2022

AP® CollegeBoard

AP® English Literature and Composition

Scoring Guidelines

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Question 1: Poetry Analysis — 6 points

In Richard Blanco's poem "Shaving," published in 1998, the speaker writes about the act of shaving. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Blanco uses literary elements and techniques to develop the speaker's complex associations with the ritual of shaving.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

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Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A **Thesis** **(0–1 points)**	**0 points** For any of the following: • There is no defensible thesis. • The intended thesis only restates the prompt. • The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. • There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt.	**1 point** Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the poem.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: • Only restate the prompt. • Make a generalized comment about the poem that doesn't respond to the prompt. • Describe the poem or features of the poem rather than making a claim that requires a defense.	**Responses that earn this point:** • Provide a defensible interpretation of the speaker's complex associations with the ritual of shaving.
	Examples that do not earn this point: **Restate the prompt** • *"The poet develops the complex associations with shaving through the use of several literary techniques."* • *"In his poem 'Shaving,' published in 1998, Richard Blanco presents a speaker that writes about the act of shaving and his complex relationship with it."* **Do not relate to the prompt** • *"The loss of a parent is a difficult one, something that many people have to deal with as they get older."* **Describe the poem or features of the poem** • *"Blanco's poem is made up of three stanzas that talk about shaving. He uses figurative language to convey many of his ideas."*	**Examples that earn this point:** **Provide a defensible interpretation** • *"In the 1998 poem 'Shaving,' Richard Blanco employs the literary technique of stream of consciousness to show how the simple act of shaving inspires complex associations with the father he barely knew."* • *"The poem links the speaker's daily ritual of shaving new growth to the cycles of regeneration in nature and then ultimately to his father, whom he starts to see reborn in himself."* • *"Blanco uses vivid imagery and the presentation of the narrator's thoughts to reveal how the act of shaving connects the narrator to his father, who seems to have died young, which then reminds the narrator of his own mortality."*
	Additional Notes: • The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. • The thesis may be anywhere within the response. • For a thesis to be defensible, the poem must include at least minimal evidence that *could* be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. • The thesis *may* establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn't do so to earn the thesis point. • A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.	

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Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
Row B Evidence AND Commentary (0–4 points)	**0 points** Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.	**1 point** EVIDENCE: Provides evidence that is mostly general. AND COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student's argument.	**2 points** EVIDENCE: Provides some specific, relevant evidence. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student's argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.	**3 points** EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning. AND Explains how at least one literary element or technique in the poem contributes to its meaning.	**4 points** EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning. AND Explains how multiple literary elements or techniques in the poem contribute to its meaning.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes				
	Typical responses that earn 0 points: • Are incoherent or do not address the prompt. • May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant.	**Typical responses that earn 1 point:** • Tend to focus on summary or description of the poem rather than specific details or techniques. • Mention literary elements, devices, or techniques with little or no explanation.	**Typical responses that earn 2 points:** • Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities. • May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don't strengthen the argument. • May make one point well but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim. • Do not explain the connections or progression between the student's claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established.	**Typical responses that earn 3 points:** • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the poem to build an interpretation. • Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. • Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim.	**Typical responses that earn 4 points:** • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the poem to build an interpretation. • Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained. • Explain how the writer's use of multiple literary techniques contributes to the student's interpretation of the poem.
	Additional Notes: • Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row. • To earn the fourth point in this row, the response may observe multiple instances of the same literary element or technique if each instance further contributes to the meaning of the poem.				

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• Attempt to contextualize their interpretation, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“Human experiences always include …” OR “In a world where …” OR “Since the beginning of time …”).
• Only hint at or suggest other possible interpretations (“While another reader may see …” OR “Though the poem could be said to …”).
• Make a single statement about how an interpretation of the poem comments on something thematic without consistently maintaining that thematic interpretation.
• Oversimplify complexities in the poem.
• Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the student’s argument.</td><td>Responses that earn this point may demonstrate sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument by doing any of the following:
1. Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the poem.
2. Illuminating the student’s interpretation by situating it within a broader context.
3. Accounting for alternative interpretations of the poem.
4. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Additional Notes:
• This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference.</td></tr>
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Question 2: Prose Fiction Analysis — 6 points

The following excerpt is from Linda Hogan's novel *People of the Whale*, published in 2008. In this passage, the narrator describes two events that occur in a community: an infant's birth shortly followed by an octopus's walking out of the sea. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the author uses literary elements and techniques to develop a complex characterization of the community.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
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	Responses that do not earn this point: • Only restate the prompt. • Make a generalized comment about the passage that doesn't respond to the prompt. • Describe the passage or features of the passage rather than making a claim that requires a defense.	**Responses that earn this point:** • Provide a defensible interpretation of the complex characterization of the community.
	Examples that do not earn this point: **Restate the prompt** • *"In this excerpt, the author depicts the community as complex through the use of various literary elements and techniques."* **Do not respond to the prompt but make a generalized comment** • *"In many communities, people react in different ways to strange events."* **Describe the passage or features of the passage** • *"This passage employs magic realism to illustrate its point."*	**Examples that earn this point:** **Provide a defensible interpretation** • *"The community in this passage is characterized by fear, practicality, and reverence for the unknown."* • *"While the community collectively considers the appearance of the octopus to be significant—despite being uncertain of its meaning—the mother of Thomas personally sees it as a specific response to the birth of her son."* • *"Through the use of an unusual plot event and the characters' responses to the octopus, the author exposes fault lines within the community that are not otherwise visible."*
	Additional Notes: • The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. • The thesis may be anywhere within the response. • For a thesis to be defensible, the passage must include at least minimal evidence that *could* be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. • The thesis *may* establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn't do so to earn the thesis point. • A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.	

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Question 3: Literary Argument — 6 points

Many works of literature feature characters who accept or reject a hierarchical structure. This hierarchy may be social, economic, political, or familial, or it may apply to some other kind of structure.

Either from your own reading or from the list below, choose a work of fiction in which a character responds to a hierarchy in some significant way. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how that character's response to the hierarchy contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

In your response, you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Provide evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

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	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: • Only restate the prompt. • Make a generalized comment about the selected work that doesn't respond to the prompt.	**Responses that earn this point:** • Provide a defensible interpretation of how a character responds to a hierarchy in the selected work. OR • Make a claim about how a character's response to a hierarchy contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole.
	Examples that do not earn this point: **Restate the prompt** • *"Hierarchical structures are a major part of society. In literature, characters can be seen either accepting or rejecting economic, political, and familial hierarchies among others."* **Do not respond to the prompt but make a generalized comment about the selected work** • *"In* The Chrysalids *by John Wyndham, David and the other telepaths hide their mutation from the rest of Waknuk, which is not an easy thing to do."* • *"People establish hierarchies because they believe they help keep order. Going against a hierarchy is very difficult. Many works of literature have characters that suffer the consequences of doing this."*	**Examples that earn this point:** **Provide a defensible interpretation** • *"Offred's development as a character in* The Handmaid's Tale *is shaped by her quiet rebellion against a government hierarchy that enforces her assigned role as a Handmaid."* • *"In S.E. Hinton's* The Outsiders*, Ponyboy and Cherry's violation of the strict hierarchy of Greasers versus Socs causes several characters to question their loyalty to these groups and brings tragedy to those who try to uphold these rules."* • *"Hurston shows how the expectations put on Janie Crawford by her grandmother and her first two husbands are meant to uphold gender-based hierarchies in society and the family. After Janie revolts against these hierarchies and runs away with Tea Cake, she is able to become independent."*
	Additional Notes: • The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. • The thesis may be anywhere within the response. • For a thesis to be defensible, the selected work must include at least minimal evidence that *could* be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. • A thesis that offers a defensible claim about a character's response to any type of hierarchical structure in the selected work may earn the point; any reasonable student interpretation of the terms "hierarchical structure" or "hierarchy" is acceptable. • The thesis *may* establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn't do so to earn the thesis point. • A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.	

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	Additional Notes: • Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row. • To earn the fourth point in this row, the response must address the interpretation of the selected work as a whole.				

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• Oversimplify complexities of the topic and/or the selected work.
• Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the student’s argument.</td><td>Responses that earn this point may demonstrate sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument by doing any of the following:
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