

AP English Language & Composition Scoring Guide

General Directions: this scoring guide will be useful for most of the essays you read. If it seems inappropriate for a specific essay, ask your table leader for assistance. Also, consult with your table leader about books that seem to have no response or a response that is unrelated to the question.

Your score should reflect your judgment of the essay's quality as a whole. Remember that student had only 40 minutes to read and write. Therefore, the essay is not a finished product and should not be judged by standards that are appropriate for out-of-class writing assignments. Instead, evaluate the essay as a draft, making certain that you **reward students for what they do well.**

All essays, even those scored 8 and 9, are likely to contain occasional flaws in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. These lapses should enter into your holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. You should not score an essay with many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics higher than a 2.

9: Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for 8 papers and, in addition, are **especially full or apt** in their analysis or demonstrate **particularly impressive control of language.**

8: Essays earning a score of 8 **effectively** accomplish both the reading and writing task called for in the prompt. They reveal the writer's ability to reason with perception and to express ideas clearly and skillfully with **stylistic maturity.** Ideas are **well developed**, supported either explicitly or implicitly by appropriate reference to the text and have a **sense of complexity** and nuance. Their prose demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not flawless.

7: Essays earning a score of 7 **fit the description of 6** essays but provide a **more complete analysis or demonstrate a more mature prose style.**

6: Essays earning a score of 6 demonstrate the writer's ability to **adequately address the prompt.** The **writer expresses ideas clearly** but with less maturity and control than top papers and sometimes with minor flaws in interpretation. These essays refer to text explicitly or implicitly but offer less convincing explanations of how language functions. A few lapses in diction or syntax may be present, but generally the prose **demonstrates control of ideas and writing.**

5: Essays earning a score of 5 are **uneven or inconsistent**, the "no-man's land" between upper and lower half papers. They address the prompt but are often **superficial or demonstrate unsophisticated ideas.** These essays may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but their prose conveys the writer's ideas.

4: Essays earning a score of 4 offer an **inadequate** response to the prompt. These essays may fail to demonstrate complete or adequate understanding of the prompt. The writer's ideas are **underdeveloped** or lack specific or persuasive evidence from text in support of ideas. The prose conveys the writer's ideas but may be formulaic or suggest **immature control of writing.**

3: Essays earning a score of 3 **compound the weaknesses of the 4.** They may be more simplistic or less consistent in controlling the elements of writing.

2: Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in addressing the prompt. These essays may offer vague generalizations, lack development or substitute simpler tasks such as **summarizing or listing techniques.** The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as a lack of development or organization, grammatical problems, or a lack of control.

1: Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but are **especially brief or simplistic** in their discussion or **weak in their control of language.**