

# AP English Language and Composition

## ESSAY SCORING GUIDE

<b>9</b>	<b>50-48</b>	<b>A</b>	<p>8-9: These well-focused and persuasive essays address the prompt directly and in a convincing manner. An essay scored a 9 demonstrates exceptional insight and language facility. An essay scored an 8 or a 9 combines adherence to the topic with excellent organization, content, insight, facile use of language, mastery of mechanics, and an understanding of the essential components of an effective essay. In a <b>rhetorical/style analysis essay</b>, literary devices and/or techniques are not merely listed, but the effect of those devices and/or techniques is addressed in context of the passage as a whole. <b>Argument essays</b> demonstrate the ability to construct a compelling argument, observing the author's underlying assumptions, (addressing multiple authors in the <b>synthesis essay</b>) and discussing many sides of the issues with appropriate evidence.</p> <p>Although not without flaws, these essays are richly detailed and stylistically resourceful, and they connect the observations to the passage. Descriptors that come to mind while reading this essay include: mastery, sophisticated, complex, specific, consistent, and well-supported.</p> <p><i>If you work at this level, you have achieved critical thinking at the synthesis and evaluation levels of Bloom's taxonomy. This means you have presented to your reader a sophisticated, critical understanding of the passage that indicates you have a clearly developed aesthetic or rhetorical sense regarding the piece. Your assertions are well-reasoned and thoroughly developed, demonstrating that you have been "moved" in some way by the piece and have a powerful response to it.</i></p>
<b>8</b>	<b>47-45</b>	<b>A-</b>	
<b>7</b>	<b>44-43</b>	<b>B</b>	<p>7-6: These highly competent essays comprehend the task set forth by the prompt and respond to it directly, although some of the analysis may be implicit rather than explicit. The 7 essay is in many ways a thinner version of the 9-8 paper in terms of discussion and supporting details, but it is still impressive, cogent, and generally convincing. It may also be less well-handled in terms of organization, insight, or vocabulary. Descriptors that come to mind while reading these essays include: demonstrates a clear understanding but is less precise and less well-supported than a 9-8 paper. These essays demonstrate an adherence to the task, but deviate from course on occasion. The mechanics are sound, but may contain a few errors which may distract but do not obscure meaning. Although there may be a few minor misinterpretations, the inferences are for the most part accurate with no significant sustained misinterpretations. <b>Rhetorical analysis essays</b> demonstrate sufficient examination of the author's point and the rhetorical strategies he uses to enhance the central idea. <b>Argument essays</b> demonstrate the ability to construct an adequate argument, understand the author's point, and discuss its implications with suitable evidence. The <b>synthesis argument</b> will address at least three of the sources.</p> <p>An essay that scores a 6 is an upper-half paper, but it may be deficient in one of the essentials mentioned above. It may be less mature in thought or less well-handled in terms of organization, syntax or mechanics. The analysis is somewhat more simplistic than found in a 7 essay, and lacks sustained, mature analysis.</p> <p><i>If you work at this level, you have achieved critical thinking at the analysis level of Bloom's taxonomy. This means you have broken the material down into its constituent rhetorical parts and detected relationships of the parts and of the way they are organized. However, your inferences are not as insightful and well-developed as an 8-9 essay.</i></p>
<b>6</b>	<b>42-40</b>	<b>B-</b>	

5	39-37	C	<p>5: These essays may be overly simplistic in analysis, or rely almost exclusively on paraphrase rather than specific, textual examples. These essays may provide a plausible reading, but the analysis is implicit rather than explicit. In a <b>rhetorical analysis essay</b>, these essays might provide a list of literary devices, or stylistic techniques present in the passage, but make no effort to discuss the effect that these devices have on the passage as a whole. Descriptors that come to mind when reading include: superficial, vague, and mechanical. The language is simplistic and the insight is limited or lacking in development. <b>Argument essays</b> demonstrate the ability to present an argument, but they frequently provide limited and inadequate discussion, explanation, or evidence for the writer's ideas. The writer may not address enough of the sources in the <b>synthesis essay</b>. Oversimplification of the issue(s) minimizes the essay's effectiveness.</p> <p><i>If you work at this level, you have achieved comprehension of the material and some analysis, but your analysis is not sufficiently developed.</i></p>
4	36-35	C-	<p>3-4: These lower-half essays compound the problems found in the 5 essay. They often demonstrate significant sustained misreadings, and provide little or no analysis. They maintain the general idea of the writing assignment, show some sense of organization, but are weak in content, maturity of thought, language facility, and/or mechanics. They may distort the topic or fail to deal adequately with one or more important aspects of the topic. Essays that are particularly poorly written may be scored a 3. Descriptors that come to mind while reading include: incomplete, oversimplified, meager, irrelevant, and insufficient. <b>Rhetorical analysis essays</b> demonstrate little discussion of rhetorical strategies or incorrect identification and/or analysis of those strategies. <b>Argument essays</b> demonstrate little ability to construct an argument. They may not clearly identify the author's point, may not present multiple authors' points of view in <b>the synthesis essay</b>, and may offer little evidence for the student's position. Students who lack three referenced sources in a <b>synthesis essay</b> can never receive a score higher than a 4.</p> <p><i>If you work at this level, you have achieved comprehension of the material but you have not moved into higher level thinking skills. You are not making insightful, developed inferences through careful analysis of the text.</i></p>
3	34-32	D	
2	30-31	D-	<p>2-1: These essays make an attempt to deal with the topic but demonstrate serious weakness in content and coherence and/or syntax and mechanics. Often, they are unacceptably short. They are poorly written on several counts, including numerous distracting errors in mechanics, and/or little clarity, coherence, or supporting evidence. In a <b>rhetorical analysis essay</b>, there is often no analysis of the passage, and in an <b>argument essay</b>, there is little or no evidence for the student's ideas. In the synthesis essay, fewer than three sources are referenced and students fail to integrate sources effectively. Wholly vacuous, inept, and mechanically unsound essays should be scored a 1</p> <p><i>If you work at this level, you do not adequately comprehend the piece assigned and have not yet begun to work cognitively with this piece of literature.</i></p>
1	29-25	F	
0	24-1	F	A zero is given to a response with no more than a passing reference to the task.
-	0	F	The dash indicates a blank response or one with no reference to the task.