

Generic AP Language and Composition Rubric

The score should reflect a judgment of the essay's quality as a whole. Remember that students had only 40 minutes to read and write; the essay, therefore, is not a finished product and should not be judged by standards appropriate for an out-of-class assignment. Evaluate the essay as a draft, making certain to reward students for what they do well.

All essays, even those scored 8 or 9, may contain occasional lapses in analysis, prose style or mechanics. Such features should enter into the holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. In no case may an essay with many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics be scored higher than a 2.

9 Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for a score of 8 and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their [analysis or argument], thorough in their development or impressive in their control of language.

8 Effective Essays earning a score of 8 effectively [present the requirements of the prompt]. They develop their [analysis or argument] with evidence and explanations that are appropriate and convincing, [adhering to the requirements of the prompt]. The prose demonstrates a consistent ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not necessarily flawless.

7 Essays earning a score of 7 meet the criteria for a score of 6 but provide more complete explanation, more thorough development or a more mature prose style.

6 Adequate Essays earning a score of 6 adequately [present the requirements of the prompt]. They develop their [analysis or argument] with evidence and explanations that are appropriate and sufficient, [adhering to the requirements of the prompt]. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

5 Essays earning a score of 5 [present the requirements of the prompt]. The evidence or explanations used may be uneven, inconsistent or limited. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the student's ideas.

4 Inadequate Essays earning a score of 4 inadequately [present the requirements of the prompt]. These essays may misunderstand the passage, or fail to completely [present the requirements of the prompt]. The evidence or explanations used may be inappropriate, insufficient or less convincing. The prose generally conveys the student's ideas but may be less consistent in controlling the elements of effective writing.

3 Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for a score of 4 but demonstrate less success in [presenting the requirements of the prompt]. They are less perceptive in their understanding of the passage or [the requirements of the prompt], or the explanation or examples may be particularly limited or simplistic. The essays may show less maturity in control of writing.

2 Little Success Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate little success in [presenting the requirements of the prompt]. These essays may misunderstand the prompt, misread the passage, fail to [present the requirements of the prompt], or substitute a simpler task by responding to the prompt tangentially with unrelated, inaccurate or inappropriate explanation. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as grammatical problems, a lack of development or organization, or a lack of control.

1 Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for a score of 2 but are undeveloped, especially simplistic in their explanation or weak in their control of language.

0 Indicates an on-topic response that receives no credit, such as one that merely repeats the prompt, or presents a narrative of a personal experience.

— Indicates a blank response or one that is completely off topic.