

AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

2016 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 2: Thomas Hardy, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

The score should reflect the quality of the essay as a whole — its content, style, and mechanics. **Reward the students for what they do well.** The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by 1 point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a 3.

9–8 These essays offer a persuasive analysis of Hardy’s portrayal of the complex relationship between the two characters, Michael Henchard and his daughter, Elizabeth-Jane. The students make a strong case for their interpretation of the complex relationship between the two characters. They may consider elements such as tone, word choice, and detail, and they engage the text through apt and specific references. Although these essays may not be error-free, their perceptive analysis is apparent in writing that is clear and effectively organized. Essays scored a 9 reveal more sophisticated analysis and more effective control of language than do essays scored an 8.

7–6 These essays offer a reasonable analysis of Hardy’s portrayal of the complex relationship between the two characters. The students provide a sustained, competent reading of the passage, with attention to elements such as tone, word choice, and detail. Although these essays may not be error-free and are less perceptive or less convincing than 9–8 essays, the students present their ideas with clarity and control and refer to the text for support. Essays scored a 7 present better-developed analysis and more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than do essays scored a 6.

5 These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible reading of the passage, but tend to be superficial or thin in their discussion of Hardy’s portrayal of the complex relationship between the two characters. While containing some analysis of the passage, implicit or explicit, the discussion of how elements such as tone, word choice, and detail contribute to the portrayal of the complex relationship may be slight, and support from the passage may tend toward summary or paraphrase. While these writers demonstrate adequate control of language, their essays may be marred by surface errors. These essays are not as well conceived, organized, or developed as 7–6 essays.

4–3 These lower-half essays fail to offer an adequate analysis of the passage. The analysis may be partial, unconvincing, or irrelevant; the students may ignore the portrayal of the complex relationship between the characters or the use of elements to develop the relationship. These essays may be characterized by an unfocused or repetitive presentation of ideas, an absence of textual support, or an accumulation of errors. Essays scored a 3 may contain significant misreading and/or inept writing.

2–1 These essays compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4–3 range. They may persistently misread the passage or be unacceptably brief. They may contain pervasive errors that interfere with understanding. Although some attempt has been made to respond to the prompt, the student’s ideas are presented with little clarity, organization, or support from the passage. Essays scored a 1 contain little coherent discussion of the passage.

0 These essays give a response that is completely off topic or inadequate; there may be some mark or a drawing or a brief reference to the task.

— These essays are entirely blank.

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

Question 2

(1 of 4)

→ In this passage from Thomas Hardy's The Mayor of Casterbridge, the narrator describes the relationship between the mayor, Michael Henchard, and his daughter, Elizabeth-Jane, with whom he had been previously estranged. Throughout the passage, Henchard, somewhat hypocritically (as he is "uncultivated himself") sharply and repeatedly admonishes his daughter for various manifestations of her lower-class tendencies. Henchard apparently seeks to 'improve' his daughter so that she can better fit into his life as mayor. Yet the more Elizabeth-Jane attempts to appease her father, the more he seems to push her away. Thus, between Henchard's verbal aggressions and his icy ~~ret~~ shift towards icy verbal neglect even as Elizabeth-Jane changes her behavior to please him, this passage suggests that though the father and daughter have been physically reunited, they remain ^{largely} estranged emotionally on an emotional level.

~~From the~~ From the very first sentence, ~~the~~ the passage begins to set up the relationship between Henchard and Elizabeth-Jane as an unhealthy one. ~~The~~ The narrator refers to "Henchard's announcement of himself to Elizabeth as her father" not as a joyous occasion or a blessing, but rather as an "enigma."



Elizabeth In her newly discovered father, Elizabeth finds, not support and praise, but rather "oddness" and "open chiding." Henchard seems constantly on the lookout for Elizabeth's "grievous failings." And throughout the passage, it seems he finds many. First, he issues a "sharp reprimand" regarding Elizabeth's often "dialect" word choices. And though Elizabeth receives her father's criticism with "shame and sadness" and, eager to please, determines to change her patterns of speech. The passage includes an extensive list of words and phrases she determines to ~~not~~ remove from her vocabulary ("fay," "dumbledores," "walked together," "groggles," "hag-rid") thus revealing the great lengths to which she is willing to go in order to please her newly found father.

Yet these lengths are not enough for Henchard, who ~~does not stop at~~ moves on to criticizing his daughter's handwriting. As a relatively new member of the upperclass, Henchard himself is "a poor fool with a pen." Nevertheless, he ~~expects~~ "believed that bristling characters were as innate and inseparable part of refined womanhood as sex itself" and thus expects Elizabeth to write neatly. Though Henchard's expectations for Elizabeth seem harsh, they do not come from a



Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

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(3.04)

Completely uncaring place. Henchard's preoccupation with Elizabeth's handwriting, for example, stems from his desire for her to ~~act as~~ to assume the very position of "refined womanhood" which would allow her an entrance into his life as mayor & therefore a member of the upper strata of society.

Despite Henchard's potentially innocent intentions, his attempts to alter Elizabeth to fit into his lifestyle seem to do her nothing but a disservice.

Elizabeth's "considerate disposition," ~~some~~ an aspect of her personality which ^{had} undoubtedly aided her before ~~now~~ "became a pitfall to her now." And though her efforts to fulfill her father's notions of "refined womanhood" ~~seem~~ are relatively successful, she neither experiences personal contentment nor any additional closeness to her father. In fact, the passage ~~is~~ concludes on a rather ominous note by stating that, "the more interesting that her appearance and manners became... the more she seemed to estrange him." The paradoxical impact Elizabeth's attempts to please her father have on her actual relationship to him emphasizes the hopelessness of her endeavor. The repetition of the phrase "the more" suggests that Elizabeth's quest for approval from her father is a quite



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Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

2A
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futile one. Furthermore, the choice of the word "estranged" to describe her actions' impact on her relationship to her father telegraphs a sad but key message about their relationship: that although they may live in the same house and recognize each other as family, ^{despite their best efforts} Elizabeth and Hercherd ^{have} remained quite estranged. #

AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

2016 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 2

Overview

Students were asked to read carefully a passage from Thomas Hardy's 19th-century novel *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and then write an essay in which they used literary elements such as tone, word choice, and selection of detail to analyze Hardy's portrayal of the complex relationship between the two characters, the Mayor and his daughter. Students were thus directed to consider complexity in a relationship that is foregrounded in a complex text. The rich passage provided students with ample material to address the prompt from any number of points of departure. Given the passage's complexity, and the added complexity that comes along with engaging with fiction written in 19th-century English prose, students were offered several ways to consider how the author employed literary elements to portray the relationship between Michael Henchard and Elizabeth-Jane.

Sample: 2A Score: 9

This sophisticated, well-evidenced essay precisely analyzes the intricate relationship between the characters. For example, it perceptively observes that "Henchard, somewhat hypocritically (as he is 'uncultivated himself') sharply and repeatedly admonishes his daughter for various manifestations of her lower-class tendencies." It clearly shows why the relationship is complex, observing, for example, that the word "enigma" signals the characters' mutual lack of understanding. The essay also distinguishes between physical and emotional estrangement, subsequently using this insight to describe the relationship as "unhealthy" because Elizabeth-Jane is "eager to please" even though Henchard is "constantly on the lookout for Elizabeth's 'grievous [sic] failing[s].'" The essay recognizes how the characters' prior experiences feed into the present relationship: as "a relatively new member of the upper class," Henchard's "preoccupation with Elizabeth's handwriting . . . stems from his desire for her to assume the very position of 'refined womanhood.'" It also acknowledges the paradox at the heart of the relationship: the impact that "Elizabeth's attempts to please her father have on her actual relationship to him emphasizes the hopelessness of her endeavor," as "she neither experiences personal contentment nor any additional closeness to [him]." Although this essay is not entirely without error, its accurate close reading, cogent writing, and well-defined argument resulted in the thorough, measured, and analytical response one expects in an essay at the top of the scoring range.

Sample: 2B Score: 6

This reasonable upper-half essay begins rather generally by observing that "people gravitate towards others that are more like them," but it uses this opening as a way of introducing the irony in the relationship between Henchard and Elizabeth-Jane: as father and daughter try "to become [sic] closer to each other's expectations" they grow more estranged. When the essay refers to the interactions between the characters, in particular the way in which Henchard changes "the way Elizabeth speaks through his disapproval," it offers mostly paraphrase. But it becomes more analytical when it summons the Minerva allusion to show how Elizabeth's initial confidence in her writing "is quickly shot down by" her father, reflecting Henchard's general disapproval. This detail from the passage is analyzed along with others to underscore the earlier point about irony: "Michael's attempts to 'fix' Elizabeth and Elizabeth's efforts to meet expectations seems that [sic] it should bring Michael to like Elizabeth more and for Elizabeth to reciprocate his positive emotions, yet the exact opposite happens." While the essay sustains and evidences its argument about irony, its insights are not as sophisticated or developed as those of essays at the top of the scoring range. The essay contains some surface errors (e.g., references to Henchard as "Nathan") and awkward phrasing (e.g., "Michael

