2019 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Ouestion 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

Carefully read the following excerpt from William Dean Howells' novel The Rise of Silas Lapham (1885). Then, in a well-constructed essay, analyze how the author portrays the complex experience of two sisters, Penelope and Irene, within their family and society. You may wish to consider such literary elements as style, tone, and selection of detail.

They were not girls who embroidered or abandoned themselves to needle-work. Irene spent her abundant leisure in shopping for herself and her mother, of whom both daughters made a kind of idol, buying her caps and laces out of their pin-money,1 and getting her dresses far beyond her capacity to wear. Irene dressed herself very stylishly, and spent hours on her toilet2 every day. Her sister had a simpler taste, and, if she had done altogether as she liked, might even have slighted dress. They all three took long naps every day, and sat hours together minutely discussing what they saw out of the window. In her self-guided search for self-improvement, the elder sister went to many church lectures on a vast variety of secular subjects, and usually came home with a comic account of them, and that made more matter of talk for the whole family. She could make fun of nearly everything; Irene complained that she scared away the young men whom they got acquainted with at the dancing-school sociables. They were, perhaps, not the wisest young men. The girls had learned to dance at Papanti's; 3 but

they had not belonged to the private classes. They did not even know of them, and a great gulf divided them from those who did. Their father did not like company, except such as came informally in their way; and their mother had remained too rustic to know how to attract it in the sophisticated city fashion. None of them had grasped the idea of European travel; but they had gone about to mountain and sea-side resorts, the mother and the two girls, where they witnessed the spectacle which such resorts present throughout New England, of multitudes of

humbly glad of the presence of any sort of young man; but the Laphams had no skill or courage to make themselves noticed, far less courted by the solitary invalid, or clergyman, or artist. They lurked helplessly

girls, lovely, accomplished, exquisitely dressed,

about in the hotel parlors, looking on and not knowing how to put themselves forward. Perhaps they did not care a great deal to do so. They had not a conceit of themselves, but a sort of content in their own ways that one may notice in certain families. The very strength of their mutual affection was a barrier to

worldly knowledge; they dressed for one another; they equipped their house for their own satisfaction; they lived richly to themselves, not because they were selfish, but because they did not know how to do otherwise. The elder daughter did not care for society, apparently. The younger, who was but three years

younger, was not yet quite old enough to be ambitious of it. With all her wonderful beauty, she had an innocence almost vegetable. When her beauty, which in its immaturity was crude and harsh, suddenly

ripened, she bloomed and glowed with the unconsciousness of a flower; she not merely did not feel herself admired, but hardly knew herself discovered. If she dressed well, perhaps too well, it was because she had the instinct of dress; but till

she met this young man who was so nice to her at Baie St. Joan,4 she had scarcely lived a detached, individual life, so wholly had she depended on her mother and her sister for her opinions, almost her sensations. She took account of everything he did and

said, pondering it, and trying to make out exactly what he meant, to the inflection of a syllable, the slightest movement or gesture. In this way she began for the first time to form ideas which she had not derived from her family, and they were none the less her own because they were often mistaken.

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¹ pin-money: money used for small expenses and incidentals

² toilet: dressing and grooming

³ Papanti's: a fashionable social dance school in nineteenth-century

⁴ Baie St. Joan: a Canadian resort

The student responses in this packet were selected from the 2019 Reading and have been rescored using the new rubrics for 2020. Commentaries for each sample are provided in a separate document.

Student responses have been transcribed verbatim; any errors in spelling or grammar appear as they do in the original handwritten response.

Sample C

- [1] From an exercept of his <u>The Rise of Silas Lapham</u>, William Dean Howell portrays sisters Penelope and Irene as dependent on their family yet independent from society through selection of detail, words focused on self-reliance, and a significant shift in tone in order to challenge why we feel the need to constantly seek the acceptance and adoration of others but also warn against the dangers of living an overly sheltered life.
- [2] Howell has a careful selection of detail to show how these sisters are different from other girls of that time period. In fact, the excerpt opens with "They were not girls who..." which implies that these sisters deviated from the societal norm. The younger sister Irene "dressed herself very stylish, and spent hours on her toilet every day", which was not so others could see and admire her, but simply for her own contentment because the Laphams "lived richly to themselves." Howell shows how in theory there is nothing particularly destructive about the mindset that family can rely on each other and live for each other. In account of the elder daughter, Howell shows how she "went to many church lectures on a vast variety of secular subjects" and "[made] fun of nearly everything," her wit deterred potential suitors, differentiating her from the marriage-obsessed girls of her day. Through highlighting the sisters' odd social behavior but apparent contentment and peace, Howell criticizes how most girls and families are obsessed with impressing others and climbing up the social ladder.
- [3] Howell also uses words like "self-guided," "self-improvement," and "mutual affection" to highlight the strong, but isolated bonds that the Lapham family shares. The Laphams are implied to be not of great social status because "a great gulf divided" them from wealthier families; however, the Laphams "had no skill or courage to make themselves noticed", but more specifically, "The elder daughter did not care for society apparently." They are described as "lurk[ing] helplessly... looking on and not knowing how to put themselves forward" in social settings which could be of detriment to the daughters when they want to get married of course a liberal perspective would claim there is no need for the daughters to get married, but as social norms of the day define, it is pure ignorance that the Laphams sheltered their daughters so much from social interaction. Here, Howell warns against overreliance of family and groups for support because once you're in, you may find it hard to get out.
- [4] Howell finally shifts his tone from objective and observant to critical of this excessive sheltering from societal values and mannerisms from line 58 and onwards. Irene attracts the attention of one young man, but is completely at a loss on how to act for "so wholly had she depended on her mother and sister for her opinions": "she began for the first time to form ideas, which she has not derived from her family." Howell illustrates the importance in thinking for yourself, for although her family's noncomformity suited them, Irene was only conforming to her family's beliefs.
- [5] With almost contrasting and ironic messages, Howell calls for his readers to seek a balance of conformity to social norms and individualism, all the while discerning yourself what fraction of each should guide your actions and thoughts.

Sample GG

- [1] People develop understanding of the world and of life in several different ways, depending on who they spend time with and how they spend their time. America has often emphasized learning values from ones family but always making sure to spend time in society to truly cultivate your personality and identity. In his novel "The Rise of Silas Lapham" William Dean Howell portrays an example and experience of two sisters, Penelope and Irene, who [illegible] their main affection and family bond are sheltered from society's attitudes. The social world and the world of the family sit in opposition. The tension between familial intimacy and the inaccessibility of society organize their experience. Howell utilizes descriptors of and imagery of the sisters family life, the metaphor of a flower to describe the younger daughter, and contrasts the younger daughter experience with the young man at Baie St. Joan with her experience at home.
- [2] Howells utilizes imagery of the Lapham family life to portray the insular and idealistic nature of family. For example, Howells describes the coordination of the girls and the mother as "[taking] long naps every day, and [sitting] hours together minutely discussing what they saw out of the window." This description set up the image of 3 well dressed, sequestered women who slept for long periods of time and simply stared out the window talking about [illegible] things. His description of them spending "hours" together and taking "long naps" makes them look unusually bonded and surprises the reader, given that in the late 1800s there was a lot occurring in society and work to be done. Rather than actively engaging with what was outside the Laphams stared out the window and wanted in it, including passivity and the lack of readiness to engage with the world around them. Looking through a window is symbolic of the Laphams looking out at the world/life that they could not access or understand.
- [3] Furthermore, Howells utilizes the metaphor of vegetable and flower to convey the sisters' natural state and contrast it with the artificially organized social world around them. Howells describes the younger sister as "having an innocence almost vegetable" and as eventually "bloom[ing] and glow[ing] with the unconsciousness of a flower." Through this Howells conveys the importance of engaging with society and actively contributing to it and learning from it; he also lends support to the natural human state, represented by the family. Howells comparing the same girl to a glowing but unconscious flower. The girls beauty was evident but meant little because she had no one to admire her or desire her beauty. Despite her happiness with her family, this shows how her beauty and personality were wasted by her constantly being in the house and with her sibling and family.
- [4] Finally Howell utilized the details of the younger daughters interactions to portray the contrast between her home life and the experience she would have interacting with society. The girl's entire perspective of people and her entire mindset was entirely based off two people, showing truly how narrow minded the girl must be and the extent of her narrative. The girls are unable to exist in the world around them or understand its rules. Her interaction with the boy in Baie St. John shows this clearly.

Sample P

- [1] Society's point of view always has a tendency to shape who people are. In the novel The Rise of Silas Lapham, by William Dean Howell, two sisters of different nature both view societal point of view as foreign. Howells uses a plethora of literary devices such as style, tone, and selection of detail when portraying the sisters' conflicted experience due to society's influence. Howell shows that the sisters are isolated from the world outside the home and unable to communicate with the people they meet.
- [2] Even though the sisters are different they are both isolated, just in different ways. Irene spends lots of time trying to look good. This can be inferred as the passage says, "Irene dressed herself very stylishly..." (line 7). The style used here can best be described as flashy or appealing in appearance due to the adjective "stylishly". The passage also reads, "...spent hours on her toilet every day." (lines 7-8). When oneself usually spends hours in the bathroom, it is predicted that their physical appearance is of large importance to that person. Penelope on the other hand is the opposite, with her style being much more simpler. This is seen as the passage reads, "Her sister has a simpler taste...might even have slighted dress." (lines 8-10). Even though Irene spends a lot of time on her appearance and Penelope doesn't know how, it ultimately doesn't matter. No one will see either sister because they are unable to enter society: "the Laphams had no skill or courage to make themselves noticed."
- [3] The Lapham family differs from the other families when it comes to society as well. The passage says, "where they witnessed the spectacle which such resorts present throughout New England...humbly glad of the presence of any sort of young man..." (lines 32-36). The tone throughout this quote is best described as very picturesque and royal. "Humbly glad of the presence of any sort of young man...", this shows that the family cares about what others think about them. But really, they don't know what to do with society because their family keeps society out: "The very strength of their mutual affection was a barrier to worldly knowledge; they dressed for one another; they equipped their house for their own satisfaction; they lived richly to themselves, not because they were selfish, but because they did not know how to do otherwise." The tone here is best seen as humble.
- [4] Because the sisters live in their own world, they have no choice but to live within it, cut off from other people. When one of the sisters meets a boy, she can't really understand what he's saying because she's never seen the world through her own eyes: She took account of everything he did and said, pondering it, and trying to make out exactly what he meant, to the inflection of a syllable, the slightest movement or gesture. In this way she began for the first time to form ideas which she had not derived from her family, and they were none the less her own because they were often mistaken." Because she lives in the world of family, she can't understand.
- [5] When describing the sisters experience, Howells uses devices such as style, tone, and selection of detail. Irene and Penelope, two sisters with different interest both find pleasing society as unimportant. Societal point of view usually has a tendency of building the way an individual is, but in the case of Irene and Penelope, this does not apply.

Sample RR

- [1] The two sisters, Penelope and Irene, from William Dean Howell's <u>The Rise of Silas Lapham</u>, have very similar upbringings, yet differ from one another immensely. The author uses selection of detail along with symbolism to convey the differences and similarities between the sister's life experiences.
- [2] Both Penelope and Irene are described as girls who had not "abandoned themselves to needle work," meaning they were both young girls; stereotypically, older women took to needle work as a passtime. However, the three year difference between the girls may have made all of the difference in their intelect, as well as their futures. The author includes details on how the two girls dress. Irene spends much of her time shopping for new clothing while Penelope does not see the point in dressing so fancy and prefered a simpler style. The author's choice to include these details on their personal styles serves a purpose it shows that Penelope has developed the same values as her parents. The two were so secluded during their childhoods, Penelope does not see the point in dressing nice to only impress her mother and sister.
- [3] It almost seems as if Irene was from re-living the boring, seclusive life of her parents before it was too late. Irene refers to her life before meeting a new man as "detached," saying she "depended on her mother and sister for her opinions." It's almost as of if Irene did not meet this man, in three years she would no longer care about the standards of society, just like her sister.
- [4] The family is also projected to be a very shallow simplistic family by the author. At one point, maybe before Penelope closed her mind to the possibility of being intelectual, she spent a period of time going to church services to "find herself." However, it is included that when she came home, she would speak of the lectures "with a comic account for them, and that made more matter of talk for the whole family." The author most likely included this detail to show that at one point, Penelope was intelectually curious, like Irene is today. However, her family's lack of intelegence rubbed off on her before she found a way out like Irene did. At one point, it is even mentioned that "Irene complained that [Penelope] scared away the men they were aquainted with."
- [5] The Lapham family is portrayed as an uneducated, unexperienced family with an extremely surface level life through selection of detail. The author includes details that may seem random, such as their vacation preferences, daily habits, and style choices to show how elementary the minds of most of the family members are. Penelope and Irene are only 3 years apart, yet Irene's attractive features allowed her to escape the simple minded family before it was too late. Penelope, who stayed with her parents for just 3 years longer, has almost completely detached herself from society. Society' standards of beauty allowed Irene to live an intelectual life, yet left Penelope in the boring house she grew up in, watching people pass by the window for entertainment and huffing her days away.

Sample TT

- [1] This excerpt from The Rise of Stilas Lapham discusses the lavish yet helpless lives of sister Irene and Penelope in a satirical way in an attempt to explain the seemingly selfish lives of Laphams "because they did not know how to do otherwise". Author William Dean Howells highlights the clueless and unaware sisters through detailed examples and a satirical tone.
- [2] The many satire-based observations in the excerpts prompt the reader to take pity on the family, especially the Lapham sisters in their interactions with each other and with society. This is exemplified in lines 38-40 when both Irene and Penelope are so focused on each other that they are completely unaware of how to be confident with others, especially with men. Their affection for each other outweighs their affection for anyone outside of their family, which distracts the sisters from focusing on the rest of the world.
- [3] The sisters' deceivingly self-absorbed nature is simply a manifestation of their contentedness and complacency in every aspect of their lives. This is shown in Howell's details about private dance lessons and European travel, which the girls did not care about because they did not know about it. This captures the very essence of blissful ignorance, and the role ignorance plays in determining the happiness and success of an individual.

Sample B

- [1] In the excerpt from the novel <u>The Rise of Silas Lapham</u>, written by William Dean Howells, it shows how different the two sisters are. Irene and the eldest daughter have two completely different views on life and it is described through style, tone, and selection of detail.
- [2] There is a certain style of writting the author is using. Throughout the excerpt, the eldest daughter's name is not presented anywhere. She is only mentioned as the eldest. The style is also througout the first paragraph, making it seem as if the two sisters are complete opposites and have nothing in common.
- [3] The tone of the excerpt is very "upbeat and happy". It is also very informative about sister Irene in the final paragraph. The tone isn't competetive, but it is comparing the two sisters. For example Irene likes to be stylish when the eldest doesn't really care. The tone is also very "soft" meaning that there really isn't any darker than that, It's just normal.
- [4] The selection to detail in the excerpt seems to rely on Irene the most. Although she is the youngest, she tried to seem much more mature. For example, it states, "Irene complained that she scared away the young men whom they got acquainted with..." (paragraph 1) to recieve the attention of boys. The author gave more detail with Irene, and since he did that, we now realize that Irene and her sister aren't really the same.
- [5] This excerpt portrayed the experiences of the two sisters with style, tone, and the selection of detail. Although the excerpt was mostly about Irene, readers still understood how the two sisters has two different views on life.

Sample EE

- [1] From the beginning of the excerpt from "The Rise of Silas Lapham", William Dean Howell depicts the way of lives of two sisters: Penelope and Irene.
- [2] "They were not girls who embroidered or abandoned themselves to needle-work" (line 1-2) exhibits the contrast of the stereotype of girl with following the girls of with "abundant leisure" (line 3). According to description of first paragraph, the two sisters obssess with shopping. For example, "Irene spent her abundant...far beyond her capacity to wear." (lines 2-7) Moreover, "They all three took long naps... they saw out of the window." (line 10-12) showes they have free life and without worrisome. Above description is abundant evidence of their normal life in the family.
- [3] On the contrary, they are ignorant in the aspect of European travel. For instance, "they did not know... how to attract it in the sophisticated city fashion." (line 22-29) It is obivious evidence of their lack of knowledge of outside world.
- [4] At next, they coincidently go to New England; but they had gone abount the mountain... humbly glad of the presence of any sort of young man." (line 30-36) the girls from outside are totally extinctive. They are more attractive, manipulate, and elegant. "They lurked helpless" contrast with life in their family.
- [5] In the end, the girls who "she could make fun of nearly everything" (lines 17-18) becomes "she had scarcely lived a detached, ...almost her sensation." Their personality change with big contrast.

Sample U

- [1] In William Dean Howell's novel, "The Rise of Silas Lapham, two sisters Penelope and Irene did not care for the views of society but for themselves. Through the use of a self-satfiicd and detail we gain insight to the sisters experience within their family and society.
 - [2] In the beginning of the passage we see how the girls act within society

Question 2: Prose Fiction Analysis 6 points

analyze how Howells uses literary elements and techniques to portray the complex experience of the two sisters within their family and society. Lopham (1885). In this passage, the author describes two sisters, Penelope and Irene. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, The excerpt found on the AP English Literature and Composition 2019 Exam (Question 2) is from William Dean Howells' novel The Rise of Silas

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.

Reporting	Scorin	Scoring Criteria
Row A	0 points	1 point
Thesis (0-1 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.	Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the passage.
	Decision Rules	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes
	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 Howells' portrayal of the complex experience of the two sisters within their family and society.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt	Examples that earn this point: Provide a defensible interpretation
	 "Howells portrays the experience of the sisters as complex through a variety of literary elements." Do not respond to the prompt but make a generalized comment "Howells illustrates the importance of fashion." 	 "In William Dean Howell's novel, "The Rise of Silas Lapham, two sisters Penelope and Irene did not care for the views of society but for themselves." [Sample U] "This secept from The Rise of Stilas Lapham discusses the lavish yet helpless lives of sister Irene and Penelope in a sotirical way in an attempt
	Describe the passage or features of the passage • "From the beginning of the excerpt from The Rise of Silas Lapham', William Dean Howell depicts the way of lives of two sisters: Penelope and Irene." [Sample EE]	to explain the seemingly selfish lives of Laphams "because they did not know how to do otherwise". Author William Dean Howells highlights the clueless and unaware sisters through detailed examples and a satirical tone," [Sample 17]
	Additional Notes: The these may be more than one centeace provided the centeaces are in close proximity.	n close proximity
	The thesis may be anywhere within the response.	
	 For a thesis to be defensible, the passage must include at least minimal end cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. 	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 those that meant the criteria can be avaided the point whether or not the rest of the reconness successfully supports that line of reasoning. 	it needn't do so to earn the thesis point.

Simply restricts the signature of the promites and promises that earn incoherence that is promites the evidence that is promites. Typical responses that earn incoherence of the incoherence or opinitis: AND	,			Scoring Criteria		
Typical responses that earn Typical responses to respecific words and Typica	Row B Evidence AND Commentary (0-4 points) 7.6 7.6 7.6	O points Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.	1 point EVIDENCE: mostly general. AND COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student's argument.		3 points EVIDENCE: POIDENCE: stockes specific evidence to srowles specific evidence to 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 passage 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 passage contribute to its meaning.
robberent or do reaching parative developments or description of a passage ences that are responses that earn Typical responses that earn overarching narrative evidence and broad developments or description of a passage ences that are details or techniques. And the passage appoints that don't strengthen the argument. Organize an argument as either do not make multiple composed of multiple robbeness with little or explanation. Bor or early support more laims or form or explanation. Bor or explain the connections or progression claims. On or fail to support a key claims, so a line of reasoning claims, so a line of reasoning claims, so a line of reasoning claims.				Decision Rules and Scoring N	otes	
is not clearly established.		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 overarching narrative developments or description of a passage rather than specific details or techniques. • Mention literary elements, devices, or techniques with little or no explanation.	Pypical 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 4 points: • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage 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 passage.

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Q2 Prose Fiction Analysis – 2019 Samples

Popints		S	Scoring Criteria
pecision Rull spoint: 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 passage could be said to"). Make a single statement about how an interpretation of the massage comments on something thematic without consistently maintaining that thematic interpretation. Oversimplify complexities in the passage. Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the student's argument.		0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex literary argument.
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 roan's see OR "Though the passage could be said to"). Make a single statement about how an interpretation of the passage comments on something thematic without consistently maintaining that thematic interpretation. Oversimplify complexities in the passage. Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the student's argument.		Decision R	ules and Scoring Notes
another reader may see OR "Though the passage could be said 4. to" Make a single statement about how an interpretation of the passage comments on something thematic without consistently maintaining that thematic interpretation. Oversimplify complexities in the passage. Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the student's argument.	•		Responses that earn this point may demonstrate a sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument by doing any of the following: 1. Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the passage. 2. Illuminating the student's interpretation by situating it within a broader context.
	•		
	•	Oversimplify complexities in the passage.	
	•		
		 This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or reference 	 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.