

**AP English Literature  
Essay Scoring Rubric**

**GENERAL DIRECTIONS:** The score you assign should reflect your judgment of the quality of the essay as a whole. Reward writers for what they do well. The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by one point from the score otherwise appropriate. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a 3.

College Board Score	Grade	Explanation
<b>9-8</b>	<b>97/93</b>	These well-written essays clearly demonstrate an understanding of the topic and have chosen an appropriate work of literature and appropriate element(s) (character, theme, tone, plot device, etc.) within that work. They address the topic convincingly with apt references. Superior papers will be specific in their references, cogent in their explications, and free of plot summary that is not relevant to the topic. These essays need not be without flaw, but they must demonstrate the writer's ability to discuss a literary work with insight and understanding and to control a wide range of the elements of effective composition.
<b>7-6</b>	<b>87/83</b>	These essays also choose a suitable work of literature and analyze the appropriate elements. These papers, however, are less thorough, less perceptive or less specific than that of 9-8 papers. Though they are not as convincing in their discussion, these essays are generally well-written; however, they have less maturity and control than the top papers. They demonstrate the writer's ability to analyze a literary work, but they reveal a less sophisticated analysis and less consistent command of the elements of effective writing than essays scored in the 9-8 range.
<b>5</b>	<b>75</b>	Superficiality characterizes these essays. They choose an appropriate element from a suitable work, but the explanation is vague or over-simplified. The discussion may be pedestrian, mechanical, or inadequately related to the topic. Typically, these essays reveal simplistic thinking and/or immature writing. They usually demonstrate inconsistent control over the elements of college-level composition and are not as well conceived, organized, or developed as the upper-half papers; the writing, however is sufficient to convey the writer's ideas.
<b>4-3</b>	<b>68/58</b>	These lower-half papers may not have chosen an appropriate element or suitable text, or they may have failed to address the topic. Their analysis may be unpersuasive, perfunctory, underdeveloped, or misguided. Their discussion may be inaccurate or not clearly related to the chosen element. The writing may convey the writer's ideas, but it reveals weak control over such elements as diction, organization, syntax, and grammar. These essays may contain significant misinterpretations of the text, inadequate supporting evidence, and/or paraphrase and plot summary rather than analysis.
<b>2-1</b>	<b>58</b>	These essays compound the weakness of essays in the 4-3 range. They seriously misread or fail to comprehend the novel or the play (or the question itself), choose an inappropriate element, or seriously misinterpret the topic of the function of the element in the work they have chosen. In addition, they are poorly written on several counts, including many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics, or they are unacceptably brief. Although the writer may have made some effort to answer the question, the argument presented has little clarity or coherence. Essays that are especially vacuous, ill-organized, illogically argued and/or mechanically unsound should be scored 1.
<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	This is a response with no more than a reference to the task.
<b>-</b>	<b>0</b>	Indicates a blank response, or one that is unrelated to the assignment.