
AP[®] English Literature and Composition

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

2019 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1: P. K. Page, “The Landlady”

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 the speaker’s complex portrayal of the landlady. Using apt and specific textual support, they demonstrate consistent and effective control over the elements of composition in language appropriate to the discussion of poetry. Although these well-focused essays may not be error-free, they are perceptive in their analysis and demonstrate writing that is clear and effectively organized. Essays scored a 9 have especially convincing analysis and effective control of language.

7–6 These essays offer a reasonable analysis of the speaker’s complex portrayal of the landlady. Using textual support, they are organized and demonstrate control over the elements of composition in language appropriate to the discussion of poetry. These focused essays show some insight, and they offer clear and controlled analysis and writing. Essays scored a 7 have solidly developed analysis and consistent control of organization and language.

5 These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible discussion of the speaker’s complex portrayal of the landlady, but the analysis may be superficial and thinly developed. They often rely on paraphrase or general textual support that includes some analysis, implicit or explicit. Their analysis and discussion may be vague, formulaic, or minimally supported. These essays demonstrate some control of language, but they may be marred by surface errors. These essays have difficulty presenting a cohesive idea, clear organization, or sustained development of analysis.

4–3 These lower-half essays fail to offer an adequate analysis of the poem. The analysis of the speaker’s complex portrayal of the landlady may be partial, unconvincing, oversimplified, or irrelevant. Evidence from the poem may be slight or misconstrued, or the essays may rely on paraphrase only. The essays often demonstrate a lack of control over the conventions of composition: inadequate development of ideas, accumulation of errors, or a focus that is unclear, inconsistent, or repetitive. Essays scored a 3 may contain significant misreading and/or demonstrate inept writing.

2–1 These essays compound several weaknesses. Although these essays make some attempt to respond to the prompt, they are often unacceptably brief or incoherent in presenting their ideas. The essays may be poorly written on several counts; they may contain pervasive errors that interfere with understanding. The ideas may be presented with little clarity, organization, or supporting evidence. Essays scored a 1 contain little coherent discussion of the text.

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.

1

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

1A
(1 of 3)

In the poem, "The Landlady", by P. K. Page, a landlady snoops ~~are~~ around the personal lives & belongings of her tenants. She learns so much about them without actually establishing a relationship with them. The specific details used to describe the landlady's behavior demonstrates how a life lacking in human connection cannot give one a sense of fulfillment.

The descriptive diction shows how the landlady does not establish any true connections with her tenants, despite knowing so much about their personal lives. She listens to their phone calls as, "her ticklish ears advance and fall back stunned," demonstrating her innate desire to snoop & the sense of joy it appears to bring her. ~~Therefore~~ The use of the word "ticklish" to describe her ears shows how listening to one phone call will not satiate her, and after a certain amount of time she will desperately need to hear another in order to maintain what she falsely views as a connection between herself and her tenant. She realizes that, "they hold the walls about them as they weep or laugh. Each face is dialled to zero publicly," so in order to get to know them, she must view their lives behind closed doors.

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

1

1A
(20P3)

The irony in this observation emphasizes how simply having knowledge about her tenants does not mean the landlady has a relationship with them as this is not knowledge willingly shared. They still view her as someone they must shield themselves to publicly, showing how the landlady & her tenants lack any true intimacy. ~~She for one violates their privacy by going through~~ She prides herself on, "know[ing] them better than their closest friends," to show how knowledge of a person does not indicate a true connection. She does not group herself with those considered, "closest friends," demonstrating how, deep down, even she recognizes that simply knowing their secrets is not enough.

The landlady demonstrates a desire for true human connection as she realizes that she cannot feel fulfilled without it. She, "knows when they wash... what they like to eat, their curvature of health, but even so is not content," using a list to show that no amount of snooping could ever be enough. This knowledge about her tenants is worthless without the establishment of a real relationship, which is what she truly desires. She, "prays she may catch them unprepared"



1

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

1A
(3 of 3)

at last," as she comes to term with the fact that knowing what they do behind closed doors cannot satisfy her desire for them to open those doors voluntarily and let her into their lives. She cannot truly know them if they do not let her, leaving her feeling ~~unfulfilled~~ unfulfilled. She wishes to, "palm the dreadful riddle of their skulls - hoping the worst," using syntax to emphasize what she really wants, which is to find someone with problems as great as hers that she can connect with. ~~Human connection is what she needs to~~ She needs someone to go through the tribulations of life with, and simply knowing things like someone's laundry schedule cannot help with this.

~~Human~~ Fulfillment in life is accomplished when one finds others to go through it with. Human connection is vital, and one cannot be truly content without it.


##

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

Question 1

As a person of authority, the one can ~~control~~
crawl the all knowing of their ~~subordinates~~ subordinates.
In the poem, "The Landlady" this is present. ~~The~~
The speaker, who is characterized as possibly ~~a~~ a
previous tenant ~~portrays~~ portrays the woman only known
as the "land lady" as a sneaky, nosy person.
Her characterization is heavily showcased through
imagery, figurative language, selection of detail and
tone.

The opening line of the poem suggests that
"the boarders" never stay long, and ~~characterizes~~ characterizes
them to be "as", "impersonal as trains" signifying
that their stay was short and quick fleeting to
the next destination. This gives off a particular
unsettling tone and leaves readers questioning
why their stay is so short and insignificant.
With the next line, the land lady is referred to for
the first time with as dim as a description of "her".
By never mentioning her name, the speaker grants
ambiguity for others maybe similar situations. ~~As~~
~~one~~ ~~is~~ ~~mentioned~~ As she is mentioned, the speaker tells that
the boarders, still going off the train ~~silence~~ since,
"Pass silently", which continues an uneasy tone and is backed
up by the imagery surrounding the mention of the land lady.
The line reads, "the crawling silence swallowing her speech",



Question 1

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

As the first insight the reader has, this gives off an immediate stalker and nosy feel from the land lady which is further aided by the description in the next line, "click doors like shutters on her camera eye". The next stanza gives more insight upon how she affects her tenants lives. They are explained as "becoming exact" to push the idea that now she has control over things like when they come and go, ~~that~~ that is described as becoming "designed", that further implies her controlling methods. Phone calls are "cryptic" and "her ticklish ears advance and face stunned" continue the theme of ^{this} overall control and all knowing craze that the land lady exerts over her tenants. The further description of the tenants in the next stanza showcases their awareness of the nosiness of the woman. "They held the walls about them as they weep or laugh" ~~and~~ is showing that they keep to themselves in their place ~~and~~ but as they come within the nest of the house, her realm, ~~their~~ faces are "dialed to zero privacy". As they are aware, it gives off an unsettling tone to what else the land lady subjects these people to.

The poem after the end of stanza 3 shifts to what the woman does to showcase



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

Question 1

her actual actions. The imagery used to describe her actions, such as, "stippled with curious flesh", and "pads on the patient land and like a pulse" also "unlocks their key holes with the wire of sight", ~~unlocks their key holes with the wire of sight~~ gives off ~~the~~ a feeling of anticipation that is directly connected to the feeling of the landlady as she rummages through other people's things. stanza five brings more of an obsessive tone to the piece as the landlady begins to think all about them and, "wonders when they are quiet", "dreams that they dope or drink" and even, "trembles to know the traffic of their brains!" This course of thought makes her seem obsessive and creepy. This is further pushed as the speaker explains, "yet knows them better than their closest friends!". This is because she has snooped and searched through their ~~belongings~~ belongings and such. Through the search of ~~the~~ knowledge of these people, she is still not content, as it says in stanza seven. What is interesting is that the speaker compares her to a "lower" but this can be explained by her ~~obsessive~~ obsessive need to know "all all all" as repeated in line twenty five.


As the poem closes, it gives off a very creepy tone as the landlady is portrayed as



Question 1

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"Pray's intense may catch them unprepared - at last and palm the dreadful riddle of their skills - hoping the worst." The specific details ~~about~~ ~~of~~ ~~this~~ ~~last~~ line gives readers an almost unknowing feel of what exactly she plans on doing to her tenants and as the speaker, it seems they are only sure that her motives are unpleasant



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

1

1C
(1 of 1)

In the Poem Landlady by P.K. Page he portrays her as a woman of knowledge and mystery as she knows everything of her tenants and witches as they come and leave. The landlady is the watcher of the building and them.

Page's imagery of the poem and his selection of detail hit you emotionally and almost physically as you read you can almost feel as the land lady is watching you every moment, every second you are in the building she is there and watching you. She has a key to your apartment a key to your mail, there's almost nothing you can do without her knowledge. Page's poem creates suspense as the landlady almost follows you, knows you better than your friends, and she almost haunts right over you. It's as if she is forever looming and its over you. The tone page creates is one of an eerie suspense of this daunting woman knowing your every move and waiting for something to draw her attention even more.

This poem by P.K. Page is ^{one} of suspense and mystery as the land lady is always there and is observing you you may not know if she is or isn't there but she knows you better than you think.

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AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

2019 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 1

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

For Question 1, the poetry analysis question, students were asked to read P. K. Page’s poem “The Landlady” and respond to the following prompt:

Carefully read P. K. Page’s 1943 poem “The Landlady.” Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze the speaker’s complex portrayal of the landlady. You may wish to consider such elements as imagery, selection of detail, and tone.

Students were expected to complete three tasks successfully:

- They were expected to read carefully.
- They were expected to analyze the speaker’s complex portrayal of the landlady.
- They were expected to write a well-organized essay based on that analysis.

These expectations mirrored those on recent exams. These expectations are also interrelated and interdependent. Reading aids in the analysis, but analysis also affects rereading. Both activities are then organized in the essay, and the act of writing often leads to further analysis.

To clarify how these key terms are being used, their definitions are reiterated here (as they were last year).

- **Reading** carefully means employing the techniques practiced during students’ Advanced Placement class and engaging with qualities, terms, and characteristics related to the study of poetry. Reading, in this context, implies the attempt to discover or create meaning (to interpret) based on the cues of the prompt.
- **Analyzing** means identifying the important parts of a larger whole and being able to explain how those parts connect to and function within that whole. In this case, students needed to identify the parts of the poem that led to an understanding of the speaker’s complex portrayal of a character, the landlady. The word “complex” here is a cue to the students that they might see contradictory, shifting, paradoxical, or even opposing elements of that portrayal. Students, then, had to articulate *how* the poet portrayed those relationships.
- **Writing** a well-organized essay means understanding how students’ own thoughts about the text are connected; being able to support those assertions with clear, concrete examples; and cueing the reader with the appropriate compositional techniques, such as establishing an assertive, defensible thesis and using transitional devices to reveal how ideas are connected. It should be noted that students are not expected in the free-response section of the examination to write a polished, revised essay. Instead, the organization may be implicit throughout and may be understood by claims formed late in the essay. The essay should, however, enable the readers to see and to follow the student’s reasoning (even if that reasoning is still developing).

Sample: 1A

Score: 8

This essay offers a persuasive analysis of the speaker’s complex portrayal of the landlady. The introduction presents the claims that “she learns so much about them without actually establishing a relationship with them” and that her behavior “demonstrates how a life lacking in human connection cannot give one a sense of fulfillment.” The essay thoroughly examines the complex nature of the relationship between the landlady and her boarders: “The use of the word ‘ticklish’ to describe her ears shows how listening to one phone call will not satiate her, and after a certain amount of time she will desperately need to hear another in order to maintain what

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Question 1 (continued)

she falsely views as a connection between herself and her tennant [*sic*].” The irony of the landlady’s behavior is perceptively recognized: “in order to get to know them, she must view their lives behind closed doors. The irony in this observation emphasizes how simply having knowledge about her tenants does not mean the landlady has a relationship with them.” Quotations are integrated smoothly and accompanied by convincing analysis: “She prides herself on, ‘know[ing] them better than their closest friends,’ to show how knowledge of a person does not indicate a true connection. She does not group herself with those considered, ‘closest friends,’ demonstrating how, deep down, even she recognizes that simply knowing their secrets is not enough.” The arguments of this essay grow more persuasive as it develops, and the student delves into the inner workings of the landlady’s mind. The essay demonstrates consistent and effective control over the elements of composition in language appropriate to the discussion of poetry through its discussion of “descriptive diction,” irony, and syntax. The essay also demonstrates effective control of language that is clear, appropriate, and effective. For these reasons, this essay earned a score of 8.

Sample: 1B
Score: 5

This essay offers a plausible discussion of the speaker’s portrayal of the landlady’s relationship with her tenants. It presents the possibility that the speaker might be a former tenant, but this claim is not supported. The essay focuses on the characterization of the landlady as “a sneaky, nosey person.” The student considers that the landlady’s name is not revealed but only comments, “By never mentioning her name, the speaker grants ambiguity for others maybe similar situations,” a vague claim that is not further explained or supported. The student examines the simile comparing the boarders to trains as “signifying that their stay was short and quick fleeting to the next destination.” The development of the analysis of the landlady’s complexity is superficial: “Through the search of knowledge of these people, she is still not content.” Throughout the essay the student describes the tone of the poem as “unsettling,” “uneasy,” “obsessive,” and “very creepy,” but little textual evidence is used to support these descriptions. There is some control of language, and the essay is organized, albeit in a formulaic way: the essay’s close adherence to the structure of the poem constrains the analysis, resulting in an essay that, despite its length, lacks the sustained development of ideas necessary to rise to the level of reasonable analysis. For these reasons, the essay earned a score of 5.

Sample: 1C
Score: 2

This essay attempts to address the prompt and begins by describing the landlady as “the watcher of the building and them [the tenants].” The second paragraph of the essay focuses on how the landlady affects “you”; the use of second person throughout the rest of the essay diminishes the attempt at analysis by focusing attention on the reader’s imagined experience rather than on the text itself. Through its lack of attention to the text, the essay offers more commentary than analysis, with little careful attention to the character: “as you read you can almost feel as the land lady is watching you every moment, every second you are in the building she is there and watching you.” The essay describes the tone as one of “eary [*sic*] suspense” but does not explain how that tone is developed. No discussion of the poem’s complexity is offered. Little supporting evidence is found in the essay for its claims. While the surface errors (“her tendants,” “the land lady is always their”) are not pervasive, they do contribute to the overall weakness of the essay. This essay earned a score of 2.