

2020

AP[®]

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AP[®] English Literature and Composition

Sample Student Responses - Packet 2

Prose Fiction Analysis Question - Johnson

AP English Literature and Composition
Prose Fiction Analysis Free-Response Question 2020 Scoring Commentaries

Index of Scores for Samples

Sample Reference	Row A	Row B	Row C
A	1	4	1
B	1	4	0
C	1	3	1
D	1	3	0
E	1	2	0
F	0	2	0
G	0	1	0

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Sample A

Score: 6/6 points (A1 – B4 – C1)

Row A: 1/1

This response earns the point in Row A because it responds to the prompt with a thesis that provides a defensible interpretation of the passage: “Through a motif of the allure of musical instruments, and the abundant sensory details that summon a vivid image of the event of their meeting, the reader can infer that the narrator was utterly enraptured by his obsession in the moment, and upon later reflection cannot help but feel a combination of amusement and a resummoning of the moment's passion” (paragraph 1).

Row B: 4/4

This response earns all four of the possible points in Row B because it effectively presents specific evidence to support its thesis and its line of reasoning. The commentary acknowledges that the narrator is an adult recalling a childhood experience and considers the significance of the passage of time. The writer argues that the use of details in the passage “serves to emphasize that this is all told through memory” (paragraph 2). Later in the essay, the writer continues to consider the significance of the passage of time by the comment, “Clearly, upon reflection the narrator feels a combination of amusement at the silliness of his former self and a wistful respect for the emotion that the crush stirred within him” (paragraph 3). The commentary consistently explains how the evidence supports the line of reasoning established. After describing how the “narrator was drawn to the ‘tones she called forth’ from her violin and wanted desperately to play her ‘accompaniment’” (paragraph 2), the writer comments, “This serves the double role of sensory imagery (with the added effect of music being a powerful aural image) and metaphor, as the accompaniment stands in for the narrator’s true desire to be coupled with his newfound crush” (paragraph 2). The weaving of the significance of the literary devices within the commentary strengthens the argument presented. In examining the irony of the narrator’s situation, the student writes, “The narrator goes on to mention his ‘successful’ endeavor to conceal his crush from his friends and the girl; this holds an ironic tone because the narrator immediately admits that his attempts to hide it were ill-fated and all parties were very aware of his feelings” (paragraph 3). The response organizes its argument with specific evidence that is explicitly explained.

Row C: 1/1

The response earns the point in Row C because it demonstrates sophistication of thought and presents a complex literary argument. By thoroughly examining the mindset of the narrator, the response explores the complex emotions he experiences: “The narrator also recalls his younger self jumping to hyperbolic extremes when imagining what he would do if betrayed by his love, calling her a ‘heartless jade’ to ironically play along with the memory” (paragraph 3). Additionally, the response situates the passage in a broader context when it explores the narrator’s attempt to rationalize his youthful behavior: “The meaning of the work is that, when

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we look back on our memories (especially those of intense passion), added perspective can modify or augment how those experiences make us feel” (paragraph 4). The response also employs a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.

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Sample B

Score: 5/6 points (A1 – B4 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

This response earns the point in Row A, notwithstanding the misuse of “nativity” in place of “naivete,” because it responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the passage: “In the passage, the author makes use of syntax and imagery to display the nativity of the narrator’s childhood crush” (paragraph 1).

Row B: 4/4

This response earns four points in Row B because it consistently provides effective textual evidence and explains how that evidence supports its line of reasoning. The response is organized around the literary devices of imagery and syntax, but other literary elements are also discussed. The section on imagery argues that the narrator’s ardor is simplistic, that of “a child who is inexperienced in the ways of affection” (paragraph 3). In a later discussion of the passage’s syntax, the writer suggests the prompt’s “use of lengthy, run-on sentences repeatedly throughout the passage can make the child’s passion towards the girl seem rambling and convoluted” (paragraph 3). Both of these points directly relate to the thesis’ focus on naivete. After describing the imagery used in the prompt to depict the church, the writer argues, “The personification of the organ using the phrase ‘heaving tremor’ brings to mind the connotation of passion, much like an individual gasping for breath or a pounding heart” (paragraph 2). The response examines the narrator’s admission of viewing the girl as the “‘incarnation of every beautiful heroine’” (paragraph 3) and goes on to describe these feelings as “reckless admiration” (paragraph 3). The response continues to advance the line of reasoning with the comment, “The boy dives head first into his idealized version of the world, fixing all of his hopes around a single individual” (paragraph 3).

Row C: 0/1

This response did not earn the point in Row C because while it thoroughly explains the naivete of the narrator, it does not address the complexity of his feelings. The essay makes attempts in both the introduction and conclusion—“Childhood crushes are commonplace for all youth” (paragraph 1), and “Having crushes as a child is commonplace” (paragraph 4)—to situate the argument in a larger context; however, the commentary does not develop and support this point.

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Sample C

Score: 5/6 points (A1 – B3 – C1)

Row A: 1/1

This response earns the point in Row A because it responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the passage: “...the reader follows the rush of emotions of a young boy with a crush. The author exposes a theme of repressed sexuality, which is consistent with the time period. This is done primarily through romantic diction and a longing tone in order to convey the complexity of a teenager’s mind” (paragraph 1).

Row B: 3/4

The response earns three out of four points in Row B because it uses specific evidence to support its claim in its line of reasoning. Organized by literary devices, the essay focuses first on the word choice found in the passage, in particular, the words “tremor” of the organ and “the fragrance” (paragraph 2) associated with meeting the girl. The essay describes these words as “elegant” and as “extremely light and airy as if he is floating on clouds” (paragraph 2). The writer then contrasts these words with “ashamed” and “deceived” (paragraph 3). In the commentary, the writer argues, “The complexity of the boy’s emotions are portrayed clearly through his words as he switches between adoration and shame” (paragraph 2). The response argues that multiple tone shifts within the passage demonstrate the complexity of the boy’s reactions. The writer describes the initial tone of the passage as “excited” and “whimsical” (paragraph 3) but shifts from “adoration to shame” (paragraph 3). The attempt to explain the tone shift from “adoration to shame” is asserted but only explained with general commentary. The commentary does not move far beyond the textual evidence offered: “I was ashamed” (paragraph 3). The idea of sexual repression is not overtly discussed in the commentary.

Row C: 1/1

This response earns the point in Row C because it situates the student’s interpretation within a broader context. In the concluding paragraph, the writer suggests, “This passage shows us how deeply people feel without those outside of their mind knowing. This is a reminder to be considerate of others as they may be feeling things others are not aware of” (paragraph 4).

Sample D

Score: 4/6 points (A1 – B3 – C0)

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Row A: 1/1

The response earns one point in Row A because it responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis: “Using literary devices/techniques such as imagery and tone, the author of the novel published in 1912 convey’s [sic] the narrator’s complex response to having a crush as passionate yet desperate and obsessive” (paragraph 1).

Row B: 3/4

This response earns three points in Row B because it provides evidence to support its claim in a line of reasoning. The organization of the response focuses first on the acts of the narrator in his feelings toward the violinist. The textual evidence incorporated here centers around the lines of direct address used “to give the reader insight into his reasoning” (paragraph 2). The response also considers not only the physical appearance of the girl, but also the environment in which he sees her: “This shows the reader that the narrator was not only infatuated by her talent, but by the setting he had found her in” (paragraph 2). The writer asserts, “The narrator directly expresses his feelings for his crush to the reader as being normal and what he thought was a natural way to admire a girl” (paragraph 2). The evidence and the commentary focus on the narrator’s boyish devotion to the girl. To further develop the line of reasoning, the response argues that the narrator’s tone shifts from innocent “admiration to frustrated and desperate” and aims to support that with the narrator’s thought ““that if she deceived me I should do something desperate...and the heartless jade, how she led me on!”” (paragraph 3). The following commentary discusses the narrator’s shift to being unstable and impulsive, but the explanation in support of the narrator’s desperate tone seems only to be the word “desperate” (paragraph 3). Although the textual evidence and commentary in both paragraphs two and three are sparse, they support the line of reasoning.

Row C: 0/1

This response did not earn a point in this row because it does not demonstrate sophistication of thought. In places, the writer oversimplifies the complexity of emotions: “This shows how quick one’s emotions can take over them and make them act in sometimes irrational ways” (paragraph 3).

Sample E

Score: 3/6 points (A1 – B2 – C0)

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Row A: 1/1

This response earns the point in Row A because it responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis: “The narrator’s descriptive writing of the setting and flashback, as well as his shift from a light-hearted and exaggerated tone to a serious and longing tone, confirms he is completely in love and yet completely hopeless, as he fails to share his feelings with the young girls” (paragraph 1).

Row B: 2/4

This response earns two points in Row B because it offers some specific relevant evidence and explains how some of this evidence relates to the thesis; however, no line of reasoning is clearly established. In paragraph two, the writer presents the first example of evidence: “He [the narrator] speaks of every possible detail: her assumed age, the lighting in the church, the silence of the audience, ‘the heaving tremor of the organ under the clear wail of the violin,’ and even her facial features” (paragraph 2). The comment, “It is obvious that the narrator is completely enthralled by the young woman before him” (paragraph 2), supports the claim in the thesis that the narrator is “completely in love,” but the following comment, “Through his attention to detail and his extreme description of the setting, the reader cannot help but acknowledge the narrator’s state of love” (paragraph 2), focuses on the obvious nature of the evidence and feels repetitive without strengthening the argument. Additionally, the response makes assertions without supplying support. For example, the response mentions a “playful, light-hearted, airy tone” (paragraph 3) without adequate evidence to support it. In other places, the commentary and the evidence seem disjointed: “The narrator claims, ‘I wanted to be taken seriously. I had definitely made up my mind that I should never love another woman.’ It is obvious in his writing the man is not satisfied by merely admiring the girl from a distance” (paragraph 3). The mix of specific evidence and broad generalities weakens the line of reasoning. Lastly, the comment “he hopes the idea of being in love with her is realistic and may, at some point, be reciprocated” (paragraph 3) contradicts the claim in the thesis that “he is completely in love and yet completely hopeless” (paragraph 1).

Row 3: 0/1

This response does not earn the point in Row C because it does not demonstrate sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument. While noting in the conclusion, “The narrator demonstrates that being in love is exciting, unknown, and playful, as well as scary, difficult, and deceitful” (paragraph 4), that complexity is not explored within the response.

Sample F

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Score: 2/6 points (A0 – B2 – C0)

Row A: 0/1

This response does not earn the point in Row A because it does not respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation. In the introductory paragraph, the prompt is paraphrased, and literary terms are mentioned, but no claim requiring a defense is made.

Row B: 2/4

This response earns two points in Row B because it provides some specific evidence from the text: “Her eyes almost closing, the escaping strands of her dark hair wildly framing her pale face, and her slender body swaying to the tones she called forth, all combined to fire my imagination and my heart with a passion, though boyish, yet strong and, somehow, lasting” (paragraph 2), and “She was my first love, and I loved her as only a boy loves. I dreamed of her, I built air castles for her, she was the incarnation of each beautiful heroine I knew; when I played the piano, it was to her, not even music furnished an adequate outlet for my passion” (paragraph 3). The response, however, offers general commentary that fails to connect the evidence to a line of reasoning. Instead, the commentary offers the following simplistic statements: “The description of this embarrassment allows the reader to picture this scene and create an image of what the narrator’s appearance was with the embarrassment that he had” (paragraph 2), and “The narrator is clearly talking about his attitude toward this individual girl. He creates an intense tone with the description of his feelings for the girl, and shows his effort to attract the girl’s attention by only playing the piano for her” (paragraph 3). The definitions of imagery and tone included in paragraphs two and three are unnecessary and do not advance the line of reasoning.

Row C: 0/1

The response does not earn a point in Row C because it does not demonstrate sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument. The concluding sentence, “Imagery and tone not only play a large part in this story, but also help lots of other stories create a similar situation to allow the reader to better understand the story as a whole and help them become more engaged and interested in the events taking place” (paragraph 4), offers a generality that does not strengthen or elevate the response.

Sample G

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Score: 1/6 points (A0 – B1 – C0)

Row A: 0/1

This response does not earn the point in Row A because it does not respond to the prompt with a defensible thesis. The introductory sentence rephrases the prompt: “The narrator provides many complex responses to his development of a crush for a young violinist” (paragraph 1).

Row B: 1/4

This response earns one point in Row B because it offers mostly general evidence in service of summary and one piece of specific evidence: “The author describes this girl as almost an angel, using extremely descriptive words to describe her, such as describing ‘the escaping strands of her dark hair wildly framed her face’ as she was playing the violin” (paragraph 1). No commentary that would establish a line of reasoning is provided. While the response asserts, “These reactions are complex” (paragraph 1), no explanation of the complexity is offered.

Row C: 0/1

This response does not meet the criteria for one point in Row C. It does not demonstrate sophistication of thought, nor does it develop a complex literary argument.