
AP[®] English Language and Composition

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

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Free-Response Question 1

- ✓ Scoring Guidelines
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Synthesis Essay**6 points**

Historic preservation laws are intended to protect buildings deemed to be of historic, cultural, or architectural value. The laws affect both government buildings and private property, putting constraints on how and to what extent the structures can be altered, renovated, or replaced. Proponents of these laws claim they are necessary for the preservation of history and culture and the architectural integrity of a neighborhood. Opponents of the laws argue that such laws prevent progress and negatively impact real estate development, building renovation, and building design.

Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the sources and develops your position on the value, if any, of laws designed to preserve buildings deemed to be of historic importance.

Source A (National Parks Service Web site)

Source B (Merlino book)

Source C (Appelbaum opinion article)

Source D (Webb graph)

Source E (Martin article)

Source F (Rosen cartoon)

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
- Select and use evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support your line of reasoning. Indicate clearly the sources used through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. Sources may be cited as Source A, Source B, etc., or by using the description in parentheses.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Thesis (0–1 points)	0 points For any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	1 point Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only restate the prompt. Do not take a position, or the position is vague or must be inferred. Equivocate or summarize other’s arguments but not the student’s (e.g., some people say it’s good, some people say it’s bad). State an obvious fact rather than making a claim that requires a defense. Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Historic preservation laws are laws designed to preserve buildings deemed to be of historic importance.”</i> Address the topic of the prompt but do not take a position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Historic preservation laws have been called controversial.”</i> Address the topic of the prompt but state an obvious fact as a claim <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“There are laws that protect historic buildings.”</i> 	Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to the prompt by developing a position on the value, if any, of laws designed to preserve buildings deemed to be of historic importance, rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt. Clearly take a position rather than just stating there are pros/cons. Examples that earn this point: Present a defensible position that responds to the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Laws that protect buildings are necessary to save history.”</i> <i>“Laws designed to protect historical buildings are essential to preserve both culture and architecture.”</i> <i>“While laws designed to protect historical buildings may help preserve cultural history as well as neighborhood integrity, they should rarely exist as they prevent building owners from possible renovations and sale.”</i>
	Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. The thesis may be anywhere within the response. For a thesis to be defensible, the sources must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn’t do so to earn the thesis point. A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning. 	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
Row B Evidence AND Commentary (0–4 points)	0 points Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or references fewer than two of the provided sources.	1 point EVIDENCE: Provides evidence from or references at least two of the provided sources. AND COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student’s argument.	2 points EVIDENCE: Provides evidence from or references at least three of the provided sources. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.	3 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.	4 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes				
	Typical responses that earn 0 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tend to focus on summary or description of sources rather than specific details. 	Typical responses that earn 2 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 3 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the sources to build an argument. Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim. 	Typical responses that earn 4 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the sources to build an argument. Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained.
Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row. 					

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row C Sophistication (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempt to contextualize their argument, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>In a world where...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time...</i>”). Only hint at or suggest other arguments (“<i>While some may argue that...</i>” OR “<i>Some people say...</i>”). Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the argument. 	Responses that earn this point may demonstrate sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation by doing any of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Crafting a nuanced argument by consistently identifying and exploring complexities or tensions across the sources. Articulating the implications or limitations of an argument (either the student’s argument or arguments conveyed in the sources) by situating it within a broader context. Making effective rhetorical choices that consistently strengthen the force and impact of the student’s argument throughout the response. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.
	Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	

Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

The world is constantly shifting, growing, and adapting. New advancements are made each and every day to improve the lives of people across the globe. In this ever-changing climate, it is vital that we take the time to appreciate how we got to where we are today. Although the process of officially labelling a site as historic can be complicated and difficult, historic preservation laws hold significant value due to the economic, environmental, and cultural benefits that stem from the preservation of historic sites.

Despite these many benefits, opponents of preservation argue that the funding aspect creates a barrier to preserving historic places. In fact, 24% of professionals surveyed identified the need for funding as a top challenge to preserving historic places ~~at home~~ (Source D). However, the economic benefits of preservation are strong enough to outweigh the cost of funding these sites. As seen after the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act, communities saw how historic preservation could "foster heritage tourism" (Source A). The protection of historic locations captivated travelers, ~~drawing them~~ motivating them to visit historic areas to experience the past. Bringing in tourists not only results in the appreciation of the style and culture of the historic buildings, but also brings business to the town in which the historic sites are located, thereby positively impacting the economy in areas that practice historic preservation. Ultimately, money must be put into these historic sites, but their preservation ~~also~~ stimulates the economy by driving tourism.

Beyond the economic benefits of preservation, historical sites also ~~also~~ positively impact the environment. Buildings are not merely buildings, they are "repositories of extracted and manufactured materials" (Source B).

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● **Important:** Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

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Question 3

Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

Constructing a building requires significant nonrenewable resources. The demolition of old buildings to ~~add~~ replace them with new structures significantly depletes these essential resources. On the other hand, by preserving these old buildings, resources are conserved, promoting sustainability. Additionally, when older buildings are preserved, they can still be altered in ways that allow them to ~~be~~ operate using technologies that are just as environmentally friendly as in modern buildings. Unfortunately, there are some limitations to adaptations made to historic buildings, as seen in parts of DC that prohibit installing rooftop solar panels (Source C). However, the preservation of materials outweighs the restrictions on modernization, demonstrating the value of preserving historic buildings.

Although preventing changes to historic buildings can inhibit the use of environmentally friendly practices, it is necessary to preserve the past so the cultural ~~and~~ and historic legacy of a location is retained. The preservation of history through buildings may not seem essential, as the events took place in the past, but Brent Leggs, executive director of the Action Fund asserts that, "It's really about leveraging the power of the place to have a positive impact on people's lives right now" (Source E). Leggs is referring to Harlem, a neighborhood that has historically been a center of African American culture. By designating buildings in this neighborhood as historic, the process of gentrification of Harlem will be slowed significantly, preserving the culture of its residents by allowing their community to remain intact. Through historic preservation of buildings, ~~modern~~ past and present cultures are also preserved.

A major barrier to this essential preservation is the process of labelling a site as historical. The bureaucratic nature of designating a site as

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Question 1

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Question 3



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historic was labelled a ~~top~~ top challenge by 9% of experts (Source D). Additionally, the requirements for a building to be deemed historically significant are not widely agreed upon, making it difficult to determine whether or not a building qualifies for preservation or not (Source B). This causes many buildings that could potentially be historic to not become preserved, resulting in their demolition. ~~The process of~~ Historical preservation is a valuable idea, but there have been issues effectively putting it into practice. If the process for establishing sites as historically significant was improved, historic preservation would be a major success, with ~~rather~~ many positive impacts. Change ~~can be beneficial~~ can be beneficial, but it is just as important to preserve reminders of the past.

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

There is no doubt that humans have had the capability to change the future through important historic events in the past. ~~movements like~~ the Civil ~~rights~~ movement, or the woman's rights movements are examples of historical events that reshaped the American people know today. ~~However buildings like the white house are where most of changes occurred which is the reason. Although important~~ In order to share these events, and allow history to be remembered, there are museums and buildings that hold meaning, and these ~~the~~ building are able to stay up thanks to the Historical Preservation law. This law allowed Historical relevant places to be a permanent institution, meaning they couldn't be knocked down or replaced. However, ~~the~~ although keeping ^{something from the} ~~that~~ past allows ^{people} ~~us~~ to ~~not~~ learn ~~from past mistakes and hopefully stop repetition in history,~~ ~~ultimately, the Historical preservation law should be enacted, and stopped because change is apart of moving on to a better future, and because space is valuable for the generation of the present, and not past.~~

Historical ^{preservation} ~~preservation~~ ^{buildings} ~~mark~~ ~~are~~ lawfully protected ~~Historical preservation focuses on the value of the building, or whether it is historically relevant before~~ from being destroyed or taken down if it is historically valuable and important. However according to Appellbaum Binyamin, writer of "when Historical Preservation Hurts Cities", Binyamin explains that Historical Preservations

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

Makes it so that, "buildings (in neighborhoods) are not supposed to change" (source C). The preservation act doesn't ^{just} preserve ~~the~~ ^{the} past, but it also stops the neighborhood ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ past because by keeping a historical building, it only gives reminders of the past, making change to be almost impossible. ^{Since} ~~because~~ not only would there be ^{no} ~~space~~ for newer buildings, but because the ^{preserved} building draws the attention away from what's becoming around it. Benjamin also clearly states that, "Humans don't like change" (source C) which is only further proven by the preservation of old buildings that mean nothing to today's world because the history was already made.

This leads to the second reasoning. ~~Not only does preservation become an obstacle from making a change, but also because the space that~~ Not only does preservation become an obstacle from making a change, but also because the space that ~~preservations~~ are taking up, can ~~be~~ be used to build things more useful for the people in the present. Preservations top 1 problem according to Webb and Amy, ~~are~~ are "need(s) for funding" (source D). ~~About~~ About 24% of people ~~agreed~~ agreed to needs for funding while in second place about 21% ~~of~~ of people say relevancy was the problem for historical preservations. ^{Money} ~~is one~~ ^{building's} problems shown that, historical preservations ~~and~~ ^{and} having trouble maintaining themselves because they aren't earning enough since the relevancy of the buildings are starting to decline. If people aren't interested in an

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Question 3



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Old building then they won't spend money to secure preserve it. With that, the space ~~that is being used~~ for preservation is taking up can be replaced ~~and~~ by homeless shelters to ~~it~~ not only make it relevant to the problems of today, but also help the people of the present rather than the buildings of the past. According to Marino, Kathryn Rogers Historical Reservation tried to solve this problem, by only keeping historical building that have "value in order to maintain cultural and environmental sustainability" (source B), however the problem with this is that most of historically valued things are kept in one building ^{dedicated to itself,} when they ~~can~~ should be kept in one building with other artifacts. By maintaining the artifacts a whole building won't be wasted and ~~the~~ history can still be remained.

In conclusion historical preservation laws are only limiting change and are more focus on maintaining the past rather than fix the present, which is why ^{historical preservation} ~~they~~ should be stopped.

Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

~~Answer~~ Due to the ever and always changing society that is the world of today, the value of laws that are put into place to preserve buildings of historic importance is ~~relatively~~ ^{high} as change is a necessity.

The value of preservation laws for historic buildings is ~~high~~ ^{high} due to the amount of challenges that come with preservation. Source D shows the issues associated with preservation. It explains, through survey results, that the issues range from a lack of funding to pressures from new developments to lack of diversity and education. Because of these challenges that are present when going through the process of preservation for buildings that are of historic value, putting laws into place that support that should be of high value and importance.

The value of preservation laws for historic buildings is high because of the amount of disparity when it comes to deeming things historic. ~~Having~~ ^{Having} precise laws that are clear ~~on~~ about the standards and specifications needed to be considered historic, ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~of high value~~ ^{is} ~~because there aren't~~ ^{is} important and would make them of high value. Source B explains the difficulty of considering/deeming things historic. It explains some of the standards, such as associated history or location, that go into

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deciding whether or not a building is historic ~~reason~~ (Merlino). Having specific laws that clearly describe the specifications and standards are of high value. This is because it is a problem, and need for these laws are of high value and the problem requires immediate response. Source F shows the ~~type of historic preservation specifications~~ type of objects that could get deemed historic should ~~specific laws~~ specific laws not be put into place. Source F shows a man sitting in a chair ~~that~~ that has no immediately recognizable important features or conditions or importance that would qualify it to be deemed historic, yet, he is petitioning for it to be saved regardless (Rosen). The historicification of objects just because we like them is not the reason historic preservation happens. This is why there is high value in laws that are in place for preservation.

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Question 1

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

Overview

Students responding to this question were expected to read six sources on the topic of historic preservation laws and then write an essay that synthesized material from at least three sources and developed their position on the value, if any, of laws designed to preserve buildings to be of historic importance. Students were expected to respond to the prompt with a thesis that takes a defensible position; use evidence from at least three provided sources to support their line of reasoning clearly, properly citing the sources; explain how the evidence supports their line of reasoning; and use appropriate grammar and punctuation in presenting their argument.

As per the Course and Exam Description, students were expected to be able to read the prompt, understand the task, use a minimum number of sources provided to write paragraphs that reflect their ability to establish claims and provide evidence, and demonstrate their understanding of prose and their ability to write using cogent, meaningful discourse.

Sample: 1A

Score: 1-4-0

Thesis (0–1 points): 1

The response presents a clear thesis at the end of the first paragraph that sets up the claims about historic preservation laws: “Although the process of officially labelling a site as historic can be complicated and difficult, historic preservation laws hold significant value due to the economic, environmental, and cultural benefits that stem from the preservation of historic sites.” This is a defensible position that responds to the prompt by presenting a series of reasons why historic preservation laws have value.

Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 4

The response provides specific evidence from Sources D, A, B, C, and E, using a blend of short quotations and paraphrase. The response consistently embeds and responds to specific words and phrases from the sources and integrates them into the response’s explanation, such as in paragraph 3 when the response states “Unfortunately, there are some limitations to adaptations made to historic buildings, as seen in parts of DC that prohibit installing rooftop solar panels (Source C),” or the explanation in the fourth paragraph about the importance of Harlem, which connects the specific example in source E to the idea of a “cultural and historic legacy of a location.”

The response is organized with a line of reasoning both within and between the paragraphs. Beginning with paragraph 2, each paragraph opens with a claim and then moves smoothly back and forth between sustained discussions of the complications and difficulties of preserving historic buildings. For example, paragraph 2 explores the economic benefits of historic preservation and paragraph 3 focuses on the environmental benefits, each of which support the thesis adequately. The claims in both paragraphs are clearly explained and tied to the thesis, such as at the end of paragraph 2 when the response states that “Ultimately, money must be put into these historic sites, but their preservation stimulates the economy by driving tourism.”

Question 1 (continued)

The response uniformly offers evidence from the sources, citing specific details from one or two sources in each paragraph after paragraph 1. In paragraph 3, for example, the commentary explains how Source C supports a line of reasoning when it states “by preserving these old buildings, resources are conserved, promoting sustainability. Additionally ... they can still be altered in ways that allow them to operate using technologies that are just as environmentally friendly as in modern buildings.” The focus on the details in this example serve to support the claim that “historical sites also positively impact the environment.”

Sophistication (0–1 points): 0

Although the response does connect evidence from the sources, such as sources D and A in paragraph 2, to develop and support the idea that the “economic benefits of preservation are strong enough to outweigh the cost of funding” historic sites, it does not consistently identify or explore complexities or tensions among the sources to indicate a sophistication of thought. The response does not situate the argument within a broader context, limiting the discussion to the immediate implications of historic preservation laws. The style is clear, but it is not consistently vivid or persuasive.

Sample: 1B**Score: 1-3-0****Thesis (0–1 points): 1**

The thesis is stated at the end of paragraph 1: “However, although keeping something from the past allows people to learn from past mistakes and hopefully stop repetition in history, ultimately, the Historical preservation law should be empead/stopped because change is apart of moving on to a better future, and because space is valuable for the generation of the present, and not past.” This takes a defensible position that addresses the prompt by claiming the value of historical preservation is not enough to justify laws mandating it.

Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 3

The response provides specific details from three sources (B, C, and D), all in the form of direct quotations. It uniformly offers evidence to support claims. In paragraph 3, for instance, the response claims that “the space that preservations are taking up, can be used to build things more useful for the people in the present.” It goes on to support this claim with evidence from two sources that show the perceived problems preservation causes (“needs for funding” and “relevancy” from Source D and “sustainability” from Source B) as impediments to freeing up space that could lead to meaningful change that “help the people of the present rather than the buildings of the past.” Even though the response uniformly offers specific evidence to explain claims, it only explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning. In paragraph 2, the response focuses on the importance of words and details from Source C to make the claim that preservation “stops the neighborhood in the past ... making change to be almost impossible,” which doesn’t support the line of reasoning established in the thesis that “change is apart of moving on to a better future.”

Question 1 (continued)**Sophistication (0–1 points): 0**

The response lacks a nuanced argument that explores the complexities or tensions across the sources. While the response does contain a line of reasoning that takes a position contrary to many of the sources, it addresses each source in isolation. Furthermore, the response does not consistently make effective rhetorical choices to strengthen the force or impact of its argument that the preservation of historical buildings impedes positive change for the present and future. This response also fails to demonstrate a vivid or persuasive style.

Sample: 1C**Score: 1-2-0****Thesis (0–1 points): 1**

Paragraph 1 is composed of a single sentence which serves as a thesis: “Due to the ever and always changing society that is the world of today, the value of laws that are put into place to preserve buildings of historic importance is relatively high as change is a necessity.” It presents a defensible claim about the necessity of change in regard to laws for historic building preservation.

Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 2

The response references three sources: Source D in paragraph 2 and Sources B and F in paragraph 3. Although there are no direct quotations, each reference does contain some specific evidence: “lack of funding,” “some of the standards, such as associated history or location,” and “a man sitting in a chair that has no immediately recognizable important features.” The response also contains simplistic explanations that do not strengthen the argument, such as the following explanation found in paragraph 2: “Because of these challenges that are present when going through the process of preservation for buildings that are of historic value, putting laws into place that support that should be of high value and importance.”

Additionally, no line of reasoning is established in the response. Paragraphs 2 and 3 each begin with a straightforward claim—“The value of preservation laws for historic buildings is high”—but the response does not explain how these claims connect to the thesis. Although the ending sentence of each paragraph makes a reference to the thesis, the connection is not explained.

Sophistication (0–1 points): 0

The rhetorical choices are not particularly effective, relying heavily on repetitive structures (“The value of historic preservation laws is” or “This is why there is high value”). The response also does not explore complexities or tensions between the sources: in paragraph 3, the response references Sources B and F to support its thesis, but the response does not address the implications or limitations of the sources, nor does it situate them in any context broader than that contained within the sources themselves.