



Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2024 AP[®] English Language and Composition Set 2

Free-Response Questions

• Number of Students Scored	597,097		
• Number of Readers	2,937		
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	58,358	9.8
	4	127,676	21.4
	3	140,253	23.5
	2	171,865	28.8
	1	98,945	16.6
• Global Mean	2.79		

The following comments on the 2024 free-response questions for AP[®] English Language and Composition were written by the Chief Reader, Akua Duku Anokye, Associate Professor, Arizona State University. They give an overview of each free-response question and of how students performed on the question, including typical student errors. General comments regarding the skills and content that students frequently have the most problems with are included. Some suggestions for improving student preparation in these areas are also provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend a College Board workshop to learn strategies for improving student performance in specific areas.

Question 1

Task: Synthesis

Topic: Food Trucks

Max Score: 6

Mean Score: 3.56

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

Students responding to this question were expected to read six sources on the topic of mobile food service establishments and then write an essay that synthesized material from at least three of the sources and developed their position on the most important factors for cities to consider when regulating mobile food service establishments. 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 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.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

This year's synthesis question asked students to develop a position on the most important factors for cities to consider when regulating mobile food service establishments. Because this is such an accessible topic, nearly every student had something to say, as evidenced by few blank responses. However, identifying specifically what the prompt asked of them presented a challenge for a number of students. Rather than addressing food truck regulations from the perspective of cities, many responses focused more narrowly on food trucks in isolation, as in this central claim: "While food trucks should obtain licenses and certificates, it is true that food trucks should be able to park closer to certain locations without having to fight to park and they should be able to get the help to allow the industry to grow." Only a few of these responses went on to discuss factors worthy of concern by cities considering regulation, broadening the context enough to produce a defensible thesis which addresses the prompt.

The responses drew from all six sources fairly equally, indicating that each was accessible and appealing. In keeping with a recent trend, students who relied less on direct quotation, instead paraphrasing or clearly referencing ideas from source material, often produced more cohesive lines of reasoning than those who relied heavily on direct quotation. Many of the stronger essays juxtaposed food truck regulations in New Orleans with those in Baltimore, drawing material from Sources B and D as examples of factors ranging from economic interests to public health and safety. Though many used the visual sources effectively, some students took liberties with them, situating the graphic data from Source C in the context of Covid-19 and interpreting the Source E cartoon as a call for things like public safety.

Many students demonstrated proficiency with reasoning and organization, one of the Big Ideas in the Course Framework. Nearly all students recognized the prompt's directive to offer a central claim of value. The more sophisticated responses also inferred in invitation for a claim of policy, as in this thesis: "Competition between food trucks and restaurants can improve quality of food, promote community and

improve the economy only if and when cities create thoughtful regulations.” Many of these followed a convincing line of reasoning by concluding with new claims of value and policy, demonstrating additional rhetorical skill with claims and evidence, another of the big ideas.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaker responses took a position on the topic without responding to the task, often arguing in favor of food trucks or restaurants rather than evaluating factors worthy of consideration by cities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger responses presented a clear stance on the topic while also responding to the task. One response argued: “As the mobile food industry begins to evolve, it is extremely important that cities implement certain regulations on food trucks. Some of these restrictions may include the proximity to other restaurants, or the extent to which the features on food trucks can be manipulated outside of a standard truck in order to ensure that traditional restaurants are not being dominated and pushed out of their business.” These defensible claims establish two forms of coexistence with restaurants as important factors for cities to consider when regulating food trucks.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using sources instead of selecting evidence from source material, while less common than in years past, was still a trait of less successful responses. These often began each body paragraph by stating “In Source A, Linda Baker says,” which resulted in a weaker line of reasoning, offering interpretive summaries of the sources with little to no analytical explanation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More high scoring responses demonstrated the ability to read synthetically, organizing a line of reasoning by recurring concepts drawn from across the sources. Economic interests, tourism, food diversity, and entrepreneurial opportunities were frequent considerations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less successful responses situated the argument in a narrower context instead of a broader one by focusing on factors for consideration by food truck or restaurant owners, not cities. Some shifted between the two without ever considering the larger civic perspective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger responses situated their arguments in a broader context, often drawn from careful reading of the sources, for example: “Since food trucks have only recently become popular in cities, it is all the more important that rules and restrictions are put in place by cities as soon as possible in order to prevent any unfair conditions for restaurants that have been established much longer than mobile food services.” This concluding claim situated the argument in the broader context of time.

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

The synthesis task is designed to ensure students learn to situate themselves in an ongoing public discourse by reading multiple perspectives on a topic and using what they learn from their reading to develop an informed personal opinion. Mainstream and social media feature a wide range of informed and uninformed opinions, so teachers can serve students well with instruction on media literacy. Learning how to produce effective research-based arguments and, more importantly, the value of such arguments to society, promotes strong academic writing and engaged citizenry at the same time.

In order to succeed on the Synthesis FRQ, students should be able to differentiate between the topic and the task. An appealing topic like this year's can work against rhetorical thinking as students with strong pre-existing opinions will often simply argue for or against it. Teachers can help students recognize the question(s) surrounding an issue and learn to employ claims of fact, value, and policy interchangeably and effectively.

Teachers should encourage students to begin synthesizing *as they read* source material, not merely *as they draft*. Synthetic reading occurs as students identify recurring thematic concepts across sources. Competition with brick-and-mortar establishments, for example, is discussed in sources A and F on this year's exam. Students might then use these themes to build a conceptual line of reasoning rather than a more formulaic source-driven one. Conceptual organization allows students to synthesize information from multiple sources in support of each reason, enhancing cohesion within and between body paragraphs.

Stronger responses were able to see the nuance in the issue and thus avoided a binary approach to the topic. Teachers should encourage students to avoid simply arguing for or against an issue, promoting critical thinking about the range of possible positions. Stasis theory can be an approach teachers utilize to help students see the rhetorical significance of an issue.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- Teachers will find example responses for this free-response question (FRQ) on the [AP Central AP English Language and Composition Exam page](#), along with scoring notes and specific commentary explaining why each point was or was not earned.
- The AP English Language and Composition [Course and Exam Description](#) (CED) includes a diverse collection of resources, including the Instructional Approaches section, which has a dedicated description of key questions and activities to guide instruction for the Synthesis FRQ. Additionally, pages 87–88 of the CED define synthesis and how teachers might approach the task with students.
- Teachers will find formative assessment practice for Synthesis in Unit 3, Unit 6, and Unit 9 [AP Classroom Progress Checks](#). These FRQs are scaffolded to provide students support as they practice synthesizing sources and constructing their own argumentation. Specifically, the Unit 3 FRQ Progress Check breaks the Synthesis task into bite-size pieces to guide students into the development of a response.
- Teachers may also make use of the released [Synthesis FRQs in the AP Classroom Question Bank](#) as a part of classroom practice for students. Simply filter the Question Type for FRQ: Synthesis. If interested in providing students practice with a factors-style Synthesis prompt, there are several

Synthesis FRQs that replicate this task: “English as Language of Science_Synthesis FRQ,” “Light Pollution,” and “Locavores.”

- Many of the [AP Daily Videos](#) located in AP Classroom will support building students’ skills specifically for the Synthesis FRQ. The videos that accompany Units 3, 6, and 9 are particularly useful for students who need practice for this FRQ. Listed below are some of the AP Daily videos that offer a range of entry points for students who are working to develop and refine their Synthesis skills.
 - Unit 3: Skill 4.A Daily Video 2
 - This video advises students how to break down the Synthesis prompt and features a factors-based Synthesis task. Beyond providing ideas for how to approach the Synthesis prompt, this video will guide students to clearly identify the task.
 - Unit 7: Skill 2.A Daily Video 2
 - This video provides instruction on how to construct a conclusion, something that is addressed in the “Advice to Teachers” section of this report. The video focuses on conclusions in a Synthesis essay and features a factors-type prompt as an example.
 - Practice Session 4: FRQ (Question 1: Synthesis)
 - A common feature of high-scoring Synthesis essays is exploring the relationship between sources. Identifying thematic concepts across sources is addressed in this video, which provides strategies for students to use while reading sources to aid true synthesis of ideas.

Question 2

Task: Rhetorical Analysis

Topic: Simu Liu Memoir

Max Score: 6

Mean Score: 3.38

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The students responding to this question were instructed to read a portion of Simu Liu’s memoir, *We Were Dreamers: An Immigrant Superhero Origin Story*, which explores Liu’s personal experiences as a Chinese immigrant in Canada, particularly focusing on his upbringing. Liu’s parents moved to Canada from China when he was a baby, and he was brought up by his grandparents. The students were asked to develop a thesis that analyzes the author’s use of rhetorical choices, providing relevant evidence to support their assertions. Additionally, they were assigned to explain how the evidence they selected reinforces their line of reasoning, demonstrating an understanding of the rhetorical situation, and utilizing proper grammar and punctuation to express their viewpoints effectively.

As per the Course and Exam Description—students were expected to be able to read and understand the rhetorical situation and address the strategic choices related to that rhetorical situation, explain how the writer/speaker’s rhetorical choices contributed to the purpose of the address, identify and describe their claims, and analyze and select the appropriate evidence to support their claims.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

The students regarded the memoir as highly comprehensible, with numerous individuals relating to it as the target audience. Certain astute students observed that the excerpt included mentions of immigrant achievements and/or parent/child relationships, even though their limited understanding of the wider rhetorical context did not impede their capacity to effectively analyze the prompt. Moreover, the more thorough responses acknowledged the significance of Liu’s memoir in its entirety.

Liu’s memoir does not rely heavily on rhetorical devices, yet many students still focused their responses on identifying specific devices. The most recognized ones included repetition, parallelism, anaphora, appeals to ethos and pathos, personal anecdotes, tonal shifts, and various types of diction (such as inspiring, common, and hopeful diction). Essays that concentrated on traditional rhetorical devices did not perform any better or worse than those that took a more comprehensive approach to the speaker’s choices. Some essays even combined traditional devices with broader choices, like “establishing credibility, employing parallelism, and appealing to their sensibilities to evoke desire and sensitivity to immigrants.” Overall, students were able to recognize decisions Liu made and reveal an understanding of their rhetorical purpose: “Without knowing it, the audience becomes more inclined to support immigrants as they become more emotionally attached to Liu as he appeals to pathos. The juxtaposition in his memoir is used to quickly change the emotions of the audience resulting in immense vulnerability that Liu exploits to gain the audiences support for not only him, as a Chinese immigrant, but for the immigrant community as a whole.”

Liu’s memoir presents a strong and logical argument, as evidenced by many students who discussed his shifts in purpose and tone at different points: starting with his narrative on the immigrant experience; then acknowledging the responsibility that comes with the right to contribute to society; transitioning to a message of hope; and finally recognizing students who are already working towards their dreams while

highlighting the rhetorical choices of the young protagonist. Numerous successful students structured their responses chronologically, following the framework of Liu’s excerpt.

To achieve the point in Row A of the scoring guidelines, responses were required to present a defensible thesis that examines the writer’s rhetorical choices. A valid thesis should not only identify specific choices but also articulate a clear purpose or message. Students could earn the point by simply naming choices and referencing the message mentioned in the prompt without further explanation. However, the point was not granted if choices were listed without any mention of purpose or with vague statements like “to get his point across” or “to convey his message.” Thesis statements were commonly found within two consecutive sentences, typically in the first paragraph, but also in the conclusion.

Many of the responses that earned the point in Row C did so by delving into the significance of analysis within the rhetorical context. These responses explored how the rhetorical choices were pertinent to the specific audience and moment in question. Notably, one response highlighted the effectiveness of Liu’s choices by analyzing recent events, demonstrating a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation: “While Liu found success in Canada and has since become a well-acclaimed actor, he shows through his memoir that the heartbreak of abandoning his own culture and the deep divide between him and his own family, foreign to him, have left a significant impact on his life, as it has for many immigrants in the same boat.” By returning to this notion of the experience for immigrants, the response demonstrates a complex understanding of the passage’s rhetorical situation.

Numerous responses highlighted Liu’s intentions and provided substantial evidence of his rhetorical strategies yet fell short of achieving the sophistication point due to a lack of in-depth exploration of the passage’s complexities and tensions. While many responses grasped Liu’s rhetorical situation, they failed to explicitly explain the significance or relevance of the identified rhetorical choices, unless Liu himself had already highlighted them in his own words (e.g., through anecdotes).

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses failed to show sufficient capacity to identify and analyze rhetorical choices. Some responses provided examples that did not consistently reflect the specified devices, and students did not adequately explain their relevance to Liu’s memoirs. These responses predominantly offered broad evidence; for instance, “In stanza 6, the narrator expresses feeling compelled to relocate to Canada and pretending to accept the situation (lines 5-6).” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The responses that exhibited strength consistently and effectively explained the reasons behind Liu’s deliberate repetition of specific words, phrases, or ideas in their analysis. They skillfully connected the impact of the linguistic choice to the purpose or message that the response identified as Liu’s intention. For instance, one response highlighted how the instances of deviating from the familiar Chinese language supported the overarching “message of heartbreak” and shed light on the challenges associated with cultural transformation. Later, the response astutely examined the significance of the terms “apparently” and “this man,” revealing the author’s profound sense of “otherness” towards his father.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate responses were characterized by a lack of analysis, as they simply presented quotes without any accompanying analysis or commentary to clarify their relevance to the argument. The discussion was overly simplistic and challenging to comprehend due to the absence of supporting evidence. Moreover, the commentary provided for the evidence was insufficient in providing a thorough explanation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger essays went beyond providing a single direct reference to the memoir and instead included multiple quotes and paraphrased references. Furthermore, essays like these also offered explanations about how the evidence supports the overall line of reasoning by analyzing specific details. For instance, one response states, “Even the Mandarin characters are used here, showing the drastic shift between the two languages which has been demanded of him. This is why he continues using Mandarin throughout his piece; though he is only a small child with little room to speak for himself and is forced to prepare himself to emigrate by way of flashcards and daydreaming, like his grandparents do, about the potential joys of Canada, he works to maintain the small shred of familiarity he has with his homeland and his culture in spite of an alien experience, emphasizing the sadness and heartbreak one feels when forced to give up a piece of oneself which is integral to one’s identity—in this case, his language, his culture, and his country.” This specific example from the text is accompanied by commentary that directly connects to the argument being made about the emotions of heartbreak and isolation.

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

It would be advantageous for students to develop their skills in conducting in-depth analysis. Educators can implement a strategy where students are mandated to produce three to five sentences dissecting a specific element or rhetorical decision within a work being examined. Although challenging for some inexperienced writers, consistent practice over time can assist students in moving past superficial observations and delving into more profound and perceptive interpretations.

Consequently, mastering the art of incorporating quotations is an essential skill for students to hone. By doing so, students can reduce their dependence on the exact words of the speaker and instead cultivate their own insights in their responses, thereby enhancing their ability to provide commentary. Additionally, students can enhance their writing by practicing paraphrasing, enabling them to reference extensive evidence without directly quoting lengthy passages. This approach allows students the opportunity to dedicate time and space to analyzing evidence. It is crucial for students to not only include the speaker's words in their writing but also to focus on the way the speaker communicates (the choices they make) and the reasons behind their communication (the impact of those choices on the audience to achieve a specific purpose). Offering sentence starters as a support mechanism for instruction could prove beneficial. Instructing students to incorporate the phrase "in order to" when discussing evidence or an author's rhetorical decisions will help them link these choices to the intended purpose, thereby enhancing their analysis's depth.

To assist students in developing their logical thinking, educators can encourage them to engage in exercises that involve the use of transitions within and between ideas presented in a paragraph. This approach helps to establish a cohesive link between ideas, thereby enhancing the clarity and strength of their reasoning. Additionally, offering sentence frames as a supportive instructional tool can yield positive outcomes.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- Teachers will find example responses for this free-response question (FRQ) on the [AP Central AP English Language and Composition Exam page](#), along with scoring notes and specific commentary explaining why each point was or was not earned.
- The AP English Language and Composition [Course and Exam Description](#) (CED) includes a diverse collection of resources, including the Instructional Approaches section, which has a dedicated description of approaches for the Rhetorical Analysis FRQ.
- Teachers will find formative assessment practice for Rhetorical Analysis in Unit 1, Unit 4, and Unit 7 [AP Classroom Progress Checks](#). These FRQs are scaffolded to provide students support as they practice examining the rhetorical situation and rhetorical choices that authors/speakers employ.
- Teachers may also make use of the released [Rhetorical Analysis FRQs in the AP Classroom Question Bank](#) as a part of classroom practice for students. Simply filter the Question Type for FRQ: Rhetorical Analysis. To practice rhetorical analysis with pieces like the memoir featured on this year's FRQ 2, teachers might consider using the following prompts, all of which have a more narrative style: "Erdrich 2018 Balancing Acts Excerpt," "Eudora Welty 1983 One Writer's Beginnings," and "Woolf Memoir Moments of Being."

- Many of the [AP Daily Videos](#) located in AP Classroom will support building students' skills specifically for the Rhetorical Analysis FRQ. Listed below are some of the AP Daily videos that offer a range of entry points for students who are working to develop and refine their Rhetorical Analysis skills.
 - Practice Session 5: FRQ (Question 2: Rhetorical Analysis)
 - One recommendation in the Chief Reader Report is to encourage students to go beyond merely restating the prompt in their thesis. This video instructs students how to read the passage in order to articulate a larger message.
 - Unit 3: Skill 6.A Daily Video 3
 - Another feature of high-scoring essays, according to the “Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps” table, is connecting a rhetorical choice to the writer’s message. This video provides concrete strategies to help students more fully analyze the writer’s choices.
 - Unit 7: Skill 3.C Daily Video 1
 - This video presents how to identify complexity within a passage by exploring how the message and choices evolve from the beginning to the end of the text, which is an organizational structure many students followed this year.

Question 3

Task: Argument

Topic: Jimmy Santiago Baca on the value of possessions

Max Score: 6

Mean Score: 3.40

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

Students responding to this question were expected to read a Jimmy Santiago Baca quote on possessions and write a response that argued their position on the extent to which Baca’s claim about the value of possessions is valid. Students were expected to respond to the prompt with a thesis that presented a defensible position; provide evidence to support their line of reasoning; explain how the evidence supported their line of reasoning; and use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating their argument.

As per the Course and Exam Description, students were expected to be able to select evidence to develop and refine their claims, use appropriate approaches of organization and reasoning to support their arguments, and make stylistic choices that advance the argument.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

This year’s argument question asked students to respond to the following prompt: “In a 2019 interview, award-winning poet and memoirist Jimmy Santiago Baca asserted: ‘In America we value possessions. We would much rather talk about a new car than talk about a story that happened between grandfather and me. We’d much rather get on the computer and play video games and enact some cataclysmic epic than to talk about the epics in our own lives.’ Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Baca’s claim about the value of possessions is valid.”

Most students were able to develop defensible thesis statements. Stronger responses identified nuance within Baca’s claim, such as one response that claimed, “And while Americans may place great value in their material possessions, that is not to say that value of equal or even greater stock is placed on the things that aren’t as material. Despite the fact that the landscape of society today may lead some to believe that Americans only value their possessions, one cannot dismiss the fact that so many Americans place greater value in their experiences, their families, and their own stories than the simple nature of their material possessions.”

The prompt was also highly accessible and gave the students autonomy to select evidence that was relevant to them and in which they felt informed and knowledgeable. A response to any portion of Baca’s claim (the value of possessions to Americans, desire to discuss possessions over experiences, desire to “enact some cataclysmic” epics vs talking about personal epics) was sufficient and allowed students to support positions with varied and insightful pieces of evidence—such as technology, video games, personal experiences with relationships, popular trends like Stanley cups, celebrity wealth, and social media influence—that students have familiarity with and feel comfortable describing.

Many responses utilized historical events as evidence such as the Roaring Twenties and the Cold War. In addition to history, many responses used personal experiences including their own technology addictions, regrets they have for prioritizing technology over relationships with people who are now deceased, and their own desire for more meaningful relationships in place of rampant consumerism and the American Dream.

Responses also drew on fiction sources, including *The Great Gatsby* and *Of Mice and Men* as well as popular movies and TV shows. Weaker responses provided mostly vague evidence and struggled connecting their evidence to their argument. The responses would also often provide summary of the evidence or topic rather than commentary. As a result, these responses struggled to develop a line of reasoning. Stronger responses consistently connected each piece of evidence to their argument with adequate commentary, creating a strong line of reasoning.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaker responses often attempted to agree or disagree with Baca and did not try to further the argument or connect their evidence meaningfully. For example, “I personally think that to an extent, Beca’s claim is valid about the value of possessions, but there is definitely some room for improvement on her thoughts and ideas to help people focus more.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger responses recognized the issue’s complexity and tension and were able to situate their unique position in this broader context. For example, “Overall, Baca’s claim about the United states is right, and in this age, because of our rampant consumerism, advertiser culture, and effects of social media, the citizens of the US all put superficial satsafaction over personal fuffillment and action.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students could provide evidence, but weaker responses struggled to provide adequate, specific evidence. The main body paragraph of one response, for example, presented three circumstances (government, court cases, and a wealthy neighbor) to support the assertion that not everyone values possessions. However, the brief examples focused on a summary of the evidence rather than specific details: “When looking at this country, possessions are not always of the highest value. For example, when looking at this country’s governement, decisions are not made to benefit the people who’s possession outeigh the value of their opposition’s possession.” The example is broad and does not provide specific details to explain how it supports the assertion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger responses were able to offer specific details to build an argument. One response provided evidence about the 1920s, an age of consumerism, noting “The roaring twenties had people caught up in a lavish life, buying whatever they could with the new innovation of buying on credit, and people got caught up in owning possessions.” The response further discussed the rise of technology today with a focus on having the newest phones. “It was just 4 or so years ago when I got my first phone, an iPhone XR. I remember how great it felt to finally have a phone, and a new one at that, and finally feeling like I fit in with all my friends, who had phones before me. However, this honeymoon period was short lived, as a few months later the iPhone 11 came out, the first iPhone with multiple cameras, and already I began to feel like my phone was oudated.”

- Weaker responses struggled to explain or connect the evidence to a line of reasoning. For example, the above mentioned response failed to explain the connections of government, court cases, and a wealthy neighbor, only stating, “This is proof that America does not always favor the people with the higher valued possessions,” thus no clear line of reasoning was established.

- Stronger responses were also better able to connect evidence clearly. One response used specific commentary to explicitly connect the evidence to the thesis and advance the line of reasoning: “in the US it has gone way too far,” expertly highlighting the duality of consumerism. The response further connected to the rise of technology, noting it leads us to “feel insufficient if we don’t stay perfectly up to date.” This continued the line of reasoning introduced in the first paragraph about “hyper fixation on the material goods” and “advertiser culture.” Finally, the response concluded this line of reasoning by stating: “Overall, our superficial society drives hyperconsumerism, which makes us want to fit in with our fellow up to date contemporaries, which strips meaning from our life by making us hooked on meaningless social media so we can fit in better.”

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

Teachers can help their students by putting more focus on what it means to develop a line of reasoning. Place focus on line of reasoning through conducting close readings of various nonfiction genres. For example, teach students that the response should move beyond mere identification of an example and instead explore how and why it supports the line of reasoning. Help students concretely define how to construct “commentary” that supports a line of reasoning and allow them to practice writing commentary in their own arguments.

The best essays often come from students who can speak very *specifically* about historical and/or current events. Teachers may implement a routine where students consistently refine their knowledge in those areas and practice writing in class and increase student engagement in this routine by providing opportunities for student choice.

Allowing students time to practice identifying the complexities of an issue and putting those tensions into clear language helps them distinguish binary thinking from critical thinking. This can be accomplished through class discussions, debates, as well as reading/analyzing a variety of published arguments for effective organizational structure, common types of evidence used in various fields, and intentional elements of persuasion used across a variety of argumentative texts.

Teachers can provide opportunities for students to explore ideas and issues from multiple perspectives, so they can see and explore how they fit into a broader cultural context. For example, teachers can provide opportunities to work with various types of evidence. They can remind students that the type of evidence does not matter as long as it is done well, so they should not discount the value of personal anecdotes. Take the opportunity to reinforce the importance of avoiding obscure examples and allow opportunities for

students to practice providing enough context/explanation so the link to the prompt and the claim is clear. Track types of “relevant” evidence throughout a text set (or 2) of sample essays. Color-code or add to a chart to analyze patterns. Rank examples of evidence from most to least effective.

Finally, it is good to address some of the more common grammar and stylistic issues found in student responses by practicing pacing (one extra-long paragraph followed by one or more underdeveloped paragraphs), using rhetorical questions sparingly, reviewing synonyms/antonyms for disagree/agree, and stressing the importance of maintaining a scholarly/academic tone to avoid a tangential-based argument.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- Teachers will find example responses for this free-response question (FRQ) on the [AP Central AP English Language and Composition Exam page](#), along with scoring notes and specific commentary explaining why each point was or was not earned.
- The AP English Language and Composition [Course and Exam Description](#) (CED) includes a diverse collection of resources, including the Instructional Approaches section, which has a dedicated description of approaches for the Argument FRQ. Additionally, page 86 of the CED defines argument and how teachers might approach the task with students.
- Teachers will find formative assessment practice for Argument in Unit 2, Unit 5, and Unit 8 [AP Classroom Progress Checks](#). These FRQs are scaffolded to provide students support as they practice synthesizing sources and constructing their own argumentation.
- Teachers may also make use of the released [Argument FRQs in the AP Classroom Question Bank](#) as a part of classroom practice for students. Simply filter the Question Type for FRQ: Argument. If interested in providing students practice with prompts in which personal anecdotes or hypotheticals are relevant, there are several Argument FRQs in the AP Classroom Question Bank that replicate this task: “Value of Exploring the Unknown,” “Grit,” “Value of Perfection” and “Pursuit of Happiness.”
- Many of the [AP Daily Videos](#) located in AP Classroom will support building students’ skills specifically for the Argument FRQ. Listed below are some of the AP Daily videos that offer a range of entry points for students who are working to develop and refine their Argument skills.
 - Unit 4: Skill 6.C Daily Video 2
 - This video discusses personal and hypothetical examples as a sufficient way to support a claim. It focuses on advancing an argument through definition and description, two modes that rely heavily on anecdotal evidence like this year’s prompt.
 - Unit 5: Skill 6.A Daily Video 2
 - While explaining how body paragraphs contribute to a line of reasoning, this video explores how to strengthen a body paragraph by including multiple pieces of evidence and layers of commentary. It provides examples of a range of evidence, including historical and hypothetical, to support a claim.
 - Unit 7: Skill 4.C Daily Video 2
 - One challenge to the Argument FRQ is developing a complex position. To discourage a binary response to the prompt, this video addresses how to avoid absolute claims in the thesis but also body paragraphs.