



Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2024 AP[®] English Literature and Composition Set 2 Free-Response Questions

• Number of Students Scored	389,272		
• Number of Readers	1,815		
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	53,268	13.7
	4	104,672	26.9
	3	123,961	31.8
	2	64,223	16.5
	1	43,148	11.1
• Global Mean	3.16		

The following comments on the 2024 free-response questions for AP[®] Literature and Composition were written by the Chief Reader, Steve Price, Mississippi College, assisted by Exam Leader Kathy Keyes and the following reading leaders: Question 1, Exam Leaders Christine De Vinne and Kim Windsor, and Question Leader Jason Coats; Question 2, Exam Leaders Matt Heitzman and Celine Gomez, and Question Leader Christine Carson; and Question 3, Exam Leaders Eric Bishop and Brenda Buckley-Kuhn, and Question Leader John Beynon. 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: Poetry Analysis

Topic: George Moses Horton, “On Summer”

Max Score: 6

Mean Score: 3.23

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

For Question 1, the Poetry Analysis question, students were asked to read George Moses Horton’s poem “On Summer” and respond to the following prompt:

In George Moses Horton’s poem “On Summer,” published in 1829, the speaker describes multiple aspects of summer in a rural area. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Horton uses literary elements and techniques to develop a complex portrayal of the setting.

In a timed-writing situation and with an unfamiliar text, students were expected to complete three main tasks successfully:

Reading the poem involves more than simply understanding individual words and describing what happens. Students were expected to view the text specifically as a poem, recognizing literary elements and techniques in the context of poetry, and then analyzing how those techniques are used to shape the poem and its meaning. For example, in “On Summer,” students might identify and explore the use of metaphor (“fire begins to burn,” “The torrid flames again return,” “Let sportive children / carefully avoid the snare, / Which lurks beneath the smiling scene”); personification (“While plenty smiles on every tree,” “With rapture view the smiling fields”); or imagery (“thunders roll along the skies,” “The night-hawk / starts his note in evening air,” “The bee begins her ceaseless hum,” “See loaded vines with melons teem— / ‘Tis paradise to human sight”). Students could also use the repetitive structure of the poem to explore the complex portrayal of the setting, noticing how various figures are introduced, diversifying the natural setting with each new stanza (for instance, “The noisy insect,” “The bee,” “The mistress bird,” “The farmer,” “The burdened ox”). More advanced readers will notice in the prompt the emphasis on “multiple aspects of summer in the rural area” and recognize that the complexity of the setting comes from the variety and the inevitable contrasts found in particular spots, such as the sun-laden open field, the stream, and the plenteous orchard.

Analyzing the poem means taking the relevant elements that students identified in their reading and exploring how the parts function collectively to create the meaning of the work as a whole. In “On Summer,” students needed to consider how the parts “develop a complex portrayal of the setting.” Readers should know from the prompt that the poem contains “multiple aspects of summer” and will recognize that the setting is more interesting and multidimensional than they might expect it to be. They should also see a shift in the poem, from the “burn[ing]” and “flames” and “snare” of the first half to the “smiles” and “laden branches” of the second half. More advanced readers will recognize that the word “complex” is central to the prompt and look for and explore the shifting, contradictory, or paradoxical aspects of the poem. These students might lean into the variety of smaller settings within the overall rural landscape, exploring the impact of the contrasts amongst the sun-laden open field, the stream, and the plenteous orchard. Students aware of the poem’s complexity might also notice the conflicting terms and explore how “fire,” “thunders,” a “snare,” “dauntless rage,” etc., eventually lead to “smiles” and “paradise.” (A savvy reader, thinking of

“paradise” as an allusion, might also notice and consider the impact of details like “Perspiring Cancer” and “sweet Philomela.”)

Writing a well-written response means demonstrating a variety of skills. Students are asked to establish a thesis that shows understanding of “how Horton uses literary elements and techniques to develop a complex portrayal of the setting.” They build this defensible interpretation with specific, relevant evidence from the poem and through their own commentary that explains the connection between their argument and the evidence. The more successful responses build a line of reasoning that connects ideas and shows the relationships between them. In “On Summer,” students could create a line of reasoning that takes advantage of the structure of the poem and how it shifts from the initially brutal imagery of “fire,” “dread,” incessant noise, a “snare,” and “rage” to “laden branches,” “smiles on every tree,” and “paradise.” Students might also explore other contrasts, like the curious mixture of energy and stillness, the interactions (or lack thereof) between nature and humans, or the way labor is distributed differently across animals and humans. A well-written response is more than grammatically correct writing, and it should be noted that students are not expected to write a polished, revised essay in the limited time allotted for the exam.

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?

Overall, responses to Free-Response Question 1, the Poetry Analysis question, were solid. “On Summer” was an accessible poem, both in language and theme (even students not from North Carolina can appreciate how hot summer can be). Students generally understood the poem and how the “multiple aspects of summer in a rural area,” described in the prompt, were depicted in the poem itself. They generally recognized that their thesis should be a defensible claim about how Horton “develop[s] a complex portrayal of the setting” and constructed their theses appropriately. Students had ample thoughts to convey about the depiction of the Esteville setting. In particular:

- Most students were able to read and understand the narrative of the poem, that the speaker was describing “multiple aspects of summer in a rural area.” They identified a range of particular elements, including the diversity of animals (“night-hawk,” “noisy insect,” “bee,” “mistress bird,” etc.) and people (“sportive children” and “The farmer”) present in the setting.
- Many students recognized that one of the “multiple aspects” of the poem was the shifting nature of summer, from the “fire” that “begins to burn” to the “dauntless rage” exuded by the “burdened ox” to the new abundance of the “smiling fields.”
- Relatedly, some of the more astute readers recognized that “multiple aspects” also came from the settings-within-the-setting—that “summer in a rural area” could include a sun-laden field, an alluringly green area with “the snare,” the “fertile borders, near the stream” (a really savvy student could do a lot with the liminal spaces of the setting), and the “smiling fields.” Students perform better when they avoid oversimplifying the concept of the prompt, in this case the setting, as static and instead see the concept as having potential for dynamic shifts and comprised of a variety of elements.
- Most students had a thesis about how Horton uses literary elements and techniques to develop a complex portrayal of the setting. Some students, however, had difficulty arguing more than a generic thesis, often along the lines that the setting differed or that the setting changed. Students showed room for improvement in constructing precise, nuanced arguments (for instance, exploring how the conflicting elements of the setting co-exist or analyzing how harsh and even grotesque elements of nature can transition into abundant beauty).
- Most students were able to identify at least one literary element in the poem, with metaphor, personification, and imagery the most frequently discussed.

- Most students selected evidence, including direct quotations, to support their exploration of the setting and their thesis. There’s opportunity, though, for students to analyze evidence more closely, including at the word level. For instance, while students commonly noted the sounds and auditory imagery in the first third of the poem, the sounds are differentiated at the word-level (the “thunders roll along the skies,” “Perspiring Cancer ... roars terrific,” “The night-hawk ... starts his note in evening air,” the “noisy insect” is instructed to “start thy drum,” and “The bee begins her ceaseless hum”), offering ample opportunity for students to analyze the subtle differences.
- Some students struggled with interpreting details of the poem within the 1829 context. For instance, a detail like the “Esteville fire begins to burn” was misinterpreted as a signifier of climate change or even an indication of arson. Students will benefit from being more aware of the importance of context and how the prompt will provide them with necessary information to better understand the context. In “On Summer,” “the fire” can confidently be read in a historical and metaphorical sense, as the conventional strength of the sun during summer—rather than reading it as we might in a 2024 context.
- There’s opportunity for students to demonstrate their sophisticated thinking. In “On Summer,” two paths seem most accessible. First, students could focus more on tension in the poem, for example the instances of energy and peacefulness or the ways in which harsh and grotesque elements lead to abundance and peacefulness. Second, and relatedly, students might focus on situating their argument in a broader context, in this case, connecting the rural setting to maturation and growth or exploring how a certain level of energy is required for summer activities but might be overdone to a point of exhaustion and pain (without moderation, the abundance of summer can become destructive).

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"> • Most students had a thesis about how Horton uses literary elements and techniques to develop a complex portrayal of the setting. Some students, however, had difficulty arguing more than a generic thesis and would benefit from practice constructing more precise, nuanced arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Through use of intense imagery and personification, as well as a shift in tone, the speaker illustrates the complex combination of both fearsome power and delicate beauty found in the important and active season for the farm, ultimately reflecting the contrast between the everyday buzz of small life forms and the strong, steady permanence of nature as a whole.” • “This is shown in the vibrant and descriptive work of ‘On Summer’ which reveals a complex portrayal of how nature is a powerful and influential figure that has vast effects on the everyday life of creatures and people on a farm which the author shows by mainly using summer as a symbol for change.”

- Most students included evidence, including direct quotations, to support their exploration of the setting and to develop their thesis. There's opportunity, though, for students to analyze evidence more closely, including at the word level.
- “Prior to the shift in lines 36–37, the speaker uses personification in describing both the natural changes in weather and the instinctual reactions of various animals on the farm in order to cast a forboding yet awe-inspiring tone over the idea of summer’s approach. In the first line, the start of summer is introduced with the announcement of ‘fire begin[ning] to burn,’ providing both a literal description of the fires that the fields are exposed to in hotter months as well as a figurative expression of the forthcoming heat and intensity of summer. The poem progresses alongside the chronological changes of the season, with the threat behind summer’s approach reinforced through ominous, almost predatory descriptions of the weather. Personifying actions such as ‘roars terrific’ and ‘lurks beneath’ that are scattered throughout the mentioning of the animals’ actions give a sense of inescapability. This attention towards tiny detail in the descriptions of natural activity immerse one completely in the workings of the natural world, with only small mentions of other perspectives—like that of ‘sportive children ... frisking o’er the green’—to provide brief perspective before returning to the intensity of nature viewed up-close.”
- “Although the animals are depicted performing animal-like behaviour, there is a distinct human quality to them. A bee ‘begins her ceaseless hum’ (17) and feels ‘delight’ when ‘she stores her comb’ (19). Here the bee is given the human qualities of an ambition and the feelings of pride when they are accomplished. Meanwhile a bird approaches her responsibility of motherhood with human-like care and quality. She ‘assumes her nest’ (25) and ‘patient waits her young to see’ (28). The thoughtfulness in which the bird thinks about its young is reminiscent of a human mother taking care of her children. Perscribing human characteristics to animals serves to endear the animals to the humans.”
- “Secondly, the author uses vivid imagery to depict the vast change in the setting that summer causes to happen. The author describes the melodic rythm of the insects and compares their rythm to a ‘drum’ which indicate how the sound

around the farm changes around summer time (13). The author also describes ‘lamp-like bugs’ which light the night sky which is another indication of how even the color changes in the farm due to summer which further emphasizes the vast and influential effects that summer has on the setting.”

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?

- 1. Embrace What We Don’t Know.** One of the things I like about George Moses Horton’s “On Summer” is all of the questions it left me with. Summer leads to abundant yields of grain in the “smiling fields;” I understand that part. But *how* that process plays out in the poem is fascinating to me and leaves me filled with plenty of questions, like: How can so much fire lead to growth? Why is so much noise—incessant noise at times—necessary for natural growth? And what does that noise produce or why is it necessary? Despite the growth and “smiles,” what role does the pain and even grotesqueness play, like the “snare” and the “dauntless rage” of the ox? It seems we—students included—can leverage those questions into better overall understanding of the poem. We need to embrace those spots where we’re left shaking our heads in confusion.

To do that: After first reading a poem, ask students to highlight spots they find confusing or where they have questions. Ask students to put a big question mark in the margin and encourage them not to be shy with their uncertainty. In “On Summer,” I would definitely highlight that “dauntless rage,” an image I can’t get out of my head. Students can then pair up and discuss each other’s challenging parts of the text. The class can also discuss the confusing parts, with the goal of collaboratively gaining understanding. The activity helps students embrace what they don’t initially know, be more comfortable with uncertainty, and build their confidence to explore these often-rich elements of a text.

- 2. Elevated Think–Pair–Share.** We all probably learned Think–Pair–Share back in our Methods of Teaching Literature class as undergraduates, and you may have since dismissed it as too basic an approach for the AP English Literature classroom. I think it can be elevated, though, and its simple design offers an easy-to-set-up foundation and opportunity for our students elevated (and experimental, risk-taking) thinking.

Start with a guiding question for the poem with which you’re working. For George Moses Horton’s “On Summer,” you might simply offer students a version of the prompt, like “How does Horton develop a complex portrayal of the setting?” or you might give them something more specific, like “How does all of the fire, burning, and heat function in Horton’s poem?”

Ask students to brainstorm individually for a minute or two (**Think**) before turning to a neighbor or talking in a small group (**Pair**). Then, shift to a class-wide discussion (**Share**). Encourage the students to focus on differences as they share and to discuss why they see things differently and which evidence contributes to their understanding, etc. Through these collaborative discussions, students can begin seeing and exploring complexities in the poem.

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

To better prepare students for the Poetry Analysis Free-Response Question, teachers may find the following resources helpful.

- Teachers may benefit from using the **Unit Guides** in the Course and Exam Description to pace and sequence their teaching of poetry analysis skills and to provide students with opportunities to practice these skills at increasing levels of difficulty and complexity.
- Students can develop their reading, analysis, and writing skills over the course of the year by practicing with the formative free-response questions in the **Progress Checks for Units 2, 5, and 8** on AP Classroom. Student performance on these formative assessments provides teachers with valuable data that can help inform their lesson planning throughout the year.
- **The AP Daily videos and AP Faculty Lecture videos for Units 2, 5, and 8** on AP Classroom can supplement teachers’ poetry analysis instruction, as well as provide remediation for individual students who may struggle with a particular skill.
 - These videos also examine how close readings of poetry at the word level can support students’ evidence analysis, a skill highlighted in the “Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps” column of the table above.
 - The **Faculty Lecture for Unit 5 (“A Brief Conversation on Contemporary Sonneteering”)**, for example, offers a close reading of three modern sonnets and explores the value of the sonnet form. Through watching this video, students can develop their understanding of how a close reading of a poem at the word level can strengthen their analysis of the evidence they select in support of their interpretation.
- Students can practice with summative free-response questions that appeared on previous AP English Literature and Composition exams when a teacher assigns a Poetry Analysis Free-Response Question from the **Question Bank** on AP Classroom. Teachers can simply filter the Question Type for FRQ: Poetry Analysis and/or for particular skills they’d like to have their students practice. These questions can be assigned as homework or as in-class assessments.
- **Student Samples, Scoring Guidelines, and Scoring Commentaries** for the Poetry Analysis Free-Response Question can be found on AP Central. The Scoring Commentaries clarify how the student samples earned the various points described in the Scoring Guidelines. Reviewing the samples and commentaries with students can help teachers illustrate the difference between the construction of solid arguments and that of more precise, nuanced arguments, an important distinction highlighted in the “Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps” column in the table above.

Question 2

Task: Prose Fiction Analysis

Topic: Jane Urquhart, *The Night Stages*

Max Score: 6

Mean Score: 3.29

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

For Question 2, the Prose Fiction Analysis question, students were asked to read an excerpt from Jane Urquhart’s novel *The Night Stages* and respond to the following prompt:

The following excerpt is from Jane Urquhart’s novel *The Night Stages*, published in 2015. In this passage, an artist named Kenneth is finishing a mural for a new airline terminal using the long-established medium of egg tempera, a paint made of egg yolk, pigment, and water. He thinks about the influences on his work and how his mural may be received. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Urquhart uses literary elements and techniques to convey Kenneth’s complex perspective as he completes his mural.

In a timed-writing situation and with an unfamiliar text, students were expected to complete three main tasks successfully:

Reading the prose passage means reading closely for both literary techniques and meaning, which can be an additional challenge for some students given the relative length and richness of the prose passage. Students were expected to view the text specifically as a prose passage, recognizing conventions particular to the genre, and then analyze how those techniques are used to shape the passage and its meaning. Students should read each prompt closely and pay attention to any background information offered. In this instance, the prompt includes details about Kenneth’s task as a painter (he’s “finishing a mural for a new airline terminal”) and information on “the long-established medium of egg tempera” (without this knowledge, students risk confusion in the passage itself, when Kenneth is cracking eggs and mixing the yolk with pigments; the background information also cues readers into the importance of the artistic process for Kenneth). In the *Night Stages* passage, readers looking for “Kenneth’s complex perspective as he completes his mural” might notice the importance of the setting—an airport terminal and a public space, where Kenneth ponders the fact that people might ignore his art. Readers might also notice the visual qualities of Kenneth’s mural, that it was “immense,” required thousands of eggs, and depicts an unusual image of “a child juggler” (which is open for more savvy readers to interpret). More advanced readers will notice the discussion of influences on Kenneth, such as a critic “telling him to keep things on the picture plane flat, two-dimensional” (advice that Kenneth ignores); Harding, a teacher who, according to the footnote, “cautioned Kenneth against appropriating the ideas, styles, and techniques of other artists”; and people he encountered while traveling through Europe (also clarified through a footnote). The passage is rich, offering readers much to consider in terms of “Kenneth’s complex perspective as he completes his mural.”

Analyzing the prose passage means taking the relevant parts that students identified in their reading and thinking about how the parts function collectively to create the meaning of the prose passage as a whole. In *The Night Stages*, students needed to consider how the parts convey “Kenneth’s complex perspective as he completes his mural.” The word “complex” is again central to the prompt, reminding students to look for and explore the shifting, contradictory, or paradoxical aspects of the prose passage. Most readers will

recognize the “facts” of the passage, the physical details of Kenneth’s mural (“the thirty-six four-by-six foot panels that would join together, like a huge puzzle, to form the immense mural”); the content of the mural (possibly noting that the final apple he paints “became spherical under his brush,” going against the advice of “the critic” who taught artists to stay two-dimensional); the details of painting with egg tempura, introduced in the prompt and described in more detail in the first and second paragraphs; and the setting, first on a scaffolding, as Kenneth finishes the mural, and then on the ground, where he reflects on the “noise, the workmen’s power tools and, in the odd moments when those were silent, the roar of planes arriving and departing.” More advanced readers will recognize that the word “complex” is central to the prompt and look for and explore the shifting, contradictory, or paradoxical aspects of the passage. These students might notice how Kenneth’s “immense” mural eventually looks “incredibly small” to him as he takes photographs for a friend, suggesting how Kenneth’s perception changes as he transitions from the process of creating art to looking at the product itself. They might also think about what Kenneth values in art (for instance, how art should be taught, the role of art, the role of the audience in art, and the importance of the artistic process).

Writing a well-written response to a prose passage again means that students demonstrate the ability to establish an overall thesis and build the argument through evidence and commentary, ideally constructing a line of reasoning that shows the complexity of their understanding. In writing about *The Night Stages*, students could create a line of reasoning that more or less follows the structure of the passage, beginning with Kenneth’s mural, then viewing the mural through the lenses of the people who have influenced his art (comparing/contrasting), and concluding with how Kenneth sees the mural existing after he leaves it, on its own, at the new airline terminal building. Students could also elevate the sophistication of that line of reasoning by situating their argument about Kenneth’s perspective in a broader context, such as how art should be taught, the role of art, the role of the audience in art, or the importance of the artistic process. A challenge of any prose passage lies in the amount of evidence that students must account for and analyze, a challenge certainly present in *The Night Stages*, given the ample details of Kenneth’s mural, artistic process, artistic influences, and reflective thinking at the end of the passage (in addition to needing to attend to important background information in both the prompt and the footnotes). The more successful responses discuss the passage thoroughly, with the exploration accounting for details across the full passage. It should again be noted that students are not expected to write a polished, revised essay in the allotted time but rather to engage in a process of thinking as they explore the passage and draft their response.

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?

Overall, responses to Free-Response Question 2, the Prose Fiction Analysis question, were solid. *The Night Stages* was a largely accessible passage in terms of the language and theme (personal development and growth). The subject matter—reflections on a large mural created through the artistic medium of egg tempura—required close attention to the prompt, footnotes, and passage, but students were up to the challenge. Students generally understood the passage and what it was literally describing, though they tended to discuss broader meaning and missed opportunities to look more closely at Kenneth’s complex perspective as he completes his mural. In particular:

- Most students were able to read and understand the overall narrative of the passage, recognizing that Kenneth was an artist completing a mural and that he was reflecting on his artistic influences (and perhaps questioning himself). Some students identified a shift in the passage, seeing the moment at the end when Kenneth reflects, “Still, what pleasure he had taken in the making of it,” as a turning point, when Kenneth transitions from considering the responses of others to enjoying his own personal accomplishment.

- Most students had a thesis about Kenneth’s perspective as he completes his mural. Often, however, the theses were oversimplified, focusing especially on the first half of the passage (before “he was on the ground” and considering the “independent life” of the mural). These arguments tended to see Kenneth as passionate or proud of the egg tempura method and to recognize that Kenneth’s teachers had impacted his art in some way. Similar to earlier observations about student responses to the Poetry Analysis question, there’s opportunity for students to respond to the Prose Fiction Analysis question with more precise, nuanced arguments (especially ones that consider the second half of the passage more) and to build the line of reasoning that connects the different ideas.
- More skilled students built a thesis around a shift in the passage, arguing that early in the passage, Kenneth focuses more on the responses of others to his personal accomplishments; after recognizing at the end that the mural has “its own independent life in the presence of an audience,” Kenneth then finds his own pleasure in the process of painting.
- Most students were able to identify at least one literary element in the poem, with textual details, diction, syntax, imagery, and the use of rhetorical questions the most frequently discussed. Point of view was a trouble spot for some students who confused it with “Kenneth’s complex perspective,” which was established as the focus in the prompt. Students who were able to distinguish between Kenneth’s own thoughts and those of the omniscient narrator were more successful in their analysis.
- Most students selected appropriate evidence, including direct quotations, to support their discussion of Kenneth’s perspective as he completes his mural and their thesis. There’s opportunity, though, for students to use a more varied range of evidence from the full passage. Students tended to rely on details from the first half of the passage, especially those related to the egg tempura method (perhaps cued into its importance by the prompt) and Kenneth’s artistic influences. Details from the second half of the passage, including when the mural takes on its own “independent life” and when Kenneth asks rhetorical questions about the role of art and audience, tended to be overlooked. (This is unfortunate, since the second half is also where the complexity of the passage develops.)
- Students showed room for improvement in demonstrating their sophisticated thinking. In *The Night Stages*, the path of broader context would seem to offer the most potential, since it’s part of the actual passage in the final paragraph. For instance, students could situate their argument about Kenneth’s complex perspective as he completes his mural within the context of how art should be taught, the role of art, the role of the audience in art, or the importance of the artistic process. Exploring tensions between Kenneth and his artistic predecessors (and even himself) is another viable path to sophistication.

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"> • Most students had a thesis about Kenneth’s perspective as he completes his mural. Often, however, the theses were oversimplified, focusing especially on the first half of the passage. There’s opportunity for students to construct more precise, nuanced arguments (especially ones that consider more of the second half of the passage). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “In this passage from <i>The Night Stages</i>, author Jane Urquhart uses rhetorical questions and juxtaposition in order to convey Kenneth’s contradicting desire to be noticed and want for freedom of expression, all in order to show how true freedom comes from freeing yourself from the expectations of others.” • “The literary elements present convey Kenneth’s complex perspective as he continues his mural.”

	<p>One literary element that conveys this perspective is imagery by showing the intricate details of Kenneth’s work through his own eyes; another literary element that helps convey the complexities of this perspective is personification by presenting the mural as its own being with its own experiences.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “In Jane Urquhart’s novel <i>The Night Stages</i>, Urquhart uses diction as well as metaphors to convey Kenneth’s affection for his work despite knowing it may be rejected by society as he completes his mural.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most students included evidence, including direct quotations, to support their discussion of Kenneth’s perspective as he completes his mural and to develop their thesis. Students tended to rely on details specifically from the first half of the passage and could benefit from using a more varied range of evidence from throughout the passage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “At the end of the passage, Urquhart uses two rhetorical questions regarding Kenneth’s audience and what they would ‘make of Flight and its Allegories?’ as well as if they would even notice it, or would ‘simply pass by it, preoccupied by the mysteries of their individual lives?’ These questions function as a way to show that despite Kenneth insisting that he doesn’t care what people think of his art, he still does wonder what their opinions might be. His primary purpose of making art is to fulfill an innate drive to create, and his primary pleasure comes from simply creating. However, these rhetorical questions are used indicate that he has not yet fully released himself from his desire for outside approval. He has come a long way from adhering to ‘cultural fashion,’ but his facade of not caring what others think is exposed by these questions. Kenneth is still thinking about what others think of him, so he is not yet truly free. He still desires to be noticed and a small part of him hopes that his ‘public art’ is not ‘ignored.’ This goes to show that although true freedom involves removing the pressures of others’ expectations from oneself, it is nearly impossible to live a life totally free of a desire for notice and appreciation. Due to this, people are always a work in progress, constantly working to fully free themselves from the desire for approval.” • “Additionally, Kenneth’s love for his work despite potential opposition to it is further highlighted through Urquhart’s use of a metaphor illustrating the large amount of people viewing Kenneth’s art. Urquhart’s description of Kenneth as still having ‘pleasure’ while creating

	<p>his art despite the ‘rivers’ of passengers ‘pouring’ and ‘flowing’ by his art that may simply ‘ignore’ it illustrates Kenneth as understanding people could disregard his art yet as still affectionate for his work. The metaphor of the passengers as ‘rivers’ that are ‘pouring’ and ‘flowing’ emphasizes the large size of the number of people viewing and judging Kenneth’s art, which highlights that society may simply ‘ignore’ and disregard it. Urquhart’s emphasis on the large amount of people potentially disregarding Kenneth’s art through his use of metaphor combined with his description of Kenneth as still finding ‘pleasure’ in the creation of it depicts Kenneth as affectionate for his work despite society’s potential opposition of it.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The personification within the excerpt conveys Kenneth’s view of the mural as its own being with its own experiences. This is obvious in paragraph 3 of the excerpt when Kenneth is taking photos of the mural for a friend; during this process, Kenneth describes the mural living on its own in front of an audience. This description shows Kenneth’s perspective regarding the mural and how he believes his art has a life of its own after it has been created. This personification can be explained by Kenneth’s painting style; in paragraph 1 it depicts Kenneth not stopping painting until he could imagine the weight of the apple in his hand, it is also described in this paragraph about how he was critiqued on his work and encourages to keep it two dimensional. The fact that he resented this critic and continued to paint until he could see his painting some to life explains his perspective of viewing his mural of having its own life and experiences separate to him.”
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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?

1. **Scaffolded Read Alouds:** One of things that struck me about the passage in Question 2 from Jane Urquhart’s *The Night Stages* was how rich the excerpt is in interpretive possibilities, including some pretty accessible paths for the line of reasoning and sophistication. For instance, the structure of the passage lends itself to line of reasoning—we see Kenneth’s art and then learn how he was influenced by his mentors; he then sees the art from a new perspective (as public art), which leads to his artistic

theory emerging. Sophistication also has some clear paths, like discussing Kenneth’s art from the broader context of artistic theory or exploring the tensions between his own art and what he was taught by his mentors.

For that reason, I think *The Night Stages* could be a really useful text down the road for classroom use, including as a mentor text with Scaffolded Read Alouds. I’m suggesting here that we apply the “I Do—We Do—You Do” model to Read Alouds, in order to mentor students on the thinking and reading processes necessary for line of reasoning and sophistication.

Read Alouds as a pedagogy have some useful “rules” that can assist us. (There are lots of examples of formal Read Aloud protocols on YouTube. Take a look.) First, teachers are encouraged to be authentic and read and think through the text in front of the students without preparation. And second, the reading is supposed to be authentic, which means that sometimes you’ll be “in the zone,” identifying important spots, offering smart observations, and connecting ideas. Sometimes ... you’ll hit a dead end and realize you’re off base. And that’s okay. Remember, sometimes we learn through what didn’t work. Let students see you persevering as a thinker as you show them how to continue exploring.

I would suggest having a hidden agenda in your Read Aloud, at least occasionally, which is to do it with the goal of illustrating for students a line of reasoning in Row B or an argument that would earn the sophistication point in Row C. Too many students believe that both the line of reasoning and sophistication magically appear, like readers mine for gold. Instead, I’d like for them to see that both a line of reasoning and sophistication are *constructed* by us as thinkers and writers—that we build both by how we comment on evidence, connect ideas, preview where we’ve been and where we’re going, etc. The Read Aloud shows students how to build a line of reasoning or construct a sophisticated argument.

After you demonstrate the Read Aloud yourself, of course, shift into doing it collaboratively, as a class exercise. And then hand it off to them to do individually, either in writing or paired up, verbally.

- 2. Bump-Up Row B:** I don’t usually focus suggestions on test scores, but I do think we have an opportunity to improve both students’ skills and their test performance if we spend some time focusing on Row B of the scoring guide, specifically looking at the 2-point and 3-point criteria.

As a quick refresher, remember that the scoring criteria for 2 points describe work that’s close but partial: “Provides some specific, relevant evidence” and “Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument.” The scoring criteria for 3 points describe work that’s more thorough and consistent: “Provides evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning” and “Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.” Student work in the 3-point range is not only more consistent, it also starts to demonstrate a *line of reasoning*. And that’s the opportunity for our students to bump up their performance (and scores) by being more aware of and demonstrating control over that line of reasoning.

Jane Urquhart’s *The Night Stages* can be an excellent mentor text to use, since potential lines of reasoning are embedded in the passage itself, especially in the clear structure of the passage (for instance, we see Kenneth’s art, and then learn how he was influenced by his mentors; he then sees the art from a new perspective as public art, which leads to his artistic theory emerging).

Even if a text lends itself to a line of reasoning, it’s important for students to know that they create the line of reasoning through their commentary. They’re the tour guides, leading readers through their

evidence and analysis as they tell the story of their argument. Help students recognize that the line of reasoning is something that they control and that they construct. You can do this by showing them examples from previous samples posted on the AP Central website or work written in your own classroom. You can also do this in class discussions of a poem or prose passage when you focus the discussion on a line of reasoning and construct a viable example collaboratively as a class. Bottom line: help your students to see that the line of reasoning is something that they create rather than something that magically appears.

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

To better prepare students for the Prose Fiction Analysis Free-Response Question, teachers may find the following resources helpful.

- Teachers may benefit from using the **Unit Guides** in the Course and Exam Description to pace and sequence their teaching of prose fiction analysis skills and to provide students with opportunities to practice these skills at increasing levels of difficulty and complexity.
- Students can develop their reading, analysis, and writing skills over the course of the year by practicing with the formative free-response questions in the **Progress Checks for Units 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 9** on AP Classroom. Student performance on these formative assessments provides teachers with valuable data that can help inform their lesson planning throughout the year.
- The **AP Daily videos and AP Faculty Lecture videos for Units 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 9** on AP Classroom can supplement teachers' prose fiction analysis instruction, as well as provide remediation for individual students who may struggle with a particular skill.
 - To support students in the practice of close reading of prose fiction to identify a broad and varied range of possible evidence from which to draw upon in a text (a common area of struggle as noted in the table above) teachers may want to have students watch **the Faculty Lecture for Unit 4, "Transcultural Reading."**
- Students can practice with summative free-response questions that appeared on previous AP English Literature and Composition exams when a teacher assigns a Prose Fiction Analysis Free-Response Question from the **Question Bank** on AP Classroom. Teachers may simply filter the Question Type for FRQ: Prose Fiction Analysis and/or for particular skills they wish their students to practice. These questions can be assigned as homework or as in-class assessments.
- **Student Samples, Scoring Guidelines, and Scoring Commentaries** for the Prose Analysis Free-Response Question can be found on AP Central. The Scoring Commentaries clarify how the student samples earned the various points described in the Scoring Guidelines. Reviewing the samples and commentaries with students can help teachers demonstrate the difference between overly simplified arguments and precise, nuanced ones with a strong line of reasoning, a common area of struggle as noted in the "Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps" column in the table above.

Question 3

Task: Literary Argument

Topic: Unfulfilled Need

Max Score: 6

Mean Score: 3.51

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

For Question 3, the Literary Argument question, students were asked to respond to the following prompt:

Many works of literature explore a character’s sense of lacking something important in life. The character perceives an unfulfilled need which may be emotional, spiritual, financial, or something the character does not understand or cannot articulate. Either from your own reading or from the following list, choose a work of fiction in which such a feeling is explored. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the character’s sense of an unfulfilled need contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

In a timed-writing situation and without the text in hand, students were expected to complete three main tasks successfully:

Selecting a work of fiction that addresses the focus of the prompt, in this case a text with a character with a “sense of lacking something important in life,” is the first essential step for students. Students benefit from choosing more complex texts, ones that contain multiple viewpoints, a variety of characters or narrative arcs, and language that lends itself to interpretation. Texts with less complexity often make analysis more difficult. The list of texts provided with the prompt offers diverse suggestions of possible texts that work with the prompt, but students are not limited to choose a text from this list. Students demonstrate the appropriateness of their chosen text through their analysis and writing. It should be noted that there is no list of acceptable texts.

Analyzing the work of fiction here requires two steps. First, students are asked to identify a fictional text that “explore[s] a character’s sense of lacking something important in life.” The prompt offers students suggestions on a variety of ways that characters might feel this unfulfilled need—it “may be emotional, spiritual, financial, or something the character does not understand or cannot articulate.” Importantly, the prompt does not define the concept but instead invites students to define the concept themselves in different or unique ways, depending on the text and character they choose. Second, students analyze “how the character’s sense of an unfulfilled need contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole.” In their analysis, students demonstrate both their ability to focus on a particular, relevant character with an unfulfilled need and to examine the implications of that character’s actions (or inaction) across the broader overall text. Students are cautioned not to summarize the text, a reminder that the evidence they draw from the text should be used in service to analysis.

Writing a well-written literary argument requires students to negotiate a range of information, including the focus of the prompt and evidence from a substantial text. In this instance, they must articulate an overall thesis about a character with a “sense of lacking something important in life” as well as how the “sense of an unfulfilled need contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole.” Students must develop their arguments through evidence and commentary, with the more successful responses building a line of reasoning that connects ideas and shows the relationships between them. Students are not expected to use

direct quotations in their response, though stronger responses use more specific, precise evidence, and use the evidence as support for defensible claims rather than merely as plot summary. A well-written response is more than grammatically correct writing, and it should again be noted that students are not expected in the time allotted to write a polished, revised essay.

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?

Generally, students found the prompt accessible and understood the concept of unfulfilled need. They used a variety of texts to explore this unfulfilled need and its impact on an interpretation of the work as a whole. In particular:

- Because students do not have the text in front of them in Question 3 (as they do in the Poetry and Prose Fiction Analysis questions), understanding the prompt and concept is especially essential. Most students understood the concept of unfulfilled need and were able to identify a text and a relevant character who lacks something important in their life.
- Some students were insightful and creative in their definition of what constituted an unfulfilled need. The prompt affords students this opportunity, and stronger responses often identified less typical examples of lacking something important in life, sometimes with minor characters (whose actions nonetheless contributed to an interpretation of the work as a whole). These responses tended to explore the instances more fully and with more particular evidence.
- Some students, however, did struggle to define the concept, relying solely on the examples provided in the prompt. As a result, they sometimes selected a text and character that wasn't the most applicable (i.e., writing about a character having a "spiritual" need, a possibility referenced in the prompt, when this really isn't the need the character grapples with in the selected text). It's useful for students to identify key phrases in the prompt and understand the expectations of the Question 3 task in order to recognize that they're invited to define the concept in their own terms and ensure they make the most appropriate choices of text and character.
- Most students had a thesis about a character's unfulfilled need. Often, however, the theses offered overly simplified arguments, along the lines that a character simply wants something (which isn't necessarily significant nor a "need") and that the unfulfilled need impacts the interpretation of the work as a whole. Similar to student performance on the other two free-response questions, there's opportunity here for students to construct more precise, nuanced arguments (for instance, to explore what an "unfulfilled need" means for a particular character or to better understand the root causes of the lack, which often impact the broader narrative).
- Relatedly, some students neglected to explore how the character's unfulfilled need contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole. Students would benefit from working not only to describe and analyze details related to the topic of the prompt—in this case, the character's unfulfilled need—but also to consider how that character's unfulfilled need impacts the broader narrative.
- Most students included evidence to support their discussion of a character's unfulfilled need. However, some students relied on overly general evidence (which was often in service to plot summary rather than a more specific discussion of the unfulfilled need itself). There's opportunity for students to use more specific and varied evidence, including details of characterization, that is relevant to the unfulfilled need and to the interpretation of the work as a whole.
- Students who created a clear line of reasoning or demonstrated a sophisticated response often did so while analyzing how the impact of the character's unfulfilled need contributes to the interpretation of the work as a whole. Common paths for the sophistication point included exploring tensions in the text (which frequently appear when a character feels unfulfilled) and placing the argument in a

broader context, for instance exploring a character’s unfulfilled need in the context of a particular social, political, or historical context.

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"> Most students had a thesis about a character’s unfulfilled need. Often, however, the theses offered overly simplified arguments. There’s opportunity for students to construct more precise, nuanced arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a response discussing Gatsby in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s novel, <i>The Great Gatsby</i>: “In F. Scott Fitzgerald’s classic <i>The Great Gatsby</i>, the titular character Jay Gatsby exemplifies the unfulfilled needs that have come with the American Dream. Gatsby’s sense of being unfulfilled in various aspects of his life, such as romantically, socially, and financially, serve as an example of the potentially destructive culture that America and all it represents exert on individuals. Gatsby’s unfulfilled needs represent a larger cultural phenomenon and American attitudes.” In an essay on Troy Maxson in August Wilson’s play, <i>Fences</i>: “In the book <i>Fences</i>, the main character Troy had a very poor childhood and young adult life. His unfortunate circumstances and lack of freedom led him to want that sense of youth back as an adult, which is unfortunately something that can’t be restored, and leads to the idea that youth is something that must be taken advantage of at the right time because it only fades away as one grows older.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most students included evidence to support their discussion of a character’s indecision. However, some students relied on overly general evidence (which was often in service to plot summary rather than a more specific discussion of the indecision itself). There’s opportunity for students to use more specific and varied evidence, including details of characterization, that are relevant to indecision and to the interpretation of the work as a whole. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In an essay discussing Gatsby in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s novel, <i>The Great Gatsby</i>: “The present day Gatsby’s actions are all due to his hardworking nature, where he tries to fulfill every expectation that American culture has shown, specifically in the rich New York community. His intense efforts to meet his needs, like decorating Nick’s home lavishly just for tea with Daisy or earning tons from illegal alcohol sales, represent just how desperate his climate has forced him to become. If it were not for the social expectations placed upon Gatsby (that one should be rich, old money not new, never a bachelor), he may have never found himself in the position he happened to be in. The tenacity in which he followed the American Dream, where

anyone can fulfill their needs in America with hard work, ended up being the demise of many.

Gatsby's actions eventually culminate in the love affair between Tom (Daisy's husband) and Myrtle being heavily complicated by Gatsby's own feelings for Daisy. The normative social expectation that one should be faithful and monogamous has been destroyed by Gatsby's intense needs warping his desires and causing conflict with Tom. Tom's own unfulfilled desires then clash with Gatsby's own, resulting in the death of Myrtle and finally Gatsby. At this point, all semblance of social belonging has been destroyed. The outcasts (new money Gatsby and poor Myrtle) have been eliminated from the rich American social circle Daisy and Tom belong to through their deaths. Even as Gatsby fought to meet his needs and fit in with American culture in the area, it resulted in his own downfall."

- In an essay on Troy Maxson in August Wilson's play, *Fences*: "During the novel, Troy cheats on his wife, Rose, with someone named Alberta, which is later revealed to Rose when he tells her Alberta is going to have a baby. One of the excuses he gives for being unfaithful is that Alberta made him feel something new, something he hadn't really experienced with Rose. Whether Troy knew it or not, this feeling is that of being young and carefree, something he didn't get to experience when he was younger. Being with Alberta gave him a sense of rebellion, one that is often associated with teenagers and younger people wanting to go against the system and do whatever they want. Since he had an extremely strict father, this wasn't something he could ever do, and so he compensates in his older years in hopes of getting to experience it. The consequences are much worse when you're older however, because much more responsibility is in your hands, and Troy learned this the hard way when Rose gave up on him.

Troy has a son named Cory who is on the football team at his high school. He is very successful and even has a talent agent come to scout him out. When Troy was younger, he played baseball, but due to his skin color, he was never able to go anywhere with it. However,

Cory had a very high possibility of getting to play in college, which made Troy jealous and force Cory to stop playing. Baseball was something very important to Troy, and to see somebody else accomplish his own dreams would have been very difficult to witness, even if it was his own son. He longed for the ability to go back and play baseball again, which was evident whenever he went and swung his bat at the tree in their yard. His time in jail when he was a young adult also did not help his chances at going far in baseball, which places more of the blame on himself, that if he stayed out of trouble and tried harder, he could have gone on to play baseball for the pros. Since that time is gone, he can never have that opportunity again.”

- In a student response focused on Jojo in Jesmyn Ward’s novel, *Sing, Unburied, Sing*: “In Jojo’s life he doesn’t have many people to care for him. He lives with his grandparents, mother, and sister. His grandmother is dying, so his grandfather is often busy taking care of her. This leaves his mother, Leonie, to take care of him, but she often neglects his needs and cares more for herself. This is especially shown when Jojo, Kayla, and Leonie take a trip down to parchman prison to bring Jojo’s father back home. They leave for the trip before they get a chance to eat breakfast which leaves the two kids malnourished the entire trip. When they do end up stopping Leonie gives Jojo money to buy her a coke and leaves nothing for him. These examples show how Jojo has no one to care for him and is often left with less than he needs. This paints Leonie in a negative light and makes the reader sympathetic towards Jojo. This view of the characters helps the reader to infer what actions they will take later in the book and how they will respond to hardship.”

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?

1. **Notice–Focus–Interpret** can be a helpful model to show a *process* for identifying and analyzing, offering students concrete steps, regardless of their skill level. The following quick overview provides teachers with some guiding questions and instructional tips for how to implement Notice-Focus-Interpret as a strategy when the class is studying a text. **Notice:** With or without a prompt in mind, ask students to identify what they see in a text (including a text that they don’t necessarily have in front of them, as students are tasked to do for the Literary Argument question). Don’t have them judge, just list or annotate aspects of the text that seem important. **Focus:** To develop an interpretation based on the features students have identified, dial in on a particular question or controlling element. For the AP English Literature and Composition exam, the focus could be the main idea of the prompt—in the case of this Question 3, the class could consider a character’s “unfulfilled need” and **then** see which features identified during the “notice” phase are the most relevant to that focus. **Interpret:** Using that focus and those relevant items, ask students to identify what the evidence is telling them. Remind students that analysis is always circular and ongoing—they can go back to more Noticing, for instance, at any time.
 - a. Notice–Focus–Interpret can provide students with a framework for how to approach analysis of a text for the Literary Argument free-response question. Sometimes in Question 3, students can struggle to generate details from the text, especially specific details, and there’s also a challenge to see how textual details “add up” and contribute toward an overall argument. The Notice part of N–F–I can help students identify related details and how they work together to create meaning. As a class, brainstorm important aspects of potential Question 3 texts, writing everything on the board—the more information the better. Offer small groups a guiding question (a Focus, like using an old Question 3 prompt) and ask them to select relevant evidence from the board *and* to draft commentary that explains the relationship of the evidence to the question. Students practice both filtering / narrowing evidence and constructing commentary, preliminary ideas that they could then use in drafting a written response.
2. **Bump Up Row C.** Again, I don’t usually focus suggestions on test scores, but I do think we have an opportunity to improve both students’ skills and their test performance if we spend some time focusing on Row C of the scoring guide.
 - a. As a quick refresher, there are four ways for students to earn the point for Sophistication in Row C, by “Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the passage,” by “Illuminating the student’s interpretation by situating it within a broader context,” by “Accounting for alternative interpretations of the passage,” and by “Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.” Let your students know that these are the concrete ways that they earn the sophistication point and that the point isn’t a nebulous, subjective feeling or fleeting and unknown trait.
 - b. This year’s Literary Argument prompt and the concept of an “unfulfilled need” can be an excellent mentor prompt to use to elevate students’ writing and thinking, since the concept has such clear relationships to at least two of the sophistication qualities. For instance, an unfulfilled need will likely include some kind of tension that students can explore; similarly, an unfulfilled need lends itself to other, broader contexts; for example, students might explore psychological explanations for a character’s actions within a particular social, political, or historical context.

- c. It's important for students to know that *they create the sophistication* of their argument through their writing and commentary. Sophistication isn't a trait that magically appears in student writing but rather a conscious part of their argument that they conceive of and construct.
- d. You can help students see sophistication in action by showing them examples from previous samples posted on the AP Central website. You can do this by showing them examples from work written in your own classroom. You can do this in class discussions of a poetry or prose passage when you focus the discussion on sophistication and construct a viable example collaboratively as a class. Be sure to treat the sophistication-focused part of your discussion as a draft: elevated thinking requires some intellectual risk taking, which can cause attempts at sophistication to flourish but also to fall flat. Even if a potentially sophisticated line of reasoning falls short, remind students that you've still learned more nuanced, particular information about the passage. There's no failure in this, only progress and learning.

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

To better prepare students for the Literary Argument Free-Response Question, teachers may find the following resources helpful.

- Teachers may benefit from using the **Unit Guides** in the Course and Exam Description to pace and sequence their teaching of literary argumentation skills and to provide students with opportunities to practice these skills at increasing levels of difficulty and complexity.
- Students can develop their literary argumentation skills over the course of the year by practicing with the formative free-response questions in the **Progress Checks for Units 3, 6, and 9** on AP Classroom. Student performance on these formative assessments provides teachers with valuable data that can help inform their lesson planning throughout the year.
- The **AP Daily videos and AP Faculty Lecture videos for Units 3, 6, and 9** on AP Classroom can supplement teachers' literary argumentation instruction, as well as provide remediation for individual students who may struggle with a particular skill.
 - To address the common misconceptions and knowledge gaps noted in the table above, teachers may wish to assign the following AP Daily videos to supplement or reinforce their instruction.
 - **Unit 9: Skill 7.B Daily Video 1**
 - **Unit 9: Skill 7.C Daily Video 1**
 - **Unit 9: Skill 7.D Daily Video 1**
- Students can practice with summative free-response questions that appeared on previous AP English Literature and Composition exams when a teacher assigns a Literary Argument Free-Response Question from the **Question Bank** on AP Classroom. Teachers may simply filter the Question Type for FRQ: Literary Argument and/or for particular skills they wish their students to practice. These questions can be assigned as homework or as in-class assessments.
- **Student Samples, Scoring Guidelines, and Scoring Commentaries** for the Literary Argument Free-Response Question can be found on AP Central. The Scoring Commentaries clarify how the student samples earned the various points described in the Scoring Guidelines. Reviewing the samples and commentaries with students can help teachers explain the value of providing more specific evidence and developing more precise, nuanced arguments, important areas of growth highlighted in the "Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps" column in the table above. The samples provide a range of thesis statements which may also help students identify opportunities in their own writing to move beyond overly general claims to more specific ones that demonstrate an understanding of complexity within the text.