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# AP<sup>®</sup> English Language and Composition

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

### **Inside:**

#### **Free-Response Question 1**

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

Mapping software and Global Positioning System (GPS) devices are used regularly by travelers and commuters. Since these devices and apps are updated in real time with user-supplied information, they have become associated with a number of problems. While commuters attempt to avoid traffic on highways, they often create traffic on smaller, local roads that are less able to handle this new burden. Users also lose a sense of their geographical surroundings as they rely more on mapping software or GPS devices for navigation.

Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the sources and develops your position on the value, if any, of mapping software and devices.

Source A (Foderaro article)

Source B (National Research Council book)

Source C (graph from He)

Source D (Grabar article)

Source E (chart from BuildFire)

Source F (Paulas article)

In your response you should do the following:

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

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Thesis (0–1 points)	<b>0 points</b> For any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no defensible thesis.</li> <li>The intended thesis only restates the prompt.</li> <li>The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim.</li> <li>There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt.</li> </ul>	<b>1 point</b> Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
	<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>	
	<b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only restate the prompt.</li> <li>Do not take a position, or the position is vague or must be inferred.</li> <li>Equivocate or summarize other’s arguments but not the student’s (e.g., some people say it’s good, some people say it’s bad).</li> <li>State an obvious fact rather than making a claim that requires a defense.</li> </ul> <b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b> <b>Restate the prompt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Many people use GPS to get around because information can be updated by users to provide real-time traffic updates.”</i></li> </ul> <b>Address the topic of the prompt but do not take a position</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“There are some advantages and some disadvantages to using GPS.”</i></li> </ul> <b>Address the topic of the prompt but state an obvious fact as a claim</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“If you rely on GPS to get everywhere, you will be able to see many different neighborhoods as you navigate to your destination.”</i></li> </ul>	<b>Responses that earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respond to the prompt by developing a position on the value, if any, of mapping software and devices, rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt. Clearly take a position rather than just stating there are pros/cons.</li> </ul> <b>Examples that earn this point:</b> <b>Present a defensible position that responds to the prompt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“GPS is valuable because it helps people get where they need to go as efficiently as possible.”</i></li> <li><i>“Mapping apps can be a valuable tool to help people keep from getting lost. It can also make their lives easier but only if people use them when absolutely needed.”</i></li> <li><i>“Although GPS may seem like a good thing, the harm that it does to local roads and the way it affects your understanding of your surroundings mean that its disadvantages ultimately outweigh its value.”</i></li> </ul>
	<b>Additional Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity.</li> <li>The thesis may be anywhere within the response.</li> <li>For a thesis to be defensible, the sources must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point.</li> <li>The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn’t do so to earn the thesis point.</li> <li>A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.</li> </ul>	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
<b>Row B</b> <b>Evidence</b> <b>AND</b> <b>Commentary</b> <b>(0–4 points)</b>	<b>0 points</b> Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or references fewer than two of the provided sources.	<b>1 point</b> <b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides evidence from or references at least two of the provided sources.  <b>AND</b> <b>COMMENTARY:</b> Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student’s argument.	<b>2 points</b> <b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides evidence from or references at least three of the provided sources.  <b>AND</b> <b>COMMENTARY:</b> Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.	<b>3 points</b> <b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides specific evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support all claims in a line of reasoning.  <b>AND</b> <b>COMMENTARY:</b> Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.	<b>4 points</b> <b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides specific evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support all claims in a line of reasoning.  <b>AND</b> <b>COMMENTARY:</b> Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.
	<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>				
	<b>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are incoherent or do not address the prompt.</li> <li>May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant.</li> </ul>	<b>Typical responses that earn 1 point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tend to focus on summary or description of sources rather than specific details.</li> </ul>	<b>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities.</li> <li>May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument.</li> <li>May make one point well but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim.</li> <li>Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established.</li> </ul>	<b>Typical responses that earn 3 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uniformly offer evidence to support claims.</li> <li>Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the sources to build an argument.</li> <li>Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims.</li> <li>Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim.</li> </ul>	<b>Typical responses that earn 4 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uniformly offer evidence to support claims.</li> <li>Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the sources to build an argument.</li> <li>Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained.</li> </ul>
<b>Additional Note:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row.</li> </ul>					

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

# Sample 1A (1 of 2)

Mapping software and Global Positioning System are technologies that have made traveling and movement from place to place incredibly easier. It allows people to get from point A to point B without any knowledge of their path or surroundings. All it takes is a phone and a data connection. GPS is an extremely useful tool that presents no negative aspects in the world of driving.

GPS allows drivers to remain in better condition when driving making the entire travel experience far better. Through the use of the GPS, the term "lost" is almost never used. No matter where one is and if one has access to the internet, the chances of that person getting lost is close to nothing. GPS gives directions to places no matter where one is regardless of the direction. Because of these chances, the drivers ability to stay calm when driving is far greater than when they must rely on paper maps. Since there is quite a low chance of getting lose, there is almost no worry that affects the driver and the people in the car : "The overall effect is that people are more calm when they'er using navigation"(Source D). GPS "induces a state of rest" which allows the drivers to push out all the fear and generally "drive safer"(Source D). When drivers remain more calm, there is a far less chance that they get into an accident and hurt the people the care about. If GPS and other navigation systems bring advantages such as general increased safety, there is no reason why one should not use GPS. It brings upon safety and in the situation of driving, there is no greater importance than safety of the driver and the people in car.

To build on top of the previous paragraph, GPS and navigation systems also bring upon great knowledge of the surrounding area that one is in. GPS functions in a way such that it allows people to create "a global patchwork of geographical information"(Source B). GPS gives "private citizens" the ability and potential to add and create to the entire model of the geography in the surrounding area. When people reach a place, the the information of their surroundings are used for another person who is also trying to reach that place. If one person is moving quite slow in a paticular place, then it is evident that traffics exists in that route. This is how navigation apps determine the fastest route to a specific place. Just like this example, a constant flow of information from each person's phone is being sent and used to create a geographical model of one's surroundings. This massive amount of information and knowledge could be used for countless aspects that are seemingly distant. This information could be utilized in "assisting local tourism and community planning, disaster response" and countless other integral parts of our world. By using GPS, the people are not only making their lives easier, they are also making it far easier for others. It has the potential to save lives and truly help those in need. With such massive advantages under GPS's built, GPS will continue to develop and help society in every way possible.

GPS definitely contains countless benefits and strengths under its belt but problems still exist. Because of the way GPS works, it also brings upon problems in different aspects. Since GPS most vaccated route that would take the fastest time to get to the destination, all the people trying to get to that one place would be directed to that one road. Meaning a usually quiet and distant road would now be packed with cars all trying to go one specific place. This would especially horrible during rush hours and for the residents of that secluded street, the noise and commotion could be devastating. When an abnormal amount cars enter a street that is not meant for that much traffic, "it's a scenario ripe for accidents; among the top causes of accidents are driver distraction"(Source F). These navigation apps generally make the entire travel experience far longer than before. Due to how these navigations apps function, Leonia, N.J is taking this serious problem into their own hands. Their police force of Leonia blocked up "60 streets to all drivers aside from residents"(Source A). By doing this, the police force

## Sample 1A (2 of 2)

was able to block up most of the town limited the scope the navigation apps have. This practically means that excess traffic would stay on the main roads of the city, subsequently solving the problem. Unfortunately, this fix is not permanent and every city does not have the capabilities for something like this. Navigation apps are going to continue causing problems and difficulties without any real way to combat them.

As mapping software continues to become more common throughout the globe, many are beginning to question whether it has had beneficial effects on society. Many countries have been completely mapped all over the globe, but as a result traffic is being diverted from free ways and highways, into residential neighborhoods to avoid traffic rushes. While GPS has done wonders for mapping the globe, it has had many negative effects on residential areas and the way that motorists understand navigation.

Global Positioning Systems, otherways known as GPS have made travel easier than ever before. When traveling the world, or even a new place you have never been before, navigation can be quite difficult while operating a motor vehicle. Previously, drivers would use paper maps to find the correct route for travel. Now this research can be instantaneous, with updated routes to help escape traffic and provide less distractions while driving. An article from Internet Magazine explains, "Even the classic dashboard gps,... Induces a state of rest. 'The overall effect is that people are more calm when they're using navigation,' ... By extension, they drive safer." (DOC D) With quick and easy navigation, drivers are able to have less distractions while driving. This may help them focus when traveling through unfamiliar territory. On the topic of unfamiliar territory, Imagine you are driving through a country in eastern Asia. You can not read the language that the signs are written in, therefore it should be extremely difficult to navigate. However, you have your trusty GPS to help you find your way through this foreign place. This technological advancement could potentially be helpful to travelers all across the world. While GPS seems pretty amazing to most people, it also has its downsides.

One major issue with GPS usage is the way that it diverts traffic from highways into residential areas. This diversion of traffic may seem wonderful for the driver who is able to get to work 5 minutes early, but it can also be hurtful to the locals who live in such residential areas. In a newspaper article, the chief of police from a residential neighborhood explains, "In the morning, if I sign onto my Waze account, I find there are over 250,000 'wazers' in the area" (DOC A) To a small town, 250 thousand cars can be devastating to the functionality of the local roads. Later in the article the chief of police explains that residents aren't able to leave their driveways due to the amount of traffic on their residential streets. So the current dilemma stands, is the five minute detour on your route to work worth the impact your journey has on these residential neighborhoods? No. In fact lawmakers from this town's jurisdiction have begun classifying this town's roads as private to avoid travelers from passing through without probable cause. The issue of mass migrations through residential areas is not the only problem stemming through GPS devices.

GPS have been known to desensitize our sense of direction as well. As we continue to put less effort into memorizing our path, and spend more time putting trust into our GPS, our brains spend less time observing our surroundings. The article from Internet Magazine mentioned earlier also explained the ways that GPS affects our brains and the way we challenge our cognitive abilities, "Participants with stronger hippocampus development tended to navigate with complex cognitive maps, while those with less developed spatial memory memorized turn-by-turn directions." In other words, turn by turn directions provided by GPS systems require less spatial memory and do not challenge the hippocampus to the same extent. This is true for the majority of GPS users across the globe. For the roughly 164 million smartphone users, over 65% of them use GPS on their smartphones to navigate. (DOC C) This means that a good majority of smart phone users are not challenging their brains with spatial cognitive skills while navigating. Those who choose to travel with GPS are weakening their instinctive navigation abilities.



## Sample 1B (2 of 2)

In conclusion, GPS has important benefits, but it comes with some pretty dissapointing consequences. As the world becomes more accesible to travel and exploration, small local neighborhoods become flooded, and instinctive navigation skills become weaker.

Since the beginning of the creation of technology many had struggled finding locations of interests. Once the final Global Positioning Systems or the GPS's were created people seemed at ease. Of course, there were still many issues. Some would come to an extreme difficulty when trying to find the proper signal to continue travelling on the road with the GPS on. There was also a difficulty with being stuck in traffic even when taking a short cut recommended by the GPS.

One reason the use of the GPS is not very effective is because it makes the direction in which you are travelling very confusing. The GPS often times also loses signal, making it more difficult to continue on the road. According to Source B, many experienced "local tourism" and "community planning"(para. 1). These two things did not have a positive effect in the attempt to travel. The National Academies Press may even say it was a "disaster response"(para.1).

The next reason to believe that the use of GPS is terrible is because people lose track of where they are going and in certain occassion may even forget where they are. Climate may also be a factor related to this. According to the fourth document " it effect's the user's ability to remember"(para.2). Not to mention that a cellphone with a GPS installed may even lose battery perventage while giving out directions on how to get somewhere.

Yet another reason is because a GPS may be leading to the incorrect location or mis-communicating with the person using it. Although many do believe that a GPS would be a great thing to use for directions, it does not mention anything about roads being re-constructed or danger zones. This would complicate everything for the person using the software or app. In fact, in the first source Lisa Foderaro mentions that she indeed has experienced something similar, " ...blithely following directions into the residential streets of some unsuspecting town, along with a slew of other frustrated motorists.

Both source b and a so happen to claim that there has been few difficulties while using a GPS system or software on a phone. These experiences are very similar because they are scenarios in which one does not have much control over. It probably would have been a great idea to be advised by the software that there was a difficulty in the road being taken. It is important to also take in mind that by using the GPS one is trying to get to somewhere of interests or somewhere as soon as possible.

To conclude a GPS may seem helpful to just anyone but many have experienced difficulties by using the software or app.

## Question 1

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

### Overview

**NEW for 2025:** The question overviews can be found in the *Chief Reader Report on Student Responses on AP Central*.

### Sample: 1A

**Score: 1-4-0**

### Thesis (0–1 points): 1

The response offers a defensible position in paragraph one: “GPS is an extremely useful tool that presents no negative aspects in the world of driving.”

### Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 4

The response provides specific evidence to support all claims in its line of reasoning that “Mapping software and Global Positioning System are technologies that have made traveling and movement from place to place incredibly easier.” For example, it states “GPS ‘induces a state of rest’ which allows the drivers to push out all the fear and generally ‘drive safer’(Source D)” as evidence of the claim that “GPS allows drivers to remain in better condition when driving making the entire travel experience far better.”

The commentary consistently and clearly explains how the evidence supports the line of reasoning, such as “By using GPS, the people are not only making their lives easier, they are also making it far easier for others.”

### Sophistication (0–1 points): 0

The response does not demonstrate sophistication of thought or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.

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

The response offers a defensible position in paragraph one: “While GPS has done wonders for mapping the globe, It has had many negative effects on residential areas and the way that motorists understand navigation.”

**Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 3**

The response provides specific evidence to support all claims in its line of reasoning. For example it states “the chief of police from a residential neighborhood explains, ‘In the morning, if i sign onto my Waze account, i find there are over 250,000 ‘wazers’ in the area’(DOC A)” as evidence to support the claim that “One major issue with GPS usage is the way that it diverts traffic from highways into residential areas.”

The commentary explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning, such as “In other words, turn by turn directions provided by GPS systems require less spacial memory and do not challenge the hipocampus to the same extent.”

However, some commentary does not effectively support a key claim. In paragraph four, the response supports the claim, but commentary for the evidence does not clearly connect to the claim. For example, the response states “This means that a good majority of smart phone users are not challenging their brains with spatial cognitive skills while navigating.”

**Sophistication (0–1 points): 0**

The response does not demonstrate sophistication of thought or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.

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

The response offers a defensible position in paragraph 1: “Some would come to an extreme difficulty when trying to find the proper signal to continue travelling on the road with the GPS on. There was also a difficulty with being stuck in traffic even when taking a short cut recommended by the GPS.”

**Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 2**

The response provides relevant evidence from three sources. Some evidence is specific: “In fact, in the first source Lisa Foderaro mentions that she indeed has experienced something similar, ‘blithely following directions into the residential streets of some unsuspecting town, along with a slew of other frustrated motorists.’”

The response provides commentary that explains how some of the evidence relates to the argument, such as “This would complicate everything for the person using the software or app.” However, it does not explain the connections or progression between the claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established.

Instead, the response contains some simplistic explanations that do not strengthen the argument, such as “It is important to also take in mind that by using the GPS one is trying to get to somewhere of interests or somewhere as soon as possible.”

**Sophistication (0–1 points): 0**

The response does not demonstrate sophistication of thought or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.