
AP[®] English Literature and Composition

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

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Question 2: Prose Fiction Analysis

6 points

The following excerpt is from Jeannette Haien’s novel *The All of It*, published in 1986. In this passage, Father Declan, an Irish priest, is driving home after a successful fishing trip. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Haien uses literary elements and techniques to develop a complex portrayal of Father Declan.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Thesis (0–1 points)	0 points For any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no defensible thesis. The intended thesis only restates the prompt. The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt. 	1 point Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the passage.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only restate the prompt. Make a generalized comment about the passage that doesn't respond to the prompt. Describe the passage or features of the passage rather than making a claim that requires a defense. 	Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a defensible interpretation of the complex portrayal of Father Declan.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The portrayal of Father Declan is constructed through the author's use of literary elements and techniques."</i> Do not respond to the prompt but make a generalized comment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Loneliness can be a heavy burden for many people, but a pet can make life less lonely."</i> Describe the passage or features of the passage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The passage shows Father Declan's thoughts about his life as a priest."</i> 	Examples that earn this point: Provide a defensible interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Haien uses Father Declan's drive home to reveal how his loneliness is affecting him. Even the happiness of a successful fishing trip is not enough to overcome his feeling of being alone and bound to living according to others' expectations."</i> <i>"Jeannette Haien uses ellipses, asides, and questions to convey how Father Declan's thoughts wander and are easily shot down by his anticipation of another's disapproval."</i> <i>"In <u>The All of It</u>, Father Declan's detailed daydream of getting a dog reveals the extent of his dissatisfaction with having no one to share his day-to-day life with."</i>
Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. The thesis may be anywhere within the response. For a thesis to be defensible, the passage must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn't do so to earn the thesis point. A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning. 		

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

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row C Sophistication (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex literary argument.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempt to contextualize their interpretation, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>Human experiences always include ...</i>” OR “<i>In a world where ...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time ...</i>”). Only hint at or suggest other possible interpretations (“<i>While another reader may see ...</i>” OR “<i>Though the passage could be said to ...</i>”). Make a single statement about how an interpretation of the passage comments on something thematic without consistently maintaining that thematic interpretation. Oversimplify complexities in the passage. Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the student’s argument. 	Responses that earn this point may demonstrate a sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument by doing any of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the passage. Illuminating the student’s interpretation by situating it within a broader context. Accounting for alternative interpretations of the passage. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.
	Additional Note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference. 	

In Jeannette Haien's novel, *The All of It*, she uses literary elements and techniques, to exhibit the tortured mind of Father Declan, displaying the struggle one often feels in maintaining a balance in looking out for themselves but also caring for others.

Haien utilizes literary elements and techniques to explain Declan's struggle in attempting to relieve himself from his pain, demonstrating that while many want to and feel like they should help themselves, they often do not because they feel guilt for the effect doing so might have on others. First, Declan wants to relieve himself of the pain he feels from his loneliness and decides he should get a dog. The excerpt reads, "Oh, the blanknesses of solitude...He ought to get a dog...He pictured the creature" (Haien). The phrase, "he ought" establishes Declan trying to come up with solutions to save himself from his loneliness. He wants to help himself feel happier. Furthermore, the parallel structure "He ought" and "He pictured" highlight his excitement about his plan. Unfortunately, Declan starts questioning the morality of this idea, no matter how happy it will make him. The excerpt pictures him questioning, "Was there anything written against a priest having a dog? For sure the Bishop didn't have one. Could he think of a sixtyish priest he knew who did? He couldn't" (Haien). First the punctuation, "?" displays how Declan's struggle with fulfilling his wishes, as this might mean acknowledge what he wants to prevent him from being the best priest he can be. Clearly, Declan places great importance on complying with his job and overall being a moral person, causing him to wonder if the dog complies with those two values. Next, the repetition of "he think," "he knew" and "he couldn't" again shows off Declan's struggle. Because of his desire for a dog, he to think of ways to rationalize getting one but he cannot. At the end of the day, Declan wants to be the best priest he can, even if this means no dog. In conclusion, Haien utilizes literary elements and techniques to explain Declan's struggle in attempting to relieve himself from his pain, demonstrating that while many want to and feel like they should help themselves, they often do not because they feel guilt for the effect doing so might have on others.

Next, Haien employs various literary elements and techniques to display Declan's constantly changing viewpoint around his dream throughout the passage, revealing how many struggle between whether they should feel guilty for bettering their lives (because of the effect it may have on others) or whether they have the duty to themselves to do so. First, Haien establishes Declan's sadness around his current life situation and how he feels he should do more for himself. She describes, "the thrill of his adventure draining from him suddenly, to be as suddenly replaced by a violent flush of self-pity" (Haien). First, the use of strong language "violent" establishes Declan's feeling that he should get more in life. Second, the epanalepsis of "suddenly" encompasses Declan's need to take action and better his life. Conversely, later in the passage Declan grapples with whether improving his own life or serving the needs of others is more important. He questions, "'But must he forever give in to the Mrs. Duggins of the world? forever keep sublimating wishes? as he was this instant sublimating'" (Haien). Haien's usage of punctuation, "?" again displays Declan's question of whether meeting his own needs or succumbing to the needs of others is the right thing to do. Moreover, the ellipsis "sublimating" reveals Declan's feeling that he has constantly given into other people's wishes and wonders if people pleasing is truly the correct answer. Lastly, Haien hints that Declan still grapples between the morality of wanting more for himself. She

finishes with, "Innocent, the mere wishing of a mere wish" (Haien). The diction "innocent" suggests the belief that dreaming of wanting more is okay, but actually take action to do so is not. This hints that Declan now believes, the needs of others are more important than serving himself. Conversely, the polyptoton "wish" and the repetition of "mere" could also suggest that Declan believes he should get more than the tiny bit he has right now and should do more for himself. In conclusion, Haien utilizes various literary elements and techniques to display Declan's constantly changing viewpoint around his dream throughout the passage, revealing how many struggle between whether they should feel guilty for bettering their lives (because of the effect it may have on others) or whether they have the duty to themselves to do so.

Overall, in Jeannette Haien's novel, *The All of It*, she uses literary elements and techniques, to exhibit the tortured mind of Father Declan, displaying the struggle one often feels in maintaining a balance in looking out for themselves but also caring for others.

In the excerpt from the novel, *The All of It* by Jeannette Haien, it discusses Father Declan's thoughts of solitude during his drive home and his internal debate on whether to get a dog. Haien uses imagery and diction to develop how Father Declan wishes for something to fix his feelings of loneliness, but is reluctant to act upon it.

Haien uses imagery to show Father Declan's longing to no longer be lonely, but also his reluctance to act on it. Father Declan describes how the night drive in the intense rain and thick fog emphasizes the sense of solitude (Par. 1). This creates the foundation of Father Declan's feelings as the story starts. The imagery of rain and fog are used by the author to explore just how much loneliness that Father Declan is feeling. The gloomy atmosphere is strongly correlated with the internal thoughts and feelings that are going on inside of Father Declan. The harshness of the rain conveys the intense thoughts of loneliness and the density of the fog conveys the amount of these thoughts are inside of him and how it has lingered for a while due to its thickness. It may explore how the author wants it to feel like these feelings of loneliness are following Father Declan in the form of the weather. It is not that Father Declan wants to be in solitude, but that it follows him where ever he goes. As Father Declan continues driving he thinks about his home and describes it as "bulk emptiness of the bleak parish-house...its high, cold rooms devoid of life" (Par. 3). This shows how the home Father Declan is not described in a positive context and rather a very negative one. The imagery is intended to show the dread that Father Declan is feeling when he gets back home due to how isolated it feels when he is in it. He may be wishes to enter a home full of life and company, but instead he arrive there by himself.

The author uses diction in conveying Father Declan's feelings of solitude, but is reluctant in going through with it. Father Declan thinks about getting a dog, but said he could hear Mrs. Duggin saying "'I'm hoovering *hair*, Father, *dog* hairs,' tousling the thin of her own, her mouth dropped disapprovingly" (Par. 5). This describes a reason as to why Father Declan may be reluctant to adopt a dog in order to relieve his feelings of loneliness. He doesn't want owning the dog to inconvenience others and would rather put his own troubling aside. The italicized words of "hair" and "dog" shows how much of a disapproval that it will be to others and his thoughts of what others might say clouds his judgment to get a companion. Father Declan's internal thoughts say "as he was this instant sublimating (*burying*, or trying to) the wish (he struck the word *desire*) to share with someone this singular-in-his-life" (Par. 6). This clearly follows onto how Father Declan is trying to hide his wish to escape out of loneliness out of reluctance. The diction of the words "*burying*" and "*desire*" is used to describe Father Declan's burying of his internal desires. He does not want to put his feelings of loneliness out in the world and gain a companion, so he chooses to bury it deep inside of him.

To conclude, Haien uses imagery and diction to convey Father Declan wants to get out of loneliness and solitude, but remains reluctant to do it.

In Haine's novel *The all of It*, he contrast Father Declan's expectations of community and joy that comes with being a priest with the author's use of detail when describing the his empty adventure home, and repetitive wishes for dog as a companion; create a sense of sorrow in him and the reader, but also reveals how sometimes titles and expectatations do not always share similarties with joy and reality.

Haine begins by describing Father Declan's ride back home and the loneliness he recieves as he realizes what awaits him on his return. Delcan explains the replacing of "thrill of his great adventure" to the fact that at his arrival he would be welcomed with a "bulk emptiness" of a "bleak parish-house" and in there he would only encounter the "ghostly haze of his own breath." Haine's choice of detail while describing Father's Declan dissapointing realization creates the sense of "blankness solitude" in not only Farther Declan, but also the reader as they follow him through his empty feelings toward life. This develops a sense of contrast from the expectations Father Delcan expected to feel in his life as a priest to the true, empty reality he is experiencing. Revleaing how Haine uses Father Delclan's vivid and empty description of home to develop a contrast between his expection and reality.

Haine would further promote Father Declan's sense of solitude through by revealing his strong desire a dog as a companion. Father Declan would repeadetly speak of his wishes of "get[ting] a dog...one that would accompany him on walks and ride beside him." This constant repetition of Father Declan's imagination of what joy a dog would bring him help to juxstapose his true feelings of emptiness. The idea of only a dog as a life long friend and companion developing that much joy in Father Delcan helps promote the idea of true isolation from others and lack of joy experiences throughout his daily life. Demonstrating how Haine uses the repetition of Father Declan's internal desires to develop the conflicting narrative of what joy a tittle, like a pastor, should bring, and the true feelings of solutitude can develop within oneself.

Overall, through Father Delcan's contrasting expectations and repetitive wishes for a companion in life, Haine helps develop a sense sorrow in both the pastor and the reader. Attributing a greater overall idea of how tittles and expectations do not always meet up to the standards and expectations of joy they suggest.

Question 2

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: 2A

Score: 1-4-1

Row A: Thesis (0–1 points): 1

The essay responds to the prompt with a thesis that provides a defensible interpretation of the complex portrayal of Father Declan. The thesis appears in paragraph 1: “In Jeannette Haien’s novel, *The All of It*, she uses literary elements and techniques, to exhibit the tortured mind of Father Declan, displaying the struggle one often feels in maintaining a balance in looking out for themselves but also caring for others.” The essay earned 1 point in Row A.

Row B: Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 4

The essay provides specific and relevant evidence to support all claims in its line of reasoning, which focuses on the difficulty Father Declan faces in balancing his needs with his obligations to others. In paragraph 2, for example, the evidence “Declan wants to relieve himself of the pain he feels from his loneliness and decides he should get a dog. The excerpt reads, ‘Oh, the blanknesses of solitude...He ought to get a dog...He pictured the creature’” is accompanied by commentary that asserts, “The phrase, ‘he ought’ establishes Declan trying to come up with solutions to save himself from his loneliness. He wants to help himself feel happier.” Additionally, the evidence “The excerpt pictures him questioning, ‘Was there anything written against a priest having a dog? For sure the Bishop didn’t have one. Could he think of a sixtyish priest he knew who did? He couldn’t’” is followed by the astute commentary, “the punctuation, ‘?’ displays how Declan’s struggle with fulfilling his wishes, as this might mean acknowledge what he wants to prevent him from being the best priest he can be. Clearly, Declan places great importance on complying with his job and overall being a moral person, causing him to wonder if the dog complies with those two values.”

Paragraph 3 then considers Haien’s use of literary elements and techniques, providing specific evidence and insightful commentary relating each device to the line of reasoning. For example, the essay cites, “‘the thrill of his adventure draining from him suddenly, to be as suddenly replaced by a violent flush of self-pity’” followed by the commentary, “the use of strong language ‘violent’ establishes Declan’s feeling that he should get more in life. Second, the epanalepsis of ‘suddenly’ encompasses Declan’s need to take action and better his life.” The essay’s focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage builds an interpretation, which contributes to the line of reasoning. That specific focus continues later in the paragraph with a consideration of the line, “‘Innocent, the mere wishing of a mere wish.’” The insightful commentary, “The diction ‘innocent’ suggests the belief that dreaming of wanting more is okay, but actually take action to do so is not. This hints that Declan now believes, the needs of others are more important than serving himself” brings the evidence back to the line of reasoning, strengthening the argument in the process. Additionally, although the essay considers how a wide variety of literary elements and techniques are incorporated within the passage, it is the quality of the analysis, not the quantity of the literary devices mentioned that elevates this essay. This compelling essay earned 4 points in Row B.

Question 2 (continued)

Row C: Sophistication (0–1 points): 1

The response develops a complex literary argument through its sustained exploration of the tensions within the passage, culminating in the statement, “Haïen utilizes various literary elements and techniques to display Declan’s constantly changing viewpoint around his dream throughout the passage, revealing how many struggle between whether they should feel guilty for bettering their lives (because of the effect it may have on others) or whether they have the duty to themselves to do so” (paragraph 3). The response earned 1 point in Row C.

Sample: 2B

Score: 1-3-0

Row A: Thesis (0–1 points): 1

The essay responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the passage. The thesis appears in paragraph 1 and states, “In the excerpt from the novel, *The All of It* by Jeannette Haïen, it discusses Father Declan’s thoughts of solitude during his drive home and his internal debate on whether to get a dog. Haïen uses imagery and diction to develop how Father Declan wishes for something to fix his feelings of loneliness, but is reluctant to act upon it.” The essay earned 1 point in Row A.

Row B: Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 3

The response provides specific evidence to support all claims in its line of reasoning about Father Declan’s longing to no longer be lonely. In paragraph 2, for example, the essay states, “Father Declan describes how the night drive in the intense rain and thick fog emphasizes the sense of solitude.” The commentary that follows, “The imagery of rain and fog are used by the author to explore just how much loneliness that Father Declan is feeling. The gloomy atmosphere is strongly correlated with the internal thoughts and feelings that are going on inside of Father Declan,” clearly explains how that evidence supports the line of reasoning. The essay offers additional evidence in the same paragraph that is not as thoroughly analyzed in the accompanying commentary. For example, the essay provides the specific evidence, “As Father Declan continues driving he thinks about his home and describes it as ‘bulk emptiness of the bleak parish-house...its high, cold rooms devoid of life,’” but the accompanying commentary, “This shows how the home Father Declan is not described in a positive context and rather a very negative one,” is rather general.

Similarly, in paragraph 3, the essay provides specific evidence, “Father Declan thinks about getting a dog, but said he could hear Mrs. Duggin saying ‘I’m hoovering *hair*, Father, *dog* hairs,’ tousling the thin of her own, her mouth dropped disapprovingly,” but the commentary, “This describes a reason as to why Father Declan may be reluctant to adopt a dog in order to relieve his feelings of loneliness,” weakens the argument. Furthermore, in paragraph 3, the claim that Father Declan does not want to “inconvenience others” is not adequately supported. Additionally, the discussion of diction lacks depth, as seen in the commentary that follows the focus on “the words ‘*burying*’ and ‘*desire*’” in paragraph 3. The commentary “He does not want to put his feelings of loneliness out in the world and gain a companion, so he chooses to bury it deep inside of him” is vague. The response mentions the literary devices of imagery and diction, but the explanation of each is inconsistent. The response earned 3 points in Row B.

Row C: Sophistication (0–1 points): 0

The response does not demonstrate sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument. Although the response explores Father Declan’s internal struggle with personal loneliness as opposed to pleasing others, it does so without complexity: “He may be wishes to enter a home full of life and company, but instead he arrive there by himself” (paragraph 2). The response did not earn the point in Row C.

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

The passage offers a defensible interpretation of the passage in paragraph 1, where it states, “In Haien’s novel *The all of It*, he contrast Father Declan’s expectations of community and joy that comes with being a priest with the author’s use of detail when describing the his empty adventure home, and repetitive wishes for dog as a companion; create a sense of sorrow in him and the reader, but also reveals how sometimes titles and expectatations do not always share similarties with joy and reality.” The essay earned 1 point in Row A.

Row B: Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 2

The response provides some specific, relevant evidence. For example, in paragraph 2, the essay points out, “Delcan explains the replacing of ‘thrill of his great adventure’ to the fact that at his arrival he would be welcomed with a ‘bulk emptiness’ of a ‘bleak parish-house’ and in there he would only encounter the ‘ghostly haze of his own breath.’” The commentary suggests that these details and the emotions they elicit develop “a sense of contrast from the expectations Father Delcan expected to feel in his life as a priest to the true, empty reality he is experiencing.” Paragraph 3 also presents some specific evidence, in particular, Father Declan’s desire of “‘get[ting] a dog...one that would accompany him on walks and ride beside him,’” but the accompanying commentary is general in scope: “The idea of only a dog as a life long friend and companion developing that much joy in Father Delcan helps promote the idea of true isolation from others and lack of joy experiences throughout his daily life.” Despite the incorporation of specific evidence, no line of reasoning is established because the commentary does not explain how the evidence supports the student’s argument. Additionally, in paragraph 3, the essay’s suggestion that “Haine uses the repetition of Father Declan’s internal desires to develop the conflicting narrative of what joy a tittle, like a pastor, should bring, and the true feelings of solutitude can develop within oneself” is vague. Juxtaposition and contrast are discussed within the essay, but the explanations of their use do not contribute to the meaning of the essay. This response earned 2 points in Row B.

Row C: Sophistication (0–1 points): 0

The essay does not demonstrate sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument. The response, therefore, did not earn the point in Row C.