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# AP<sup>®</sup> Seminar End-of-Course Exam

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

### **Inside:**

#### **Part A**

- ☒ **Scoring Guidelines**
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## End-of-Course Exam: Part A

15 points

### General Scoring Notes

- When applying the scoring guidelines, you should award the score according to the preponderance of evidence (i.e. best fit).
- Except where otherwise noted, each row is scored independently.

### 0 (Zero)

Scores of 0 are assigned to all rows of the rubric when the response is off-topic; a repetition of a prompt; entirely crossed-out; a drawing or other markings; or a response in a language other than English.

### NR (No Response)

A score of NR is assigned to responses that are blank.

**Question 1: Argument, main idea, or thesis****3 points**

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria			
<b>Row 1</b>	<b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<b>1 point</b> The response misstates the author’s argument, main idea, or thesis.	<b>2 points</b> The response identifies, in part and with some accuracy, the author’s argument, main idea, or thesis.	<b>3 points</b> The response accurately identifies the author’s argument, main idea, or thesis.
<b>Understand and Analyze Argument</b>	<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>			
<b>(0-3 points)</b>	<b>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are irrelevant to the argument (do not even relate to the topic or subject of the text)</li> </ul>	<b>Typical responses that earn 1 point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Misidentify the main argument or provide little or no indication of understanding of any part of the main argument.</li> <li>Just state the topic of the argument.</li> <li>Restate the title or heading.</li> </ul>	<b>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accurately identify only part of the argument (part is omitted or is overgeneralized).</li> <li>Describe all parts, but either vaguely or with some inaccuracy.</li> </ul>	<b>Typical responses that earn 3 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correctly identify all of the main parts of the argument.</li> <li>Demonstrate understanding of the argument as a whole.</li> </ul>
		<b>Examples that earn 1 point:</b> <b>Misidentify the main argument</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Parents should spend more time with their kids.”</i></li> </ul> <b>Restate the title or heading</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Paid parental leave is important.”</i></li> </ul>	<b>Examples that earn 2 points</b> <b>Identify only part of the argument</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Paid parental leave is needed in US because unpaid leave is not sufficient for many people as they can’t afford it.”</i></li> </ul> <b>Describe all parts, but either vaguely or with some inaccuracy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“America should have paid leave because it is good for the whole family and not everyone gets it.”</i></li> </ul>	<b>Examples that earn 3 points:</b> <b>Include all parts of the argument</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“The United States should have a policy of paid parental leave because not everyone has access to unpaid leave or can afford it, and the benefits to mother and baby are huge.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Additional Notes:</b> <b>The argument/thesis has three main parts:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>America should have paid parental leave. (A response must discuss geographic location of United States or America.) (In place of parental leave, also accept maternal leave, paternal leave, family leave, or any other wording that is specific to paid work leave taken after having a child.)</li> <li>Current unpaid leave policies disadvantage some groups OR disadvantaged groups would benefit from paid leave policies. (Accept: underprivileged groups/families, parttime workers, groups with limited/unavailable access to paid leave, unpaid/FMLA leave, or any similar wording.)</li> <li>Paid parental leave has benefits for the mother, father, child, and/or family. (A response must reference a specific stakeholder or group.) (In place of a broad mention of benefits, also accept specific examples such as mental health, physical health, and/or cognitive impacts.)</li> </ol>				

**Question 2: Explain line of reasoning****6 points**

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria			
<b>Row 2</b>  <b>Understand and Analyze Argument</b>  <b>(0, 2, 4 or 6 points)</b>	<b>0 points</b>  Does not meet the criteria for two points.	<b>2 points</b>  The response correctly identifies at least one of the author’s claims.	<b>4 points</b>  The response provides a limited explanation of the author’s line of reasoning by accurately identifying some of the claims AND identifying the connections or acknowledging a relationship among them.	<b>6 points</b>  The response provides a thorough explanation of the author's line of reasoning by identifying relevant claims and clearly explaining connections among them.
	<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>			
	<b>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not identify any claims accurately.</li> </ul>	<b>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accurately identify only one claim.</li> </ul> OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify more than one claim, but make no reference to connections between them.</li> </ul>	<b>Typical responses that earn 4 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accurately identify some claims but there are some significant inaccuracies or omissions.</li> </ul> AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide few or superficial connections between claims (demonstrating a limited understanding of the reasoning).</li> </ul>	<b>Typical responses that earn 6 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accurately identify most of the claims.</li> </ul> AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly explain the relationships between claims (including how they relate to the overall argument).</li> </ul>
<b>Additional Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A response may evaluate sources and evidence in the second part (Row 2), and/or analyze the argument in the third part (Row 3). Credit should be awarded for this.</li> </ul> <b>Author’s claims:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The US does not offer universal paid parental leave as many other countries do (workers are guaranteed only unpaid leave through FMLA). (Provides context for the argument, why it’s a problem.)</li> <li>Many people can’t afford to take unpaid leave and many don’t qualify for it. (Explains why the current situation is a problem.)</li> <li>Mothers fare better when they have paid time off after giving birth. (Reason in support of argument.)</li> <li>Parental leave policies are linked with better mental health. (Reason in support of argument.)</li> <li>Underprivileged families may benefit most from parental leave policies (but are often ineligible). (Reason in support of argument.)</li> <li>Offering leave to fathers can help develop parental instincts and benefits the whole family. (Reason in support of argument.)</li> <li>Paid leave is often hard for fathers to obtain. (Reason in support of argument.)</li> <li>Paid maternal leave is associated with health and cognitive benefits for the child. (Accept: lower infant mortality rates, long-term benefits related to breastfeeding, better language skills, and/or fewer infant behavioral problems.) (Reason in support of argument.)</li> <li>Resources and time for families after childbirth really matter (Conclusion).</li> </ol>				

**Question 3: Evaluate effectiveness of the evidence****6 points**

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria			
<b>Row 3</b>  <b>Evaluate Sources and Evidence</b>	<b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for two points.	<b>2 points</b> The response identifies little evidence. It makes a superficial reference to relevance and/or credibility but lacks explanation.	<b>4 points</b> The response explains various pieces of evidence in terms of credibility and relevance, but may do so inconsistently or unevenly.	<b>6 points</b> The response evaluates the relevance and credibility of the evidence and thoroughly evaluates how well the evidence is used to support the author's argument.
<b>(0, 2, 4 or 6 points)</b>	<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>			
	<b>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Misidentify evidence or exclude evidence from the response. AND</li> <li>Provide no evaluative statement about effectiveness of evidence.</li> </ul>	<b>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify at least one piece of evidence (or source of evidence) but disregard how well it supports the claims. OR</li> <li>Offer broad statements about how well the evidence supports the argument without referencing ANY specific evidence.</li> </ul>	<b>Typical responses that earn 4 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a vague, superficial, or perfunctory assessment of how well at least two pieces of evidence support the argument. OR</li> <li>Explain the relevance of evidence or credibility of sources presented, but explanations lack detail.</li> </ul>	<b>Typical responses that earn 6 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide detailed evaluation of how well the evidence presented supports the argument by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluating the strengths and/or weaknesses of the evidence.</li> </ul> AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluating the relevance of specific evidence, and credibility of sources of the specific pieces of evidence presented.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<b>Additional Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A response may evaluate sources and evidence in the second part (Row 2), and/or analyze the argument in the third part (Row 3). Credit should be awarded for this.</li> <li>Responses which solely evaluate sources of information and not specific pieces of evidence presented from those sources cannot score 6 for Row 3.</li> </ul>			

## Summary of Evidence

Source (as provided in text)	Credibility	Evidence/Relevance to claims
No source provided	No source	<p><i>“the United States remains one of just six countries worldwide that do not offer paid parental leave.”</i></p> <p>Provides context for the argument and proves the issue is related to the United States specifically.</p>
Darby Saxbe, PhD.	An associate professor of psychology at the University of Southern California who studies family environments and transitions	<p><i>“We have this whole abundance of child development research about the importance of early attachment, but our policies aren’t lining up with that”</i></p> <p>Supports idea that the current policy is a problem (many people can’t afford to take unpaid leave).</p> <p><i>“We develop responses to our babies because we’re in charge of them, not because moms are perfectly designed to be the primary caregiver”</i></p> <p>Supports claim that offering leave to fathers can help develop parental instincts.</p>
Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), 1993	United States law that governs the current policy	<p><i>“Without [paid family leave], workers are guaranteed only unpaid leave—up to 12 weeks without losing their jobs—through the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), passed in 1993.”</i></p> <p>Supports the idea that the current policy is a problem (many people can’t afford to take unpaid leave).</p>
Employee and Worksite Perspectives of the Family and Medical Leave Act, Abt Associates, 2020	No information provided about Abt Associates	<p><i>...about 44% of U.S. workers don’t even qualify for benefits through FMLA, which excludes smaller employers and many part-time workers.</i></p> <p>Supports idea that the current policy is a problem (many do not have access to it).</p>
Jou, J., et al., <i>Maternal and Child Health Journal</i> , Vol. 22, 2018	Peer-reviewed journal	<p><i>...including a 51% decrease in the risk of rehospitalization</i></p> <p>Supports claim mothers fare better when they have paid time off after giving birth.</p>
Bullinger, L. R., <i>Journal of Health Economics</i> , Vol. 66, 2019; Feldman, R., et al., <i>Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology</i> , Vol. 25, No. 4, 2004	No author credibility Peer-reviewed journals	<p><i>Women who aren’t able to take as much time off—especially those who return to work in under 2 months—face more depressive symptoms and more marital and self-esteem problems.</i></p> <p>Supports claim parental leave policies are also linked with better mental health.</p>

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Stearns, J., <i>Journal of Health Economics</i> , Vol. 43, 2015	Peer-reviewed journal	<p>...starting with better birth outcomes, including fewer early term births, possibly owing to decreased stress during pregnancy.</p> <p>Supports claim that underprivileged families may benefit most from parental leave policies.</p>
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Access To and Use of Paid Family and Medical Leave,” <i>Monthly Labor Review</i> , 2019	Data gathered by U.S. government	<p>...data indicate that about 47% of White parents, 41% of Black parents, and just 23% of Hispanic parents have access to paid leave.</p> <p>Supports claim that underprivileged families may benefit most from parental leave policies.</p>
An Israeli study Riem, M. M. E., et al., <i>Psychoneuroendocrinology</i> , Vol. 132, 2021	Peer-reviewed journal  Randomized, controlled trial	<p>...first-time fathers, those who carried their babies in a soft carrier attached to their bodies showed more amygdala activity when they heard babies crying than those who used a [car seat] carrier.</p> <p>Supports claim that offering leave to fathers can help develop parental instincts.</p>
Marian Bakermans-Kranenburg, PhD	a professor of neurobiological and environmental determinants of parenting and child development at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	<p>“This strongly suggests that it does not matter who you are, but it does matter what you do.”</p> <p>Supports claim that offering leave to fathers can help develop parental instincts and benefits the whole family.</p>
Persson, P., & Rossin-Slater, M., <i>NBER Working Paper No. 25902</i> , 2019		<p>Following a Swedish policy reform that increased fathers’ ability to stay home, mothers had fewer physical health complications and were less likely to take prescription medications for anxiety.</p> <p>Supports the claim that offering leave to fathers can help develop parental instincts and benefits the whole family.</p>
Wong, E., et al., <i>Journal of Social Policy</i> , Vol. 49, No. 3, 2020	Peer-reviewed journal	<p>...paid leave is even harder for fathers to obtain, which particularly harms same-sex male couples.</p> <p>Supports claim paid leave is often hard for fathers to obtain.</p>
Khan, M. S., <i>Child and Youth Services Review</i> , Vol. 116, 2020; Choudhury, A. R., & Polachek, S. W., <i>Vaccine</i> , Vol. 39, No. 21, 2021	Peer-reviewed journal	<p>Paid leave is associated with lower infant mortality rates and higher rates of vaccination, especially for families below the poverty line.</p> <p>Supports claim that paid leave is associated with lower infant mortality rates.</p>
<i>Paid Family Leave: A Crucial Support for Breastfeeding</i> , CLASP		<p>Women with access to more paid leave also breastfeed more, which can boost a child’s immunity and development.</p> <p>Supports claim that women with access to more paid leave also breastfeed more which can have longer term benefits to child health.</p>

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Lichtman-Sadot, S., & Bell, N. P., <i>Journal of Policy Analysis and Management</i> , Vol. 36, No. 4, 2017	Peer-reviewed journal	<i>Improvements in child physical health carry through at least until elementary school.</i> Supports claim that women with access to more paid leave also breastfeed more which can have longer term benefits to child health.
Natalie H. Brito, PhD	An assistant professor of applied psychology at New York University	<i>...patterns of infant electroencephalogram (EEG) activity were different across paid and unpaid leave groups, even when controlling for income, education, occupation, perceived stress, and other factors.</i> Supports claim paid maternal leave is associated with more mature early cognitive functioning (including better language skills and fewer infant behavioral problems.)
Kozak, K., et al., <i>Infancy</i> , Vol. 26, No. 4, 2021	Peer-reviewed journal	<i>...paid leave is associated with better language skills in toddlers and fewer infant behavioral problems for mothers with less education.</i> Supports claim paid maternal leave is associated with more mature early cognitive functioning (including better language skills and fewer infant behavioral problems.)
Berger, L. M., et al., <i>The Economic Journal</i> , Vol. 115, No. 501, 2005; Brooks-Gunn, J., et al., <i>Child Development</i> , Vol. 73, No. 4, 2002	Peer-reviewed journal	<i>Further studies suggest that longer maternal leaves are linked to fewer cognitive and behavioral problems, even when controlling for factors like the quality of child care and the home environment.</i> Supports claim paid maternal leave is associated with more mature early cognitive functioning (including better language skills and fewer infant behavioral problems.)



**Sample A**

---Response A1---

In the article "The Urgent necessity for Paid Parental leave," author Zara Abrams establishes that current US-offered unpaid leave is not sufficient for many families for reasons such as poverty and not being qualified for FMLA. Therefore, the author, along with the widespread public support, urges that paid and more inclusive parental leave should be implemented by the US because it offers many benefits to mothers, fathers, children, and underprivileged families such as increasing parent mental health, bettering birth outcomes, and increasing cognitive activity in infants.

---Response A2---

Throughout the article, the author employs various different claims to support her main argument of implementing parental leave for families. To start, the author establishes that the US "remains one of just six countries worldwide that do not offer paid parental leave." To add, the author cites that workers only get unpaid leave. Through these claims, the author establishes the problem of current US unpaid leave is not sufficient enough for many families. To further develop the extent of this problem, the author claims that many people cannot afford to take unpaid leave. This claim compounds the severity of not having paid parental leave, building the author's central argument. Then, the author shifts to further developing her central argument by listing multiple claims about the benefits of paid parental leave. The author explores the benefits paid leave would have on several different groups to build her central argument. Firstly, the author claims that research shows that mothers "fare better when they have paid time off after giving birth." This claim establishes one benefit of paid leave. Then, to expand upon this claim of "faring better," the author claims that leave policies are also "linked with better mental health." To support, the author cites evidence that shows how women without parental leave have worse mental health than those who do. These claims work together to build one benefit of having parental leave--better mental health and well being for primary caregivers. Then, the author claims that parental leave would also support underprivileged families with benefits such as better birth outcomes. This claim serves as another benefit of paid leave, further building her central argument. From here, the author shifts to dial in on this claim and claim that these families are "often ineligible for such benefits because of the limits of the FMLA." Through this additional claim, the author not only compounds the severity of the current problem but also further supports her central argument of implementing paid parental leave. Later, the author explores the benefits of parental leave to fathers, claiming that offering leave to fathers can benefit the whole family. This claim builds upon her previous claim about the benefits of leave to mothers by showing how leave actually can benefit everyone in a family, not just birthgivers. This claim thus further develops the author's reasons as to why the US needs to implement paid leave. Later, the author shifts to exploring the benefits of paid leave to the child itself, claiming that it is "associated with lower infant mortality rates and higher rates of vaccination." The author then employs another claim that presents how paid leave can increase brain activity in infants. These two claims work together to build another benefit of paid leave, this time showing its benefits to the child. Overall, these three main groups of claims that cover the benefits of paid

leave to children, mothers, and fathers, all work together to build her central argument of having paid leave.

---Response A3---

Throughout her article, the author employs many different pieces of evidence to support her central argument of the US implementing paid leave.

One piece of evidence the author used was a statistic from the US bureau of labor that shows how "about 47% of white parents, 41% of black parents, and just 23% of hispanic parents have access to paid leave." By citing statistics from a report from a national agency, the author establishes the reliability of her source. Furthermore, the agency being the bureau of labor is relevant to the topic at hand as the author's claim is about unpaid leave in working families. The evidence is also relevant to the claim as the evidence shows how white parents, despite also not being very eligible for parental leave, is around 25% more eligible than hispanic families. This data thus shows the inequality of eligibility of parental leave, which in turn helps establish the severity of her problem.

Another piece of evidence the author used was from an academic journal named NBER Working paper in 2019 that shows how increased father's ability to stay home led to "mothers [having] fewer physical health complications." By being published in an academic journal, the author establishes the credibility of the source. The study being made in 2019 also means that the data is up-to-date, furthering its accuracy. The evidence is also relevant to the argument it shows how parental leave for fathers can in turn also help the mothers, thus showing how paid leave can benefit the entire family. However, problems arise when the author fails to be specific about her evidence. She did not include specific data that details exactly how much mothers benefited from fathers having paid leave. Instead, she only described these benefits as being "fewer" than those who don't have leave. Had the author been more specific about this data, it would have made her evidence clearer and thus have strengthened her overall argument.

A third piece of evidence used by the author is from an Israeli study that shows how "'primary caregiver' gay fathers display amygdala activation similar to the mothers in the study, whereas 'secondary caregiver' gay fathers had brain activity that more closely resembled heterosexual fathers." This evidence is relevant to the author's claim of how parental leave can also benefit fathers as it shows how male homosexual couples also exhibit similar needs of primary caregivers. Through this evidence, the author provides one reason as to why fathers having paid parental leave is also essential. However, this evidence is flawed as the author fails to mention the name of the study as well as the year it was conducted. By not knowing any publishing information of the study, this evidence lacks credibility. Furthermore, not including the year the study was made means that the information could be outdated, further weakening the reliability of the study.

Overall, the author utilizes relevant and credible sources to support her claims by employing statistics and conclusions of studies. Only minor flaws are present when the author fails to be more specific about the details and credibility of the evidence.

## Sample B

---Response A1---

The author argues that low-income parents that cannot afford to take time off to spend with their newborn will benefit from having paid parental leave because it will lessen risks associated with the mother's health, strengthen the relationship between the parents and their newborn, and help the infant's neurological and psychological development.

---Response A2---

The author's line of reasoning her thesis is that many lower class families cannot afford to stop working to care for their infants and miss out on the benefits associated with parental leave such as less health risks for the mother, better relationship with their newborn, and increased rate of psychological and neurological development.

The author's first claim describes the mental and physical health benefits of taking paid parental leave after having a child. She uses a statistic from "Maternal and Child Health Journal" that states that there is "a 51% decrease in the risk of rehospitalization" for mothers who take parental leave. She also uses the "Journal of Health Economics" and "Journal of Applied Psychology" to describe the connection between parental leave and better mental health in women. She explains that women who return in under 2 months are more likely to suffer from depression, self-esteem issues, and marital problems. She also uses another statistic from "Journal of Health Economics" that describes how less economically fortunate families might suffer less early term births when given paid parental leave.

The author then goes onto describe the population of people affected by the lack of paid parental leave. She says that those who get paid leave are more likely to be of affluence and education, and she proves this with statistics from "Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Access To and Use of Paid Family and Medical Leave" that state that "47% of White parents, 41% of Black parents, and just 23% of Hispanic parents have access to paid leave".

The author then goes on to talk about how parental leave allows for a stronger relationship between the parents and their newborn. She uses different studies to prove that parental leave helps develop parent instincts and amygdala activity in fathers and mothers.

The final claim of this article was how paid leave was directly correlated with early cognitive development and better health in infants. She uses "Child and Youth Services Review" to describe the connection between paid leave and lower mortality rates and higher vaccination rates. She also uses "Paid Family Leave: A Crucial Support for Breastfeeding, CLASP" to prove that child immunity was raised with paid parental leave. The author also describes early cognitive benefits for newborns associated with parental leave. She uses a study by Dr. Natalie H. Brito to prove that infants whose parents had paid leave experienced "more mature early cognitive functioning". She also uses this study to show how paid leave is associated with better language skills and fewer behavioral problems.

In conclusion, the author's line of reasoning was that lower income families will benefit from having paid parental leave because it will decrease health risks for the mother, build better relationships between the parents and their child, and increase early cognitive development.

----Response A3----

The author's first claim describes the mental and physical health benefits of taking paid parental leave when having a child. She uses information from "Journal of Health Economics" and "Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology" to suggest that parental leave policies are associated with better mental health. She also uses a statistic from "Maternal and Child Health Journal" that states that there is "a 51% decrease in the risk of rehospitalization" when parents have paid time off. The author also used research from "Journal of Health Economics" that suggests that underprivileged families have fewer early term births with paid parental leave. These pieces of evidence effectively describe health benefits associated with paid parental leave. They are both from credible sources and are cited correctly. However, the author fails to elaborate on any of these pieces of evidence, instead just bluntly giving statistics.

Overall, the author did pick credible and relevant sources of evidence, but failed to elaborate effectively on the majority of them.

## **Sample C**

----Response A1----

the authors main idea is that parents should be paid for Parental Leave.

----Response A2 ----

The author used the claims that many people cannot afford to take unpaid leave, and many do not qualify for the benefits of FMLA, that mothers fare better when they have paid time off after giving birth, parental leave policies also link with better mental health, and underprivlged families could possibly benefit most from parental leave policies.

----Response A3----

The evidence used in this argument is very effective because its giving true reasoning on why parents should have Paid Parental Leave. Its giving direct examples and real statistics of tests showing that many Moms and Dads would benefit from having Paid Parental Leave.

## End-of-Course Exam Part A: Short Answer

**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 A

**1 Understand and Analyze Arg Score: 3**

**2 Understand and Analyze Arg Score: 6**

**3 Evaluate Sources and Evidence Score: 6**

#### Row 1: Understand and Analyze Argument

The response earned **3** points for identifying all three parts of the argument: “paid and more inclusive parental leave should be implemented by the US” (part 1) because “current US-offered unpaid leave is not sufficient for many families for reasons such as poverty and not being qualified for FMLA” (part 2). A change in policy would offer “many benefits to mothers, fathers, children, and underprivileged families such as increasing parent mental health, bettering birth outcomes, and increasing cognitive activity in infants” (part 3).

#### Row 2: Understand and Analyze Argument

The response earned **6** points for identifying most of the claims (e.g., the US “reamins one of just six countries worldwide that do not offer paid parental leave,” “many people cannot afford to take unpaid leave,” “research shows that mothers ‘fare better when they have paid time off after givign birth,” “leave policies are also ‘linked with better mentla health,” “paretnal leave woudl also support under privileged families,” “offering leave to fathers cna benefit the whole family,” and paid leave can benefit the child through “lower infact mortality rates,” “hihger rates of vaccination,” and an increase in “brain activity”). The response also recognizes the relationships between the claims, highlighting that the first claim “establishes the problem,” followed by a discussion of how the claims “further develop the exten[t] of the problem,” “compound the severity” of the problem, and “expand upon” previous claims.

The response considers the various benefits of paid parental leave and their associated stakeholders as the overarching organizational structure of the argument, discussing how “the author explores the benefits paid leave would have on several differnt groups to build her central argument.” This line of reasoning is traced throughout the response, highlighting how the claims “work together to build one benefit of having parental leave—better mental health and well being for primary caregivers,” explore “the benefits of parental leave to fathers,” and later shift “to exploring the benefits of paid to to the child itself.” Finally, the response provides a summary of the structure of the author’s main argument, highlighting that “these three main groups of claims that cover the beenfits of paid leave to children, mothers, and fathers, all work together to build her central argument of having paid leave.” Because the response provides a thorough evaluation of the author’s line of reasoning by accurately identifying relevant claims and clearly explaining the connections among the claims, it earned 6 points.

## End-of-Course Exam

### Part A: Short Answer (continued)

#### Row 3: Evaluate Sources and Evidence

The response earned **6** points for thoroughly evaluating multiple sources and pieces of evidence in terms of relevance and credibility. The response first discusses statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor, citing specific data points from the article (“47% of white parents, 41% of black parents, and just 23% of hispanic parents have access to paid leave”). The response evaluates the strengths of the credibility of the source, recognizing that the statistics are cited from the U.S. Bureau of Labor, which “is relevant to the topic at hand as the author’s claim is about unpaid leave in working families.” In addition, the response evaluates the relevance of the evidence to the claim under which it falls, recognizing that the evidence highlights “the inequality of eligibility of parental leave, which in turn helps establish the severity of her problem.” In addition, the response critiques the credibility of the Israeli study, stating that the source lacks credibility “as the author fails to mention the name of the study as well as the year it was conducted.” The lack of a specific publication date influences the credibility because “the information could be outdated, further weakening the reliability of the study.” While the response critiques the credibility of the source, it also recognizes the strengths of the evidence’s relevance. The response quotes the study’s findings that compare primary and secondary caregiver brain activity, identifying that the evidence is “relevant to the authors claim of how parental leave can also benefit fathers” as well as connecting it back to the central argument by explaining that the evidence “provides one reason as to why fathers having paid parental leave is also essential.” Because the response provides a thoughtful evaluation of the effectiveness of the evidence in supporting the author’s argument and the credibility of the provided sources, it earned 6 points.

#### Sample B

**1 Understand and Analyze Arg Score: 2**

**2 Understand and Analyze Arg Score: 4**

**3 Evaluate Sources and Evidence Score: 4**

#### Row 1: Understand and Analyze Argument

The response earned **2** points for identifying two parts of the argument: “low-income parents that cannot afford to take time off...will benefit from having paid parental leave” (part 2) because “it will lessen risks associated with the mother’s health, strengthen the relationship between the parents and their newborn, and help the infant’s neurological and psychological development” (part 3).

#### Row 2: Understand and Analyze Argument

The response earned **4** points for accurately identifying some of the claims (e.g., “the mental and physical health benefits of taking paid parental leave after having a child,” “the population of people affected by the lack of paid parental leave” are typically not those who are “of affluence and education,” “parental leave allows for a stronger relationship between the parents and their newborn,” and “paid leave was directly correlated with early cognitive development and better health in infants”). By using superficial sequential language such as “[t]he author’s first claim,” “then goes onto describe,” and “then goes on to talk about,” the response demonstrates a limited understanding of the line of reasoning. Although the response provides a summative statement that broadly discusses the overall organizational structure of the argument (“the author’s line of reasoning was that lower income families will benefit from having paid parental leave because it will decrease health risks for the mother, build better relationships between the parents and their child, and increase early cognitive development”), the statement lacks detail and does not provide an explanation of the relationships between the claims. Rather than effectively highlighting connections between the claims and the overall argument, the response relies on discussing the author’s use of evidence to prove points made in the claim. When the response states, “she proves this with statistics” and “[s]he also uses this study to show,” it is actually referencing connections between claims and evidence

## End-of-Course Exam

### Part A: Short Answer (continued)

(row 3) rather than explaining the connections between the claims or connecting the individual claims to the overall argument. Because the response correctly identifies some of the claims and provides only superficial connections between them, it earned 4 points.

#### Row 3: Evaluate Sources and Evidence

The response earned **4** points for providing a simplistic evaluation of how well the evidence supports the argument. The response cites specific evidence from the *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, stating that there is a “51% decrease in the risk of rehospitalization’ when parents have paid time off.” In addition, paraphrased evidence from the *Journal of Health Economics* is included, which explains that underprivileged families have fewer early term births with paid parental leave. Although various sources and pieces of evidence are accurately identified, the response provides a singular, broad evaluation of how well the evidence supports the argument. In the evaluation, the response simply states that “they are both from credible sources” even though “the author fails to elaborate on any of these pieces of evidence, instead just bluntly giving statistics.” This evaluation is uneven, failing to provide a detailed analysis of why the evidence is credible and how the evidence effectively supports the author’s argument. Because the response demonstrates an uneven application of the evaluation skills, it earned 4 points.

#### Sample C

**1 Understand and Analyze Arg Score: 1**

**2 Understand and Analyze Arg Score: 2**

**3 Evaluate Sources and Evidence Score: 2**

#### Row 1: Understand and Analyze Argument

The response earned **1** point because it simply identifies the argument as “parents should be paid for Parental Leave” which is a vague restatement of the title. Because the response is on topic but does not provide enough specificity to accurately identify any part of the argument, the response cannot earn more than 1 point.

#### Row 2: Understand and Analyze Argument

The response earned **2** points for accurately identifying more than one claim but failing to provide any meaningful connections between them, providing only a list of claims. The response identifies various claims (e.g., “many people cannot afford to take unpaid leave, and many do not qualify for the benefits of FMLA,” “mothers fare better when they have paid time off after giving birth,” “parental leave policies also link with better mental health,” and “underprivileged families could possibly benefit most from parental leave policies”); however, because the response makes no reference to the connections between the claims, it cannot earn more than 2 points.

#### Row 3: Evaluate Sources and Evidence

The response earned **2** points because it offers broad evaluative statements of the evidence but does not reference any specific evidence. The response states that the evidence is “very effective” and gives “direct examples and real statistics.” Because the response does not connect the evaluative language to any specific sources or pieces of evidence, it cannot earn more than 2 points.