



## Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2025 AP<sup>®</sup> English Language and Composition Set 1 Free-Response Questions

• Number of Students Scored	617,689		
• Number of Readers	3,121		
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	82,754	13.4
	4	173,142	28.0
	3	202,765	32.8
	2	99,155	16.1
	1	59,873	9.7
• Global Mean	3.19		

The following comments on the 2025 free-response questions for AP<sup>®</sup> English Language and Composition were written by the Chief Reader, Michael Neal, Associate Professor, Florida State University. They give an overview of each free-response question and of how students performed on the question, including typical student errors. General comments regarding the skills and content that students frequently have the most problems with are included. Some suggestions for improving student preparation in these areas are also provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend a College Board workshop to learn strategies for improving student performance in specific areas.

## Question 1

**Task:** Synthesis

**Topic:** Space Debris

**Max Score:** 6

**Mean Score:** 3.45

### ***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

Students responding to this question were expected to read six sources on the topic of space debris and then write an essay that synthesized material from at least three of the sources and developed their position on the most important factors that space agencies and nations should consider when dealing with the problem of space debris. Students were expected to respond to the prompt with a thesis that takes a defensible position; use evidence from at least three provided sources to support their line of reasoning clearly, referencing the sources; explain how the evidence supports their line of reasoning; and use appropriate grammar and punctuation in presenting their argument.

As per the Course and Exam Description, students were expected to be able to read the prompt, understand the task, use sources provided to write paragraphs that reflect their ability to establish claims and provide evidence, and demonstrate the connections between them to support their argument in a line of reasoning.

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

This year's synthesis question asked students to develop a position on "the most important factors that space agencies and nations should consider when dealing with the problem of space debris." Most students seemed to find the prompt accessible, as evidenced by the extensive arguments many wrote. The prompt provided a compelling issue rooted in a real-world scientific and environmental concern, allowing students to engage with a globally relevant topic. Many responses demonstrated an understanding of the stakes involved in managing space debris, including the protection of satellites, the safety of future space missions, and the sustainability of space as a resource for exploration and communication.

Students who were successful in their responses typically incorporated a variety of the provided sources to support their positions. They acknowledged the technological, economic, environmental, and political complexities of the issue, offering nuanced arguments about why certain factors—such as international cooperation, funding for cleanup technologies, and regulatory frameworks—were more important than others. Some students thoughtfully explored the ethical responsibility of nations to address space debris as a shared problem, while others emphasized innovation and the development of proactive technologies to mitigate future debris. Successful responses engaged with the sources and incorporated source material into their argument, including evidence from at least one source in every body paragraph. These responses used specific words and details from multiple sources to support the argument and offered commentary to explain the connections to the student's thesis and claims. For instance, this response provided thorough commentary: "To further this point, nearly 1,200 of these satellites were of commercial use. (Source B) This graph demonstrates that while the evolution of technology has become more entertaining for us as individuals, we as humans fail to see the lasting impacts left from these launches." Explanations like this moved beyond mere summary and/or a simplistic or repetitive explanation as they consistently connected the evidence to their argument and established a clear line of reasoning, earning a 4 in Row B.

However, students who struggled with the prompt often did so because they failed to fully grasp the central concern: that space debris poses a significant and growing threat to space exploration, satellite operations, and international collaboration in space. In these weaker responses, students frequently offered arguments

that were tangential or only loosely connected to the prompt’s intent. For example, some made general statements about pollution or technological advancement without clearly tying their ideas to the problem of space debris or discussing the implications for space agencies and global stakeholders. Overall, while most students demonstrated engagement with the prompt and the ability to formulate thoughtful responses, those who did not succeed often fell short due to limited understanding of the context and stakes of the issue, as well as a lack of effective development and synthesis skills.

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

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many students failed to fully grasp the complexity of the issue, which significantly impacted the depth and effectiveness of their responses. Rather than analyzing the multiple dimensions of the topic—such as political, environmental, technological, and ethical considerations—they often focused narrowly on surface-level ideas: “‘What is happening on earth is happening in space.’ (Source C). This reality is clear and there’s not really much we can do to fix these problems.” This limited understanding led to oversimplified arguments that lacked nuance, critical thinking, or engagement with broader implications. Others failed to recognize or consider the long-term consequences of potential solutions. As a result, many responses read more like general opinions rather than carefully constructed arguments grounded in evidence and thoughtful reasoning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students who effectively synthesized text information demonstrated a clear understanding of the sources and skillfully wove them into their arguments. Their commentary often reflected a deeper engagement with the topic, acknowledging its complexity and addressing multiple perspectives or potential counterarguments. This thoughtful analysis helped to clarify their positions and made their essays more persuasive. In many cases, their commentary also connected broader themes or real-world implications, further enhancing the depth of their writing. One response stated, “The issue of space debris is one that certainly needs to be addressed because in space we are seeing a mirror of the unfolding tragedy that has polluted our oceans and lands yet, we continue to focus our attention on the ‘next few frontier’ until something new comes along.” Ultimately, effective commentary helped to transform source-based writing into a well-developed and coherent argument that demonstrated strong comprehension of the issue.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students who failed to integrate text information struggled to connect the sources to their arguments. Instead of using the sources to support or enhance their claims, many students either summarized them without analysis or mentioned them briefly without explanation. In some cases, students quoted the texts without introducing or explaining the significance of the information: “Document C also mentions how most of what goes into space doesn’t come back down again. ‘Houston, we have a problem.’” This</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students who provided effective commentary offered insightful analysis that explained the significance of the evidence they presented. These students were able to articulate why particular pieces of information mattered and how they supported their overall argument. They were able to draw meaningful connections between multiple sources, showing how different perspectives contributed to a deeper understanding of the issue. One response noted, “When approached in this fashion, it’s clear that</li> </ul>

lack of integration weakened their arguments and demonstrated a limited understanding of how to use evidence effectively in synthesis writing. Without clear connections between their ideas and the information from the texts, no line of reasoning was established.

even though space debris clean-up requires taxpayers to pay the cost upwards of 3 million dollars to fix, as the Soviet Union realized when a crash of its satellites ‘scattered radioactive debris across Canada’ (Source D; Source C). Ultimately, the costs that are associated with space debris removal should not encourage space agencies to shy away from eliminating space debris; if anything, it should encourage them to eliminate it faster.”

**Based on your experience at the AP<sup>®</sup> Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?**

Providing opportunities for students to engage with and respond to a variety of texts (historical, contemporary, scientific) through formal and informal writing activities and discussions in class is key in helping them to develop the critical reading skills they need to successfully respond to the Synthesis prompt and task.

To help students master this skill, teachers should start by explicitly modeling what synthesis looks like. Walking students through how to extract key ideas, look for connections, and then integrate them into a unified position or insight are critical for successful synthesizing of sources. Think-aloud strategies can be powerful when explaining how thinking evolves by pointing out to students similar or opposing ideas in texts and comparing ideas or recognizing contradictions.

Scaffolding texts is crucial. Early in the synthesis introduction process, consider providing graphic organizers or sentence frames that prompt students to link texts logically (e.g., “While Source A *emphasizes* \_\_\_\_, Source B *reveals* that \_\_\_\_,” or “Together, these texts *suggest* that \_\_\_\_”). Students should note verbs in this exercise because verbs illustrate a point of view in the source and, potentially, the position a student can take. Encourage students to consider the *why* behind each source’s point of view and how those perspectives interact. Ask students to synthesize two readings into a short paragraph before composing a full essay. Give them feedback focused specifically on synthesis—not grammar or formatting—so they can refine their analytical thinking.

Finally, emphasize purpose. Students often confuse synthesis with summary unless they understand its goal: to generate a thoughtful, original response to a question or issue. Show examples of high-level synthesis in real-world writing—such as editorials, policy briefs, or academic essays—to reinforce this. Remind students that synthesis is about *building* something new from existing materials, not just repeating what was said.

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

- Teachers will find example responses for this free-response question (FRQ) on the [AP Central AP English Language and Composition Exam page](#), along with scoring notes and specific commentary explaining why each point was or was not earned.
- The AP English Language and Composition [Course and Exam Description](#) (CED) includes a diverse collection of resources, including the Instructional Approaches section, which has a dedicated description of approaches for the Synthesis FRQ.
- Teachers will find formative assessment practice for Synthesis in Unit 3, Unit 6, and Unit 9 [AP Classroom Progress Checks](#). These FRQs are scaffolded to provide students support as they

practice synthesizing sources and constructing their own argument. Specifically, the Unit 3 FRQ Progress Check breaks the Synthesis task into bite-size pieces to guide students into the development of a response.

- Teachers may also make use of the released [Synthesis FRQs in the AP Classroom Question Bank](#) as a part of classroom practice for students. Simply filter the Question Type for FRQ: Synthesis. To practice with a factors-style Synthesis prompt like the one featured on this year’s FRQ 1, teachers might consider using the following prompts: “Light Pollution,” “Factors for Establishing a Wind Farm,” and “Space Exploration.”
- Many of the [AP Daily Videos](#) located in AP Classroom will support building students’ skills specifically for the Synthesis question. Listed below are some of the AP Daily Videos that offer a range of entry points for students who are working to develop and refine their synthesis skills.
  - Unit 1: Skill 3.A: Daily Video 3
    - Strong responses were more successful at embedding quotations from sources into their writing. This AP Daily Video explains how to introduce quoted, paraphrased, and summarized information from sources.
  - Unit 3: Skill 4.A Daily Video 3
    - As identified above, stronger responses were better at connecting their cited sources to their argument. This video describes how to build a line of reasoning and ensure that the utilized sources support the student’s claims. It also provides a sample support paragraph that incorporates multiple sources in one paragraph.
  - Unit 3: Skill 6A: Daily Video 2
    - This video builds upon the discussion of line of reasoning with a greater emphasis on using commentary to link the source to the claim. It also highlights the difference between summarizing and analyzing evidence, which is a marker of stronger responses.

## Question 2

**Task:** Rhetorical Analysis

**Topic:** David Treuer Excerpt

**Max Score:** 6

**Mean Score:** 3.30

### ***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

The students responding to this question were instructed to read an excerpt from David Treuer’s nonfiction book, *Rez Life: An Indian’s Journey Through Reservation Life*, and then write an essay that analyzed the rhetorical choices Treuer made to develop his argument about the contributions that Native Americans and their communities have made to the United States. Students were expected to respond to the prompt with a thesis that analyzed the writer’s rhetorical choices; select and use evidence to support their claims; explain how the evidence supported their argument to form a line of reasoning; demonstrate an understanding of the rhetorical situation; and use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating their argument.

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

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

The prompt was relatively accessible and gave students the opportunity to address the contributions of individual Native Americans and/or the contributions of Native American tribes and groups. Typically, responses addressed how Native American contributions have been a significant part of the American story. Responses that earned higher scores had thesis statements that recognized the rhetorical choices Treuer made to acknowledge the contributions of Native Americans and their purpose behind those choices, such as, “In his nonfiction book, David Treuer communicates his message that Native Americans and their communities have contributed to the building of the foundation of the United States to his readers, and ultimately urges them to realize how important they have been to the development and sustainment of America through the effective use of organization and by alluding to many famous historical people and events.”

Responses that earned a point in Row A identified Treuer’s rhetorical strategies and tied them to the contributions Native Americans made, while those that did not earn this point struggled to include or address contributions made by Native Americans and their communities, as well as include rhetorical strategies. The rhetorical choices that were used most commonly were historical allusions, the author’s positionality, juxtaposition, comparisons, organization, interjections, and symbolism. Some of the more sophisticated responses understood the use of the sign as something that is meant to inform readers and drivers while also recognizing highway signs are soon forgotten, just as the contributions that Treuer shares about Native Americans have been forgotten.

Students recognized Treuer’s ethos as a member of the Ojibwe Tribe, which encouraged his readers to trust his perspective. Stronger responses connected how his ethos and his informational tone helped make readers receptive to his argument about the many contributions of Native Americans to the United States.

Many of the responses that earned the point in Row C did so by recognizing the significance of Treuer’s rhetorical choices given the rhetorical situation and pairing that with an explanation of the passage’s complexities, such as in the following: “Treuer effectively manages to transmit a sense of patriotism surrounding Indian Americans and use the possible patriotism of his readers in his favor. Additionally, these pieces of information also contribute logically to his argument, as it effectively supports his idea that Indian Americans have indeed made great contributions to the United States, even participating on its independization.”

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

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weaker responses earned the point in Row A but often had thesis statements that repeated information from the prompt and oversimplified Treuer’s argument. For example, one thesis statement stated, “David Treuer is a member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, a tribal nation in Minnesota. In the book “Rez Life,” Treuer uses research and personal experiences to explore the history of reservations and the issues that affect Native Americans who live on them today.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger responses developed layered thesis statements that identified the choices Treuer made while explaining how these choices related to his purpose, such as, “Treuer develops his argument by providing the reader with images of Native American signs, examples of significant cultural moments, repetition of accomplishments. Collectively these strategies convey the importance of understanding and valuing the contributions of Native Americans to society in the US and no longer letting their actions go unrecognized.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses that scored lower tended to incorporate evidence that was mostly general. One example of a response providing broad generalities for evidence is, “Treuer paints this serene painting of how it’s like being Native American. The indigenous people of the United States have created this culture that stands for peace and refuses to let their history die. Treuer uses imagery to show that Native Americans have been through a lot and even forgotten about, but that doesn’t stop them from remembering their rich past.”</li> <li>• Furthermore, these responses often struggled to develop a line of reasoning. In the example above, the simplistic explanation does not explain the connection between the evidence and the student’s claim, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger responses uniformly offered evidence to support claims. One response supported the claim that Treuer juxtaposed American culture with Native Americans with specific words and details from the passage: “He first compares them by saying ‘Indian reservations, and those of us who live on them, are as American as apple pie, baseball, and muscle cars’ (para. 4).” This response developed a line of reasoning by explaining how these choices contributed to Treuer’s argument: “Treuer invokes common images of American culture as a way to illustrate his point that they carry the same amount of importance in American culture as things like our ‘national pastime’ (baseball) or foods that remind us of our country (apple pie). This comparison puts weight on his argument that Native Americans are an important part of American culture, and that their contributions have shaped parts of our national identity in the same way that these images have.”</li> </ul>

**Based on your experience at the AP<sup>®</sup> Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?**

Helping students connect their evidence to their thesis through commentary would be an ideal first step. With this free-response question, lower-scoring responses recognized that Treuer uses rhetorical strategies and choices, but they often had difficulty explaining how these choices prompted the reader to understand, and more importantly act on, Treuer’s message. Guiding students to consider the various functions of a writer’s choice, especially how it connects to their interpretation of the passage, would help strengthen the line of reasoning.

Another area to provide instruction is to help students identify the rhetorical situation from texts without an obvious audience. While the audience of Treuer’s text might not be as explicit as a speech, stronger students demonstrated an understanding of Treuer’s rhetorical situation and thus applied that knowledge when analyzing the writer’s choices. One strategy is to encourage students to thoroughly annotate and consider what information about the rhetorical situation can be derived from the prompt. These opportunities would help students be able to identify rhetorical moves and share how these choices are intended to move readers. When students understand what has inspired an author to write and how the author organized their writing for a particular effect, they are able to respond to prompts like those presented on the exam confidently.

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

- Teachers will find example responses for this free-response question (FRQ) on the [AP Central AP English Language and Composition Exam page](#), along with scoring notes and specific commentary explaining why each point was or was not earned.
- The AP English Language and Composition [Course and Exam Description](#) (CED) includes a diverse collection of resources, including the Instructional Approaches section, which has a dedicated description of approaches for Rhetorical Analysis.
- Teachers will find formative assessment practice for Rhetorical Analysis in Units 1, 4, and 7 [AP Classroom Progress Checks](#). These FRQs are scaffolded to provide students support as they practice examining the rhetorical situation and rhetorical choices that authors/speakers employ.
- Teachers may also make use of the released [Rhetorical Analysis FRQs in the AP Classroom Question Bank](#) as a part of classroom practice for students. Simply filter the Question Type for FRQ: Rhetorical Analysis. To practice rhetorical analysis with texts from a book or opinion article like those featured on this year’s FRQ 2, teachers might consider using the following prompts: “Stamper 2017 Preface to Word by Word,” “Urschel and Thomas 2019 Preface to Mind and Matter,” and “Sasse\_Summer Jobs\_Rhetorical Analysis.”
- Many of the [AP Daily Videos](#) located in AP Classroom will support building students’ skills specifically for the Rhetorical Analysis. Listed below are some of the AP Daily Videos that offer a range of entry points for students who are working to develop and refine their Rhetorical Analysis skills.
  - Practice Session 5: FRQ (Rhetorical Analysis)
    - Students who struggled to develop a complex thesis statement often relied on language from the prompt. This video provides strategies to help students go beyond the prompt and identify the larger message of the passage.
  - Unit 3: Skill 6.A: Daily Video 3
    - As described in this Chief Reader Report, rich commentary was characteristic of strong responses. These tend to focus on specific words and details from the example when analyzing the choice. This video addresses incorporating evidence and provides

sample questions for students to ask themselves when analyzing a rhetorical choice the writer makes.

- Unit 4: Skill 2A: Daily Video 1
  - One trait of weaker responses was an oversimplified thesis that relied heavily on the language of the prompt. This video instructs students on how to craft a thesis statement (including examples of both open and closed theses) that indicates a complex understanding of the passage.

### Question 3

**Task:** Argument

**Topic:** Embracing the Present

**Max Score:** 6

**Mean Score:** 3.64

#### ***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

Students responding to this question were expected to read a quotation from Naomi Osaka on embracing the present moment and write a response that argued their position on the extent to which Osaka’s claim about embracing the present moment is valid. Students were expected to respond to the prompt with a thesis that presented a defensible position; provide evidence to support their claim; explain how the evidence supported their line of reasoning; and use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating their argument.

As per the Course and Exam Description, students were expected to be able to select evidence to develop and refine their claims, use appropriate reasoning to support their arguments, and connect the evidence to the argument in a line of reasoning.

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

The prompt was highly accessible; virtually all responses were able to address some aspect of Osaka’s claim in a relevant fashion. Osaka’s wording allowed for a variety of responses and evidence, inviting students to approach “embracing the present moment” in a variety of ways. Many students built on the idea of not losing sight of personal progress because of concerns about the future, but others envisioned being present as a conscious focus on the present instead of the past. The vast majority of students interpreted “valid” to mean “a positive approach to life” as measured by personal fulfillment or the ability to achieve goals. Few students focused on the ethical implications of “embracing the present moment” as a type of validity.

Many responses leaned heavily on personal experiences and sports as evidence. Personal anecdotes were most successful when students could identify the specific impact of an experience and explain that the causal mechanism of that impact grew out of their specific context. This provided an anchoring point to integrate that evidence into the larger line of reasoning. In the same way, examples that pulled from national figures—primarily in sports—were most successful when students were able to relate specific details about the individual’s personal narrative and explain what and how that narrative demonstrated a specific case of “embracing the present moment” (or a counter to that approach).

There were some strong responses that leaned heavily on hypothetical evidence. The abstract nature of the task invited students to explore what might have happened if an individual did or did not choose “living in the moment.” Students were successful with hypothetical examples when their explanations were grounded in specific observations about human nature and society in a convincing way. Likewise, there were strong responses that drew from imaginative texts, including novels and movies. Again, the evidence was effective when specific elements and causal relationships were integrated into the line of reasoning through clear explanations.

Many responses demonstrated sophistication of thought in a variety of ways. One effective approach was addressing the complexities and tensions created by conflicting benefits of focusing on the past, present, and future without reducing the argument to a simple solution.

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

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weaker responses failed to establish what “living in the moment” meant within the student’s argument. Many included a general thesis such as “Living in the moment is extremely valid” or “Osaka’s claim is incredibly valid,” but the explanations did not develop any specifics or connect to any consistent sense of what these general statements meant. Thus, responses like these struggled to build a line of reasoning. Some students did not demonstrate that they knew what “living in the moment” meant, and so they could not explain how a specific piece of evidence related to the claim, thus preventing them from developing a line of reasoning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While stronger responses did not always explicitly define “living in the moment” in their thesis, the responses did provide the explanations of evidence that indicated an understanding of what the phrase meant within the argument. In these cases, the student consistently approached “living in the moment” as one specific thing, such as being focused on your immediate surroundings or as not being distracted by the opinions of others. Some students successfully explored more than one understanding of the expression. In these responses, the explanations clarified how the meaning shifted.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At times, weaker responses consisted of a series of loosely related simplistic, repetitive claims inspired by the idea of “living in the moment” but without any specific evidence or explanations. They appeared to be a repetition of received wisdom presented as advice for the reader, not defensible positions about the topic. For example, “Living in the moment can make one feel content with where they stand in life because they can stand back and observe what they’ve accomplished and how far they have come in their life. An individual can accomplish everything they’ve ever wanted, but if they don’t live in the moment and they’re hung up on the future or the past; they won’t see how hard they’ve worked. Living in the moment can make people stop and see how many goals of theirs they’ve accomplished. If the individual can look at how far they’ve come, they can feel happy with their lives and can make them realize that they have everything they need. Being content with what one may already have can help them put everything into perspective and figure out what else they want to do.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger responses crafted more nuanced arguments and focused more on providing specific evidence and exploring the implications of “embracing the present moment” in terms of impact or outcomes. For example, one response closed a longer discussion with the observation, “In our culture, satisfaction is seen as submission. We see it as giving up. But who is happier--someone who is perfectly content with their job or someone who is never, ever satisfied? My own father is another example of this. He has previously worked directly under the director of the museum he works at, but chose eventually to return to his old job one step lower which he enjoyed more. He has stayed at his job for 25 years, though he could’ve made more money elsewhere with his experience, because he is content with where he is, we are comfortable, and he cares about the museum he works at.”</li> </ul>

- Weaker responses often included a weak attempt to address a counterargument in an isolated way. An illustrative example of this approach is, “Some argue that embracing the present moment can lead to people losing sight of their goals, and that therefore it is not a beneficial thing, While living in the moment may.” This was then followed by a repetitive discussion of that concept before dismissing it as invalid with minimal explanation.

- Stronger responses did not always include an explicit counterargument. Instead, they either integrated anticipated objections within a broader paragraph on a specific claim, or they did not take a binary approach to the position. For example, one strong response specified that “living in the moment” was one aspect of “keeping a positive mindset” and then clarified that whether one was living in the moment or reflecting on the past, the focus on positive or negative events was the decisive element.

***Based on your experience at the AP<sup>®</sup> Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?***

Students need experience connecting abstract concepts to concrete examples. In addition to selecting appropriate evidence, students need opportunities to define concepts in meaningful ways and develop language that identifies how a specific example represents that concept. This could be done in a variety of formats: structured and organic discussion, idea maps and graphic organizers, and informal and formal writing opportunities.

Anticipation and addressing counterarguments are important skills in argumentation; however, teachers should avoid requiring a specific counterargument paragraph in student responses. Not all lines of reasoning are strengthened by a counterargument. Furthermore, these obligatory counterargument paragraphs often fail because the student either creates a strawman or fails to really address the issue. There is a lack of authentic understanding or engagement in these forced attempts. Students need to be presented with multiple ways to address complexities and tensions that go beyond an attempt to dismiss an opposing point of view.

Some of the strongest responses focused on making distinctions rather than taking a side. For example, some students distinguished “living in the past” from “remembering the past;” others drew a distinction between different types of “living in the moment.” Students need classroom activities that avoid reducing positions to binaries and instead provide opportunities to see how multiple nuanced claims can be built out of the same questions. For example, class discussions should not always be framed as two-sided debates.

Teachers should also make a point to select texts that demonstrate how writers define abstract concepts prior to explaining them or making connections to them. Teachers should also consider texts that provide rich examples for illustrating aspects of human nature or society. This can come in the form of fiction or nonfiction narratives, but also in works of science, philosophy, and business, technology, etc. Students should practice using these outside observations to support their own positions.

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

- Teachers will find example responses for this free-response question (FRQ) on the [AP Central AP English Language and Composition Exam page](#), along with scoring notes and specific commentary explaining why each point was or was not earned.
- The AP English Language and Composition [Course and Exam Description](#) (CED) includes a diverse collection of resources, including the Instructional Approaches section, which has a dedicated description of approaches for the Argument question.

- Teachers will find formative assessment practice for Argument in Unit 2, Unit 5, and Unit 8 [AP Classroom Progress Checks](#). These FRQs are scaffolded to provide students support as they practice constructing their own argument.
- Teachers may also make use of the released [Argument FRQs in the AP Classroom Question Bank](#) as a part of classroom practice for students. Simply filter the Question Type for FRQ: Argument. To practice with prompts in which personal anecdotes are relevant, similar to those featured on this year’s FRQ 3, teachers might consider using the following prompts: “Value of Exploring the Unknown,” “Grit,” “Value of Perfection,” and “Pursuit of Happiness.”
- Many of the [AP Daily Videos](#) located in AP Classroom will support building students’ skills specifically for the Argument FRQ. Listed below are some of the AP Daily Videos that offer a range of entry points for students who are working to develop and refine their Argument skills.
  - Unit 4: Skill 6.C: Daily Video 2
    - This video discusses personal examples as a sufficient way to support a claim. It focuses on advancing an argument through definition and description, two modes that rely heavily on anecdotes like this year’s prompt.
  - 2022 Review Session 7: Argument Task: Analyzing the Prompt
    - Strong responses demonstrated a complex understanding of the nuances and complexities of the quotation. This video provides and applies an acronym to a sample prompt to instruct students how to identify potential issues or impacts revealed through an Argument prompt.
  - 2024 Practice Session 8: FRQ (Question 3: Argument)
    - This video unpacks the “Value of Exploring the Unknown” prompt, specifically highlighting how to successfully include personal anecdotes as evidence. It also provides instruction on incorporating specific details to strengthen evidence.