

AP ESSAY RUBRIC

This is the rubric used by graders of the AP Literature exam essays in June. Read it carefully and review it frequently so that you become familiar with the criteria for each score. Review this rubric every time you are revising a timed writing essay or considering the score you earned on a timed writing. This rubric is more instructive and relevant to your growth as an AP Lit student than the points into which your timed writing score is converted.

9-8 (50/50, 49/50, 48/50)

These well-focused and persuasive essays address the prompt directly and in a convincing manner. An essay scored a 9 demonstrates exceptional insight and language facility. An essay scored an 8 or a 9 combines adherence to the topic with excellent organization, content, insight, facile use of language, mastery of mechanics, and an understanding of the essential components of an effective essay. Literary devices and/or techniques are not merely listed, but the effect of those devices and/or techniques is addressed in context of the passage, poem, or novel as a whole. Although not without flaws, these essays are richly detailed and stylistically resourceful, and they connect the observations to the passage, poem, or novel as a whole. Descriptors that come to mind while reading this essay include: mastery, sophisticated, complex, specific, consistent, and well-supported.

If you work at this level, you have achieved critical thinking at the synthesis and evaluation levels of Bloom's taxonomy. This means you put together the literary elements you have broken the piece into (through analysis), and present to your reader a sophisticated, critical understanding of the literature that indicates you have a clearly developed aesthetic or rhetorical sense regarding the piece. Your inferences are well-reasoned and thoroughly developed, demonstrating that you have been "moved" in some way by the piece and have a powerful response to it.

7-6 (47/50, 46/50)

These highly competent essays comprehend the task set forth by the prompt and respond to it directly, although some of the analysis may be implicit rather than explicit. The 7 essay is in many ways a thinner version of the 9-8 paper in terms of discussion and supporting details, but it is still impressive, cogent, and generally convincing. It may also be less well-handled in terms of organization, insight, or vocabulary. Descriptors that come to mind while reading these essays include: demonstrates a clear understanding but is less precise and less well-supported than a 9-8 paper. These essays demonstrate an adherence to the task, but deviate from course on occasion. The mechanics are sound, but may contain a few errors which may distract but do not obscure meaning. Although there may be a few minor misreadings, the inferences are for the most part accurate with no significant sustained misreadings. An essay that scores a 6 is an upper-half paper, but it may be deficient in one of the essentials mentioned above. It may be less mature in thought or less well-handled in terms of organization, syntax or mechanics. The analysis is somewhat more simplistic than found in a 7 essay, and lacks sustained, mature analysis.

If you work at this level, you have achieved critical thinking at the analysis level of Bloom's taxonomy. This means you have broken the material down into its constituent literary parts and detected relationships of the parts and of the way they are organized. However, your inferences are not as insightful and/or well-developed as an 8 – 9 essay.

5 (45/50, 44/50, 43/50)

These essays may be overly simplistic in analysis, or rely almost exclusively on paraphrase rather than specific, textual examples. These essays may provide a plausible reading, but the analysis is implicit rather than explicit. These essays might provide a list of literary devices present in the literature, but make no effort to discuss the effect that these devices have on the poem, passage, or novel as a whole. Descriptors that come to mind when reading include: superficial, vague, and mechanical. The language is simplistic and the insight is limited or lacking in development.

If you work at this level, you have achieved comprehension of the material and some analysis, but your analysis is not sufficiently developed.

4-3 (42/50, 41/50, 40/50, 39/50, 38/50)

These lower-half essays compound the problems found in the 5 essay. They often demonstrate significant sustained misreadings, and provide little or no analysis. They maintain the general idea of the writing assignment, show some sense of organization, but are weak in content, maturity of thought, language facility, and/or mechanics. They may distort the topic or fail to deal adequately with one or more important aspects of the topic. Essays that are particularly poorly written may be scored a 3. Descriptors that come to mind while reading include: incomplete, oversimplified, meager, irrelevant, and insufficient.

If you work at this level, you have achieved comprehension of the material but you have not moved into higher level thinking skills. You are not making insightful, developed inferences through careful analysis of the text.

2-1 (37/50 and below)

These essays make an attempt to deal with the topic but demonstrate serious weakness in content and coherence and/or syntax and mechanics. Often, they are unacceptably short. They are poorly written on several counts, including numerous distracting errors in mechanics, and/or little clarity, coherence, or supporting evidence. Wholly vacuous, inept, and mechanically unsound essays should be scored a 1.

If you work at this level, you do not adequately comprehend the piece assigned and have not yet begun to work cognitively with this piece of literature.

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A zero is given to a response with no more than a passing reference to the task.

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The dash indicates a blank response or one with no reference to the task.