

| Specific Criteria  | Feedback & Comments |
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| <b>Content</b>   |                     |
| Student offers a <u>compelling interpretation</u> of the passage, demonstrating with clarity and precision how the author directs our perceptions of the subject or expresses attitude in a meaningful way.                                  |                     |
| Student uses apt and specific <u>textual evidence</u> to support (but not dominate) clearly articulated arguments.   |                     |
| Student is convincingly specific about <u>literary techniques</u> used in the passage and why these techniques are significant.  |                     |
| Student astutely recognizes <u>complexities and nuances</u> in the passage that are essential to the author's presentation of the subject.   |                     |
| <b>Organization</b>  |                     |
| Introduction is engaging and purposeful, and conclusion is necessary and satisfying. (NOTE: An excellent timed-write <i>can skip</i> the traditional introduction and conclusion in favor of developing your analysis as fully as possible.) |                     |
| Paragraphs are logically sequenced and thoroughly developed.   |                     |
| Smooth transitions link ideas together coherently wherever the essay shifts from one idea to another.  |                     |
| Quotations are integrated seamlessly, in a way that maintains the flow of the writer's ideas.  |                     |
| Organization is solid yet sophisticated. Writer uses a structure that <u>fits</u> the passage under discussion and <u>avoids</u> formulaic organization.   |                     |
| <b>Style</b>   |                     |
| Diction is precise.  |                     |
| Sentences are appropriately varied in pattern.   |                     |
| Style is clear, concise, fresh, natural, and fluid.  |                     |
| Voice is active, direct, clear, interesting, and appropriate.  |                     |
| <b>Conventions</b>   |                     |
| Essay demonstrates mastery of English conventions—including correct grammar, punctuation, and mechanics—and includes only <u>inconsequential errors</u> , if any.  |                     |
| Sentences are clear and well-constructed.  |                     |
| Quotations are formatted properly.   |                     |
| Handwriting is legible.  |                     |

| Holistic Characteristics of Essays at Each Score-Level |  |
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| <b>9 to 8</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ These well-conceived and well-ordered essays offer a <b>compelling interpretation</b> of the passage, demonstrating with <b>clarity and precision</b> how the author directs our perceptions of the subject or expresses attitude in a meaningful way.</li> <li>▪ Using <b>apt and specific references to the text</b>, these essays are <b>convincingly specific about literary techniques</b> used in the passage and <b>why these techniques are effective</b>. Writers of these essays also demonstrate an astute ability to <b>recognize key complexities or nuances</b> in the passage that are essential to the author's presentation of the subject.</li> <li>▪ Though the writing need not be without flaws, it exhibits <b>stylistic maturity</b> through an <b>effective command</b> of sentence structure, diction, and organization, and it reveals the writer's ability to choose from and <b>control</b> a wide range of the elements of effective writing.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>7 to 6</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ These essays reflect a <b>sound grasp</b> of the passage, giving a <b>competent</b> account of how the author expresses attitude(s) in the passage or presents the subject in a meaningful way.</li> <li>▪ These essays offer significant insights into the passage, but their discussion of the passage may be <b>more generalized and less precise</b> than essays in the 9-8 range, their treatment of the literary techniques may be <b>less convincing or less specific</b>, or they may even demonstrate minor errors of interpretation. Statements are supported by relevant evidence, but with less specificity or effectiveness than the highest scoring essays.</li> <li>▪ These essays are <b>well-written</b> in an appropriate style, but with <b>less stylistic maturity</b> than the top papers. Some lapses in diction or syntax may appear, but the writing still demonstrates <b>sufficient control</b> over the elements of composition to present the writer's ideas clearly.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>5</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ These essays tend to offer a <b>superficial interpretation of the passage</b>, in which they respond to the assigned task but probably say little beyond the most easily grasped observations.</li> <li>▪ Their <b>analysis</b> of how the author communicates attitude or meaning may be <b>vague, formulaic, or inadequately supported</b>. The writer's treatment of important literary techniques in the passage tends to be general and minimal, and the use of supporting evidence tends to be vague and unpersuasive—often relying more on paraphrase than on textual quotation. These essays may even suffer from the cumulative force of many minor misreadings.</li> <li>▪ These essays are <b>adequately written</b> to convey the writer's thoughts, but they may demonstrate <b>inconsistent control</b> over the elements of composition. <u>While egregious mechanical errors do not constitute a distraction</u>, these essays are nonetheless not as well-conceived, organized, or developed as upper-half papers.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>4 to 3</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ These lower-half essays address the passage and the directions, but they reveal <b>an incomplete understanding</b> of the passage and perhaps an insufficient understanding of the prescribed task.</li> <li>▪ The <b>analysis</b> may be <b>partial, unconvincing, or irrelevant</b>—or it may rely essentially on paraphrase or plot summary. These essays may misinterpret significant parts of the passage, and evidence from the text may be meager or misconstrued. They also seem weak in their treatment of literary devices; one or more specified techniques may be omitted.</li> <li>▪ The writing is <b>just sufficient</b> to convey the writer's ideas, but it demonstrates <b>weak control</b> over the elements of composition (such as diction, syntax, and organization), often exhibiting <b>recurrent stylistic flaws</b> and/or inadequate development of ideas. These essays may contain consistent spelling errors or some flaws in grammar.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note: Essays scored 3 may contain significant misreading and/or unusually inept writing.</b></p> |
| <b>2 to 1</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ These essays compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4-3 range, and they are <b>unacceptably brief or poorly written</b> on several counts. They may seriously misread the passage, revealing some fundamental misunderstanding of the passage or concentrating on an irrelevant or farfetched interpretation.</li> <li>▪ Although they attempt to respond to the question and may make some reasonable observations about the passage, the writer's assertions are presented with <b>little clarity, organization, or evidence</b>.</li> <li>▪ These essays often contain <b>many distracting errors</b> in grammar and mechanics, and they reveal <b>consistent weaknesses</b> in grammar or another of the basic elements of composition.</li> </ul>  |