

2025

AP[®] English Language and Composition

Scoring Guidelines

Set 2

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Synthesis Essay**6 points**

Mapping software and Global Positioning System (GPS) devices are used regularly by travelers and commuters. Since these devices and apps are updated in real time with user-supplied information, they have become associated with a number of problems. While commuters attempt to avoid traffic on highways, they often create traffic on smaller, local roads that are less able to handle this new burden. Users also lose a sense of their geographical surroundings as they rely more on mapping software or GPS devices for navigation.

Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the sources and develops your position on the value, if any, of mapping software and devices.

Source A (Foderaro article)

Source B (National Research Council book)

Source C (graph from He)

Source D (Grabar article)

Source E (chart from BuildFire)

Source F (Paulas article)

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
- Select and use evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support your line of reasoning. Indicate clearly the sources used through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. Sources may be cited as Source A, Source B, etc., or by using the description in parentheses.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Thesis (0–1 points)	0 points For any of the following: - There is no defensible thesis. - The intended thesis only restates the prompt. - The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. - There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt.	1 point Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Only restate the prompt. - Do not take a position, or the position is vague or must be inferred. - Equivocate or summarize other’s arguments but not the student’s (e.g., some people say it’s good, some people say it’s bad). - State an obvious fact rather than making a claim that requires a defense.	Responses that earn this point: Respond to the prompt by developing a position on the value, if any, of mapping software and devices, rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt. Clearly take a position rather than just stating there are pros/cons.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt <i>“Many people use GPS to get around because information can be updated by users to provide real-time traffic updates.”</i> Address the topic of the prompt but do not take a position <i>“There are some advantages and some disadvantages to using GPS.”</i> Address the topic of the prompt but state an obvious fact as a claim <i>“If you rely on GPS to get everywhere, you will be able to see many different neighborhoods as you navigate to your destination.”</i>	Examples that earn this point: Present a defensible position that responds to the prompt <i>“GPS is valuable because it helps people get where they need to go as efficiently as possible.”</i> <i>“Mapping apps can be a valuable tool to help people keep from getting lost. It can also make their lives easier but only if people use them when absolutely needed.”</i> <i>“Although GPS may seem like a good thing, the harm that it does to local roads and the way it affects your understanding of your surroundings mean that its disadvantages ultimately outweigh its value.”</i>
Additional Notes: - The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. - The thesis may be anywhere within the response. - For a thesis to be defensible, the sources must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. - The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn’t do so to earn the thesis point. - A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
Row B Evidence AND Commentary (0–4 points)	0 points Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or references fewer than two of the provided sources.	1 point EVIDENCE: Provides evidence from or references at least two of the provided sources. AND COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student’s argument.	2 points EVIDENCE: Provides evidence from or references at least three of the provided sources. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.	3 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.	4 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes				
	Typical responses that earn 0 points: - Are incoherent or do not address the prompt. - May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant.	Typical responses that earn 1 point: Tend to focus on summary or description of sources rather than specific details.	Typical responses that earn 2 points: - Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities. - May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument. - May make one point well but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim. - Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established.	Typical responses that earn 3 points: - Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. - Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the sources to build an argument. - Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. - Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim.	Typical responses that earn 4 points: - Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. - Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the sources to build an argument. - Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained.
Additional Note: Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row.					

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row C Sophistication (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Attempt to contextualize their argument, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (<i>“In a world where ...” OR “Since the beginning of time ...”</i>). - Only hint at or suggest other arguments (<i>“While some may argue that ...” OR “Some people say ...”</i>). - Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the argument.	Responses that earn this point may demonstrate sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation by doing any of the following: - Crafting a nuanced argument by consistently identifying and exploring complexities or tensions across the sources. - Articulating the implications or limitations of an argument (either the student’s argument or arguments conveyed in the sources) by situating it within a broader context. - Making effective rhetorical choices that consistently strengthen the force and impact of the student’s argument throughout the response. - Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.
	Additional Note: This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference.	

Rhetorical Analysis**6 points**

Raquel Vasquez Gilliland is a Mexican American poet, novelist, and painter whose works focus on myths, folklore, motherhood, and plants. In 2023 she published an opinion article in *The New York Times* titled “Go Outside, Sink Your Feet Into the Dirt and Engage With the World.” The following is an excerpt from that opinion article. Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Vasquez Gilliland makes to develop her argument about the value of engaging with nature.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the rhetorical situation.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Thesis (0–1 points)	0 points For any of the following: - There is no defensible thesis. - The intended thesis only restates the prompt. - The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. - There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt.	1 point Responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Only restate the prompt. - Fail to address the rhetorical choices the writer of the passage makes. - Describe or repeat the passage rather than making a claim that requires a defense.	Responses that earn this point: Respond to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt <u>and</u> clearly articulate a defensible thesis about the rhetorical choices Vasquez Gilliland makes to develop her argument about the value of engaging with nature.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt “In her op-ed ‘Go Outside, Sink Your Feet Into the Dirt and Engage With the World,’ Vasquez Gilliland shows that there is value in connecting to the land.” Make a claim but do not address the writer’s rhetorical choices “In the passage, Vasquez Gilliland says she gets inspiration from nature to help her with her writing.” Repeat provided information from the passage “Vasquez Gilliland became interested in nature at a young age when she first saw a dove land on her grandmother’s hand after she had called out to it.”	Examples that earn this point: Present a defensible thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices “Raquel Vasquez Gilliland argues for the value of engaging with nature by relying extensively on imagery.” “Vasquez Gilliland uses many moving personal anecdotes to show the benefits of spending time with nature. This is especially true today when we are often isolated and obsessed with social media.” “By relating to the audience and describing her relationship with nature, Vasquez Gilliland suggests that the land has the power to ground people and help them solve sometimes practical, sometimes philosophical problems.”
	Additional Notes: - The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. - The thesis may be anywhere within the response. - For a thesis to be defensible, the passage must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. - The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn’t do so to earn the thesis point. - A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
Row B Evidence AND Commentary (0–4 points)	0 points Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.	1 point EVIDENCE: Provides evidence that is mostly general. AND COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student’s argument.	2 points EVIDENCE: Provides some specific, relevant evidence. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.	3 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning. AND Explains how at least one rhetorical choice in the passage contributes to the writer’s argument, purpose, or message.	4 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning. AND Explains how multiple rhetorical choices in the passage contribute to the writer’s argument, purpose, or message.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes				
	Typical responses that earn 0 points: - Are incoherent or do not address the prompt. - May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant.	Typical responses that earn 1 point: - Tend to focus on summary or description of a passage rather than specific details or techniques. - Mention rhetorical choices with little or no explanation.	Typical responses that earn 2 points: - Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities. - May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument. - May make one point well but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim. - Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established.	Typical responses that earn 3 points: - Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. - Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage to build an argument. - Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. - Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim.	Typical responses that earn 4 points: - Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. - Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage to build an argument. - Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained. - Explain how the writer’s use of rhetorical choices contributes to the student’s interpretation of the passage.
Additional Notes: - Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row. - To earn the fourth point in this row, the response may observe multiple instances of the same rhetorical choice if each instance further contributes to the argument, purpose, or message of the passage.					

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row C Sophistication (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Attempt to contextualize the text, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (<i>“In a world where ...”</i> OR <i>“Since the beginning of time ...”</i>). - Only hint at or suggest other arguments (<i>“While some may argue that ...”</i> OR <i>“Some people say ...”</i>). - Examine individual rhetorical choices but do not examine the relationships among different choices throughout the text. - Oversimplify complexities in the text. - Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance their analysis.	Responses that earn this point may demonstrate sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation by doing any of the following: - Explaining the significance or relevance of the writer’s rhetorical choices (given the rhetorical situation). - Explaining a purpose or function of the passage’s complexities or tensions. - Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.
	Additional Note: This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference.	

Argument Essay**6 points**

Amanda Gorman is the first National Youth Poet Laureate of the United States, an honor given to a young person for exceptional artistic expression, civic engagement, and social impact. In a 2021 interview in *Time* magazine, when asked how to maintain optimism¹ in challenging times, Gorman stated: “Optimism shouldn’t be seen as opposed to pessimism,² but in conversation with it. Your optimism will never be as powerful as it is in that exact moment when you want to give it up.”

Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Gorman’s claim about the relationship between optimism and pessimism is valid.

¹a tendency to view things in a positive light

²a tendency to view things in a negative light

In your response you should do the following:

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

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Thesis (0–1 points)	0 points For any of the following: - There is no defensible thesis. - The intended thesis only restates the prompt. - The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. - There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt.	1 point Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Only restate the prompt. - Do not take a position, or the position is vague or must be inferred. - State an obvious fact rather than making a claim that requires a defense.	Responses that earn this point: Respond to the prompt by taking a position on the extent to which Gorman’s claim about the relationship between optimism and pessimism is valid, rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt. Clearly take a position rather than just stating that there are pros/cons.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Do not take a position <i>“Optimism is when you view things positively.”</i> Address the topic of the prompt but are not defensible—it is an obvious fact stated as a claim <i>“There are both optimists and pessimists in this world.”</i>	Examples that earn this point: Present a defensible position that responds to the prompt. <i>“Gorman’s claim about optimism and pessimism is valid.”</i> <i>“While Gorman has a good point about the power of optimism in the face of extreme struggle, pessimism can be an equally powerful and overwhelming force.”</i> <i>“Unwavering optimism is most powerful when the dialogue with pessimism becomes contentious. It is these moments that allow a strength of character to emerge.”</i>
Additional Notes: - The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. - The thesis may be anywhere within the response. - The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn’t do so to earn the thesis point. - A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
Row B Evidence AND Commentary (0–4 points)	0 points Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.	1 point EVIDENCE: Provides evidence that is mostly general. AND COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the argument.	2 points EVIDENCE: Provides some specific, relevant evidence. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.	3 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.	4 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes				
	Typical responses that earn 0 points: - Are incoherent or do not address the prompt. - May be just opinion with no evidence or evidence that is irrelevant.	Typical responses that earn 1 point: Tend to focus on summary of evidence rather than specific details.	Typical responses that earn 2 points: - Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities. - May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument. - May make one point well but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim. - Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established.	Typical responses that earn 3 points: - Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. - Focus on the importance of specific details to build an argument. - Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. - Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim.	Typical responses that earn 4 points: - Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. - Focus on the importance of specific details to build an argument. - Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained.
Additional Note: Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row.					

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row C Sophistication (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Attempt to contextualize their argument, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>In a world where ...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time ...</i>”). - Only hint at or suggest other arguments (“<i>While some may argue that ...</i>” OR “<i>Some people say ...</i>”). - Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the argument.	Responses that earn this point may demonstrate sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation by doing any of the following: - Crafting a nuanced argument by consistently identifying and exploring complexities or tensions. - Articulating the implications or limitations of an argument (either the student’s argument or an argument related to the prompt) by situating it within a broader context. - Making effective rhetorical choices that consistently strengthen the force and impact of the student’s argument. - Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.
	Additional Note: This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference.	