

2025



AP[®] English Language and Composition

Scoring Guidelines

Set 1

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Synthesis Essay**6 points**

As nations and space agencies have sent spacecraft and satellites into space, human-created debris—or “space junk”—has accumulated in orbit around Earth. Space debris may range in size from small parts and flecks of paint to whole defunct satellites, but all of it poses a potential risk if it collides with a spacecraft. Many countries have agreed that the management of space debris is a priority because it poses a threat to space exploration and satellites. However, removing it is difficult and costly.

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 most important factors that space agencies and nations should consider when dealing with the problem of space debris.

Source A (O’Callaghan article)

Source B (graph from ESA)

Source C (Quell article)

Source D (Rossettini opinion article)

Source E (NOAA article)

Source F (chart from Mosher and Kiersz)

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 most important factors that space agencies and nations should consider when dealing with the problem of space debris, 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>"There are several factors space agencies need to consider when they are thinking about how to remove space debris."</i> Address the topic of the prompt but do not take a position <i>"Space debris is accumulating around the planet because of defunct satellites or debris left behind by humans on space missions."</i> Address the topic of the prompt but state an obvious fact as a claim <i>"The amount of space junk orbiting Earth has greatly increased in recent years."</i>	Examples that earn this point: Present a defensible position that responds to the prompt <i>"Cost is the most important factor space agencies and nations need to keep in mind when deciding what to do about the problem of space junk."</i> <i>"There are multiple problems related to space debris. While removing existing space debris is important, the most important factor is preventing more debris from accumulating."</i> <i>"Space agencies need to figure out an effective way to deal with space debris, and they need to make sure that the plan is implemented in a way where the countries and people responsible for putting the debris in space are the ones who pay the costs."</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	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 Notes: 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 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 Notes: 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**

The following is a passage from the introduction to David Treuer’s 2012 nonfiction book *Rez Life: An Indian’s Journey Through Reservation Life*. Treuer is a member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, a tribal nation in Minnesota. In *Rez Life*, Treuer draws on research and personal experience to explore the history of reservations and the issues that affect Native Americans who live on them today. A reservation is an area of land governed by a tribal nation in what is now the United States. Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Treuer makes to develop his argument about the contributions that Native Americans and their communities have made to the United States.

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. Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt <i>“In his book Rez Life: An Indian’s Journey Through Reservation Life, Treuer uses a variety of rhetorical strategies to make his point about the contributions of Native Americans.”</i> Make a claim but do not address the writer’s rhetorical choices <i>“Treuer’s main point is that although most people are not familiar with Indian reservations or Native Americans’ contributions to American society, Native Americans have played a key role in the nation’s history.”</i> Repeat provided information from the passage <i>“Indian reservations can be found all over the United States, and Native Americans have participated in every war America has been involved in.”</i>	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 Treuer makes to develop his argument about the contributions that Native Americans and their communities have made to the United States. Examples that earn this point: Present a defensible thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices <i>“In this passage, Treuer uses interesting facts about Native Americans to show that they have made significant contributions.”</i> <i>“Using rhetorical strategies such as contrast and a humorous yet slightly ironic tone, Treuer calls attention to the fact that Native Americans and Indian reservations are ‘as American as apple pie.’”</i> <i>“In the introduction to his 2012 book, Rez Life: An Indian’s Journey Through Reservation Life, Treuer describes the history of Native Americans and then focuses on their contributions. By combining historical examples with engaging contemporary examples, he shows they are an integral part of US society and history.”</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 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 Notes: 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**

In a 2022 interview with *People* magazine promoting her program to empower young girls through sport, professional tennis player and mental health advocate Naomi Osaka said: “For me, the biggest lesson I’ve learned is to try to be present in each moment. It’s easy to lose sight of how far you’ve come, but I’ve been prioritizing trying to live in the moment and enjoy the journey.”

Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Osaka’s claim about embracing the present moment is valid.

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 Osaka’s claim about embracing the present moment 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>“Living in the moment means ‘being’ in the moment.”</i> Address the topic of the prompt but are not defensible—it is an obvious fact stated as a claim <i>“Life is a journey with many moments for someone to experience.”</i>	Examples that earn this point: Present a defensible position that responds to the prompt. <i>“It is more important that we make long-term plans, so we can reach our goals and so we can enjoy our achievements.”</i> <i>“Osaka is correct. If one doesn’t actively try to ‘live in the moment’ they might struggle to see how much they have grown.”</i> <i>“While living in the moment is good, if one focuses too much on the present, they will be unable to develop the traits and practice the skills needed for future success.”</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 Notes: 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 Notes: 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.	