

Question 3: Literary Argument**6 points**

Many works of literature feature a character who holds a secret that can have broader implications for that character or other characters. For example, such secrets may create conflict, provide a source of consolation, protect characters from reality, or allow one character to manipulate other characters.

Either from your own reading or from the list below, choose a work of fiction in which an important character holds a secret that affects that character's relationship with one or more other characters. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the effect of the character's secret contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

In your response, you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- 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 interpretation of the selected work.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Only restate the prompt. - Make a generalized comment about the selected work that doesn't respond to the prompt.	Responses that earn this point: - Provide a defensible interpretation of the effect of the character's secret. OR - Make a claim about how the effect of the character's secret contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt "Secrets can have broad implications for the characters in a novel." Do not respond to the prompt but make a generalized comment about the selected work "No one knows where Heathcliff's wealth comes from in Emily Bronte's <u>Wuthering Heights</u>." "<u>Passing</u> is a story about two women who have taken very different paths in their lives." "It is difficult to tell exactly what has happened in <u>The Good Soldier</u> because the narrator is unreliable."	Examples that earn this point: Provide a defensible interpretation "In <u>Hamlet</u>, Claudius's secret that he has killed his brother, the king, is what motivates and drives Hamlet to try to get revenge." "Because Winnie has kept so much of her past a secret in Amy Tan's <u>The Kitchen God's Wife</u>, Pearl feels distant from her mother, and in fact keeps her own secrets from her even though she loves her." "Sethe's secret is central to the themes of <u>BeLoved</u>. She must confront the trauma she has experienced and struggle to acknowledge it before she can be released from the past."
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. - A thesis that offers a defensible claim about the effect of the character's secret in the selected work may earn the point; any reasonable student interpretation of "the effect of the character's secret" is acceptable. - For a thesis to be defensible, the selected work 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 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 textual references or references that are irrelevant.	Typical responses that earn 1 point: Tend to focus on overarching narrative developments or description of a selected work 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 from the selected work to build an interpretation. - 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 from the selected work to build an interpretation. - 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. - To earn the fourth point in this row, the response must address the interpretation of the selected work as a whole.					

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 develops a complex literary argument.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Attempt to contextualize their interpretation, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>Human experiences always include ...</i>” OR “<i>In a world where ...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time ...</i>”). - Only hint at or suggest other possible interpretations (“<i>While another reader may see ...</i>” OR “<i>Though the text could be said to ...</i>”). - Oversimplify complexities of the topic and/or the selected work. - Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the student’s argument.	Responses that earn this point may demonstrate a sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument by doing any of the following: - Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the selected work. - Illuminating the student’s interpretation by situating it within a broader context. - Accounting for alternative interpretations of the text. - 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.	