

Question 3: Literary Argument

6 points

In many works of literature, characters may be significantly affected by memories of the past. A character may be inspired by the past, haunted by the past, unable to let go of the past, or motivated by the past to craft a better future.

Either from your own reading or from the list below, choose a work of fiction in which a character is significantly affected by a memory. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the impact of the memory on the character 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 impact of a memory on a character in the selected work. OR • Make a claim about how the impact of a memory on a character contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole.
Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt • “Literary characters are often motivated by their memories of the past to craft a better future.” Do not respond to the prompt but make a generalized comment about the selected work • “Memories of the past have a big impact on the events of <i>The Scarlet Letter</i>.” • “In <i>Beloved</i>, Sethe and Paul D remember each other from when they were enslaved at the plantation Sweet Home.” • “Macbeth shares the memory of what the witches said about his future with his wife.”		Examples that earn this point: Provide a defensible interpretation • “In <i>The Odyssey</i>, Odysseus’s memories of his home inspire him to continue his quest to return. Even when it would be easy for him to give up on Calypso’s island, Odysseus’s memories press him to complete his quest.” • “Axl’s experience in Ishiguro’s <i>The Buried Giant</i> shows how remembering the past can be a source of conflict as much as a source of clarity and understanding.” • “In <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>, Septimus’s memories of his wartime experiences have made him unable to live a normal life. He has hallucinations of his friend Evan and is overwhelmed by the real world.”
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 impact of a memory in the selected work may earn the point; any reasonable student interpretation of “the impact of a memory” 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 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.		

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.
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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 <i>Wuthering Heights</i>." • "Passing 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 <i>The Good Soldier</i> because the narrator is unreliable."		Examples that earn this point: Provide a defensible interpretation • "In <i>Hamlet</i>, 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 <i>The Kitchen God's Wife</i>, 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 <i>Beloved</i>. 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.		

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