

**AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION**  
**SAMPLE SCORING GUIDELINES FOR THE SYNTHESIS ESSAY**

These scoring guidelines will be useful for most of the essays that you read. If they seem inappropriate for a specific essay, ask your Table Leader for assistance. Also consult with your Table Leader about exam booklets that seem to have no response or a response that is unrelated to the question.

Your score should reflect your judgment of the essay's quality as a whole. Remember that students have only 15 minutes to read and 40 minutes to write. Therefore, the essay is not a finished product and should not be judged by standards that are appropriate for out-of-class writing assignments. Instead, evaluate the essay as a draft, making certain to reward students for what they do well.

All essays, even those scored an 8 or a 9, may contain occasional flaws in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. These lapses should enter into your holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. In no case may an essay with many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics be scored higher than a 2.

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**9** Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for essays that are scored an 8 and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their argument and synthesis of cited sources, or impressive in their control of language.

**8 Effective**

Essays earning a score of 8 effectively take a position that defends, challenges, or qualifies the claim that television has had a positive impact on presidential elections. They effectively support their position by effectively synthesizing\* and citing at least three of the sources. The writer's argument is convincing, and the cited sources effectively support the writer's position. The prose demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not flawless.

**7** Essays earning a score of 7 fit the description of essays that are scored a 6 but are distinguished by more complete or more purposeful argumentation and synthesis of cited sources, or a more mature prose style.

**6 Adequate**

Essays earning a score of 6 adequately take a position that defends, challenges, or qualifies the claim that television has had a positive impact on presidential elections. They adequately synthesize and cite at least three of the sources. The writer's argument is generally convincing and the cited sources generally support the writer's position, but the argument is less developed or less cogent than the arguments of essays earning higher scores. Though the language may contain lapses in diction or syntax, generally the prose is clear.

**5** Essays earning a score of 5 take a position that defends, challenges, or qualifies the claim that television has had a positive impact on presidential elections. They support their position by synthesizing and citing at least three sources, but their arguments and their use of cited sources are somewhat limited, inconsistent, or uneven. The writer's argument is generally clear, and the sources generally support the writer's position, but the links between the sources and the argument may be strained. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the writer's ideas adequately.

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\* For the purposes of scoring, synthesis refers to combining the sources and the writer's position to form a cohesive, supported argument and accurately citing all sources.

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**(continued)**

**4 Inadequate**

Essays earning a score of 4 inadequately take a position that defends, challenges, or qualifies the claim that television has had a positive impact on presidential elections. They attempt to present an argument and support their position by synthesizing and citing at least two sources but may misunderstand, misrepresent, or oversimplify either their own argument or the cited sources they include. The link between the argument and the cited sources is weak. The prose of 4 essays may suggest immature control of writing.

**3** Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but demonstrate less understanding of the cited sources, less success in developing their own position, or less control of writing.

**2 Little Success**

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate little success in taking a position that defends, challenges, or qualifies the claim that television has had a positive impact on presidential elections. They may merely allude to knowledge gained from reading the sources rather than citing the sources themselves. These essays may misread the sources, fail to present an argument, or substitute a simpler task by merely responding to the question tangentially or by summarizing the sources. The prose of essays scored a 2 often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as a lack of development or organization, grammatical problems, or a lack of control.

**1** Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but are especially simplistic or weak in their control of writing or do not cite even one source.

**0** Essays earning a score of zero (0) are on-topic responses that receive no credit, such as those that merely repeat the prompt.

— Essays earning a dash (—) are blank responses or responses that are completely off topic.