

AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

2008 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 2

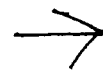
(Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting*)

The score reflects the quality of the essay as a whole—its content, its style, its mechanics. Students are rewarded for what they do well. The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by 1 point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a 3.

- 9–8** These essays offer a persuasive analysis of how the author uses literary devices to characterize Arun's experience as an exchange student. The essays make a strong case for their interpretation of the passage: they explore possibilities of character and situation; consider devices such as point of view, selection of detail, syntax, characterization, diction, and tone; and engage the text through apt and specific references. Although these essays may not be error-free, their perceptive analysis is apparent in writing that is clear, precise, and effectively organized. Generally, essays scored a 9 reveal more sophisticated analysis and more effective control of language than those scored an 8.
- 7–6** These essays offer a reasonable analysis of how the author uses literary devices to characterize Arun's experience. They reveal a sustained, competent reading of the passage, with attention to devices such as point of view, selection of detail, syntax, characterization, diction, and tone. Although these essays may not be error-free and may be less perceptive or less convincing than those in the 9–8 range, their ideas are presented with clarity and control and refer to the text for support. Generally, essays scored a 7 present better-developed analysis and more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than do those scored a 6.
- 5** These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible reading of the passage but tend to be superficial or undeveloped in their treatment of how the author uses literary techniques to characterize Arun's experience. While exhibiting some analysis of the passage, implicit or explicit, the discussion of how literary devices contribute to Arun's experience may be slight, and support from the passage may be thin or tend toward paraphrase. Although these essays demonstrate adequate control of language, they may be marred by surface errors. Generally, essays scored a 5 lack the more effective organization and the more sustained development characteristic of those that received 7–6 points.
- 4–3** These essays offer a less than thorough understanding of the task or a less than adequate treatment of how the author uses literary devices to characterize Arun's experience. Often relying on plot summary or paraphrase, they may fail to articulate a convincing basis for understanding situation and character, or they may misread the passage. These responses may be characterized by an unfocused or repetitive presentation of ideas, an absence of textual support, or an accumulation of errors. Generally, essays scored a 4 exhibit better control over the elements of composition than those scored a 3.
- 2–1** These essays compound the weaknesses of those in the 4–3 range. They may persistently misread the passage, be unacceptably brief, or contain pervasive errors that interfere with understanding. Although some attempt has been made to respond to the prompt, the ideas are presented with little clarity, organization, or support from the passage. Essays that are especially inept or incoherent are scored a 1.
- 0** These essays do no more than make a reference to the task.
- These essays are either left blank or are completely off topic.

In the excerpt from *Fasting, Feasting* by Anita Desai, the writer uses a variety of techniques to detail Arun's inner emotions and sentiments regarding his experience. Through the use of alternative diction, speech, and point of view, the author aptly expresses to the audience ~~Arun's~~ Arun's perception of the events. Due to the newness of the situation, Arun's uneasy air does not ~~so~~ shock the audience; however, the characterization of such uncomfortableness through Desai's words allows the reader a deeper understanding of the character.

In the first paragraph, the matter-of-fact type diction allows the reader to ~~the~~ quickly establish the setting of the passage. By claiming that "Arun cannot plead work," Desai already shows the character as unwilling to participate in the activity he is trying to find an exit strategy. However, as the text progresses, the diction becomes more expressive and imagery becomes a key component in the text. Mrs. Patton's "animated prance [that] galvanizes her dwindled shanks" shows the reader ~~the~~ the excitement that the American family feels; ~~which~~ ^{an emotion that} is intensified by Arun's obvious indifference and awkwardness. The two children follow "silently" making an uneasy trek to the beach. However, in the last paragraph the diction once again becomes more intense. The heavy visual and auditory imagery that the author uses ~~at~~ aids the reader in ~~the~~ connecting with Arun's deeper



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2

2A
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emotions. Beyond his outward un-comfortableness, the "thrumming of windas" in the "benighted wilderness" creates a more permanent unsettled feeling in Annu. The repetition of the word "insidious" and its use as a contrast to the buildings in the town also serve to highlight Annu's deeper emotion of ~~hatred~~ ^{disgust or outright} ~~dislike~~ ^{dislike} of the situation.

Similarly, by creating some sort of dialogue in the passage, Desai allows the reader to easily characterize the American family and, thus, contrast it with Annu. At the beginning of the text, when Annu is trying to decline going to the beach, Mrs. Patton's dialogue serves as a blatant establishment of her role in the plot. As a host, she assumes her duty is to entertain, a task she sees as essential to Annu's comfort. Ironically, however, Annu's discomfort ~~expands exponentially by repeated~~ ^{repeated} refusal ("No, no, no... oh no.") to accept Annu's excuses. Later in the ~~text~~ text when Annu hears Mrs. Patton ~~singing~~ ^{singing} the lyrics to "Summertime" the words also serve to point out irony within Anita Desai's text. By belting that "the living is eeh-zee...", Mrs. Patton is established as a character ~~whose oblivion~~ ^{whose oblivion} allows her to maintain bliss. Despite Annu's obvious discomfort, the American host ~~took~~ ^{falsely perceived} his denials as a shyness, a polite gesture because he wished not to disturb them. Ironically, the living for Annu is not easy at all; indeed, in the final paragraph, he shows the audience his true emotions regarding the situation.



2

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

2A
3 of 3

Throughout most of the text the point of view is third person limited; the author merely comments on the situation, allowing the audience to draw conclusions or infer the deeper themes of the text. However, in the concluding paragraphs the point of view becomes third person omniscient giving the reader a more depth view of Ann's thought process. In line 46, the author uses a rhetorical question, ^{represents} a technique that ~~displays~~ Ann's thoughts on the issue. Because he is "sweating" and his hands are "upflin and damp" the audience concludes that ^{Ann} B. becoming increasingly unsettled, ~~and~~ the following rhetorical question actually allows the reader to pinpoint his unease and the following sentences expand upon his beliefs.

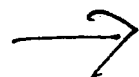
A. Although the passage begins as a ^{lighthearted} ~~lighthearted~~ account of a swimming event, the author uses several rhetorical strategies to quickly transform the tone. Through the development of her diction, Desai is able to show the various increasing levels of Ann's unease, a feeling that culminates in a ^{more} heightened sense of dread. The author also uses speech to characterize the ^{where} American family, serves as a foil to Ann, and to express irony. ~~By shifting perception at the conclusion of the passage,~~ the author also ^{summarizes} ~~creates~~ the unease and helps the reader to gain deeper insight into the character's mind.

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Desai utilizes strong characterization and a very singular point of view to effectively characterize Crum's experience in America with his host family.

~~Crum's well developed character~~ Crum's internal monologue ^{at first} displays his awkwardness as a guest of the Pattons' but then very skillfully shifts to a singular overtone of disgust for the whole experience. This is fostered by sharp but sparse dialogue that serves to heighten the differences between Crum and the Pattons. In addition, Crum's experiences are further enhanced in the reader's mind because of the imagery used to express his revulsion towards the wilderness and its ~~insidious~~ "creeping curtain of insidious green."

Crum's internal monologue and his reaction to what goes on in the world around him lend credence to the overall believability and impact of his experiences in America. From the opening lines of the excerpt we can infer that he has been apprehensive about going out with the Pattons for a long time; with this point of view in the background as a skeletal structure for the innermost workings



#2

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

2B
2 of 3

of his psyche, we ~~as~~ build sympathy for him. Contrasted with his dejected demeanor is the delightfully decadent Mrs Patton who ironically sings "Summertime... when the living is eehzee-". She cannot seem to fathom any other point of view than ~~the~~ her own, and she is characterized as an object of derision throughout the rest of the trip to the beach. Her confident swagger is directly in contrast with unassumedness of Arum to step out into the unknown.

He criticizes nature as hoarse and shrieking - "they shrill and shrill... a bird shrieks... an ugly jarring note that does not vary." - and dangerous with "...grasses stirring with insidious life, and bushes with poison berries". In short he is afraid of the wilderness and much rather would be ~~an~~ familiar town around people. However his excuses have long since ^{failed to get} ~~gone~~ through to the obstinate Mrs Patton, and he must be accommodating for her and carry her basket whether he wants to or not.

All of this intense characterization of Arum and his foil that is his environment serves to emphasize the uniqueness of his

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experience and how tempered it is by others
and his natural environment.

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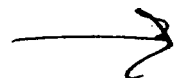
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2C
10/2

In the passage taken from Fasting, Feasting by Anita Desai, ~~of the~~ a young boy ~~on stays at a country that~~ is confused by his host family's actions. He is taken from the town and brought to a country-like setting for the sake of leisure. Desai uses speech and point of view to characterize Arun's experience.

The author's use of a third person omniscient narrator lets the reader know ~~that~~ of Arun's disapproval of the beach and his confusion. ~~The author uses~~ The author's description of Arun, from lines 43-46, ("Arun... damp") shows the reader that Arun is nervous about going to this location. The following lines show Arun's ~~let to show~~ Arun's confusion. The reader is in Arun's mind and learns that he prefers the city. He does not understand why Americans would choose to go to an isolated place. He feels safe in the city being surrounded and "post offices, shops..." by people, and very insecure in the woods - "the grasses ~~stirring~~ stirring with insidious life, and bushes with poisonous berries." He does not find the nature beautiful, but thinks that the bird is "shriek[ing]" and describes it as an "ugly, jarring note that does not vary." ~~In his thoughts~~ ~~lead~~ The work even ends with him "nearly tripping upon a root." All of these thoughts show the reader Arun's disapproval of the wilderness, and preference of the city. His experience can be regarded as a negative one.

The other device used in the passage is speech. Desai's choice of words also support the notion that Arun is not pleased with being in the wilderness. The passage begins with Arun trying to find



2

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

2C
2 of 2

excuses ~~to~~ to not accompany them to the beach. This shows that Arun was forced to go. When they arrive at the beach, ~~Ar~~ Arun is silent. His lack of speech shows his disinterest. ~~of the~~

The author uses the ^{stylistic} devices of speech and point of view to show that Arun ~~does not~~ is not fond of the wilderness ~~and~~ and believes his experience to be a negative one. He prefers the city, to the more country-^{traditional} like setting. ~~It~~ ~~It~~ His "Indian" life has clashed with the American idea of leisure.

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AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
2008 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 2

Overview

Students were asked to read carefully an accessible excerpt from Anita Desai’s novel *Fasting, Feasting* (1999) and then, in a well-organized essay, to analyze how Desai uses such literary devices as speech and point of view to characterize the experience of an Indian exchange student, Arun. In the excerpt, Arun joins members of his American host family for an afternoon at the beach. The intent of this question was to assess students’ abilities to read closely and to interpret the author’s use of literary devices to create a complex and nuanced representation of Arun’s experience. To respond to the question successfully, students needed to connect detail to larger meaning and to show how particular devices combine to characterize Arun’s experience.

Sample: 2A

Score: 8

This essay is an excellent analysis, providing insight after insight, including one on the irony of the passage. The student sees the passage as, at first, “lighthearted,” but then argues that “the author uses several rhetorical strategies to quickly transform the text.” For example, the student notes how Desai employs “repetition of the word ‘insidious’ and its use as a contrast to the buildings in the town . . . to highlight Arun’s deeper emotion of disgust” with the situation he has been forced to participate in. The analysis of imagery and point of view is particularly skillful, demonstrating the student’s appreciation for Desai’s craft—how she shows at first Arun’s increasing “unease” and then ultimately reveals “a more heightened sense of disdain.” The discussion occasionally falters with vocabulary (Mrs. Patton’s “oblivion”) and relies on generalizations where some details would have helped, but overall it analyzes the passage with great understanding.

Sample: 2B

Score: 6

This upper-half essay begins effectively, with a very well-developed opening paragraph, but its discussion tends to weaken at the end because it does not support all its claims with textual evidence. It is insightful in its remarks about the change in tone and point of view, as Arun shifts from a position of awkwardness to a “singular overtone of disgust for the whole experience.” It correctly asserts that Arun “has been apprehensive about going out with the Pattons for a long time.” Likewise, this essay demonstrates a clear understanding of the “delightfully decadent Mrs. Patton who . . . cannot seem to fathom any other point of view than her own.”

Sample: 2C

Score: 4

This lower-half essay makes a series of comments about Arun’s experience but cannot develop these observations into an adequate analysis of the passage. Although it responds to the prompt and provides quotations to support its assertions, there is really little analysis of what Desai has done with language to construct Arun’s experience. The student quite insistently repeats the fact that Arun does not like the beach and prefers the town but does almost nothing with the rest of the passage and the interactions between Arun, Mrs. Patton, and her daughter. The writing is clean and easy to understand, but the interpretation of Arun’s experience is fairly superficial and unsophisticated.