

**AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION**  
**2009 SCORING GUIDELINES (Form B)**

**Question 3**

(A Political or Social Issue)

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 well-focused and persuasive essays identify political or social issues in a novel or play and explain how the author explores such issues. Providing apt and specific textual support, these essays analyze the nature of the political or social issues and identify the literary elements used by the author. Although not without flaws, these essays exhibit an ability to discuss a literary work with significant insight and understanding, to sustain control over a thesis, and to write with clarity, precision, and coherence—and in the case of an essay scored a 9, with particular persuasiveness and/or stylistic flair.
- 7–6** These competent essays identify political or social issues in a novel or play and explain how the author explores such issues. These essays offer insight and understanding of the literary elements the author uses, but the analysis is less thorough, less perceptive, and/or less specific in supporting detail than that of essays scored in the 9–8 range. References to the text may not be as apt or as persuasive. Essays scored a 7 demonstrate more sophistication in substance and in style than those scored a 6, though both are generally well written and free from significant or persistent misinterpretations.
- 5** These essays respond to the assigned task, but they tend to be superficial in analysis. They often rely on plot summary that contains some analysis, implicit or explicit. Although they attempt to identify and discuss political or social issues and how the author uses literary elements to explore such issues, they may demonstrate a rather simplistic understanding. Typically, these essays reveal unsophisticated thinking and/or immature writing. They demonstrate adequate control of language but lack effective organization and may be marred by surface errors.
- 4–3** These lower-half essays reflect an incomplete or oversimplified understanding of the work. They may fail to identify political or social issues, or fail to explain how the author uses literary elements to explore such issues. These essays may rely almost exclusively on plot summary. Their assertions may be unsupported or even irrelevant. Often wordy, vague, or repetitious, they lack control over the elements of college-level composition. Essays scored a 3 may contain significant misreadings and demonstrate inept writing.
- 2–1** Although these essays make some attempt to respond to the prompt, they compound the weaknesses of essays scored in the 4–3 range. Often they are unacceptably brief or incoherent in presenting their ideas. They are poorly written and contain distracting errors in grammar and mechanics. Remarks are presented with little clarity, organization, or supporting evidence. Particularly incompetent and/or incoherent essays are scored a 1.
- 0** These essays do no more than make reference to the task.
- These essays are either blank or completely off topic.

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3A  
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"The horror! The horror!" are the last words of Kurtz, a (~~morally~~) main character of Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad. They are uttered in a faint whisper by a giant of a man as he looks back on his imperialistic life and realizes how incredibly terrible and evil his actions have been. Throughout this novel, Conrad exposes the evils of imperialism through symbols and allusions, enhancing the overall meaning of the work that there is an innate evil inside every human being.

The most significant symbol against imperialism is perhaps a piece of artwork painted by Kurtz. The image has a black background with a <sup>blindfolded</sup> lady holding up a lighted torch. The light from the torch is reflected (~~plays~~) on the lady's face, throwing a sinister light on her visage. (~~She is blind~~) The figure represents the Company, the only imperialistic force in the novel, which sends colonists and tradesmen like Kurtz to the Congo in Africa. The dark background (~~is~~) symbolizes Africa and the lighted torch represents the Company's alleged goals of "bringing" the light of civilization" to "the dark continent." However, it is clear that imperialism also has a destructive effect from the



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shister light that plays of the lady's face. Despite the Company's claim to have noble, respectable reasons for being in the Congo, it is actually bringing evil onto the continent. The blindfold covering the lady's eyes is also symbolic, as it corresponds to the way that the Company is "blindly" stumbling through Africa. The Company has come to Africa with imperialistic intentions which only serve to damage the morality of the European colonists and destroy the country and lives of the locals. ~~The~~ Kurtz's painting ~~symbol~~ illustrates this in one striking image.

In addition, Conrad uses allusions to unveil ~~the~~ <sup>his</sup> ~~disapproval~~ ~~destructiveness~~ of imperialism. The Company is located in Brussels, Belgium, a city infamous for its savage plundering of Africa. This city is referred to throughout the work as "the sepulchral city" or "the whited sepulchre," an allusion to the Bible where Jesus calls the Pharisees whited sepulchres to refer to their hypocrisy. (Regardless of) The Company and imperialism's pure, respectable appearance to the public ~~(they actual)~~ in reality they ~~(have)~~ hides its evil intentions of raping the land of its resources, especially ivory. This allusion of a "whited sepulchre"

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exposes the extreme hypocrisy of the Company and imperialism. Although it appears acceptable on the exterior, on the interior, imperialism is evil. Imperialism brings the European colonists to a place filled with enough silence, enough solitude, to force them to look inside their souls. There, they discover the innate evil that is within each human being.

Heart of Darkness is essentially a political novel protesting imperialism in an age where Europe was obsessed with expansion and the saying "The sun never sets on the British Empire" was literally true. Through symbols and allusions, Conrad cries out ~~for~~ against imperialism, which he believes will lead Europeans to have to face their innately evil nature, as Kurtz ~~did~~ does when he (~~cries~~) whispers, "The horror! The horror!" Imperialism leads ~~the~~ Europeans to Africa, ~~on~~ a yet uncivilized continent with an immense silence and solitude ~~prevailing~~ permeating the land. This forces the Europeans to become introspective and discover the evil inside them.

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#3

Many works of literature have focused on society, in particular criticisms of society. One of the most thought provoking novels of this type is George Orwell's 1984. Written in the 1940's, it was written as a social criticism of the loss of free thinking and knowledge - and is shockingly accurate today. In order to accurately comment on these issues, Orwell uses a lot of vivid imagery, the genre, and some common literary themes ~~to~~ in his novel 1984.

The images used in this novel are absolutely vital to its meaning. They are images of dirt, desolation, poverty, isolation, and the list could go on. Winston, the protagonist, lives in a dark building with many floors, drinks horrible coffee, and is constantly watched by Big Brother and telescreens. The reader gets a feeling of everything being grey, dark, and dirty, just because of the vivid descriptions Orwell gives. ~~Some~~ The only images of color ~~are~~ are the things Winston can never have or be - the red sash worn by the anti-sex league, the sunburned arm of a pole hanging laundry, and a piece of coral he bought <sup>illegally</sup>. The society wants everything dark and grey. The images of color created by Orwell emphasize the ~~dark~~ awful living conditions and suppression of the individual which

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he is so strongly against. There would be a lot less power in the novel without the use of images.

The setting and genre also contribute heavily to the power of the novel. Orwell sets his novel in London, <sup>about</sup> almost 40 years after he ~~wrote it~~, it was written. By doing this, he not only warned his generation, but scared the future generations.

Reading it today, 1984 is almost terrifying. The concept of telescreens is active and in use with the concept of CCTV. It's increasingly easy to find someone and listen in on their conversations, as many government agencies can confirm. The individual is slowly suffocating, and although the novel is not 100% of today's life, it is still shockingly close to what life could soon become.

By using common themes in literature, Orwell is able to make 1984 connect with many readers. There is the theme of good versus evil, which immediately connects Winston to every reader. He sees what is wrong with society, and develops the courage to live life regardless of what others think. The reader expects Winston to succeed, keeping the reader emotionally involved in the book and utterly shocked at the end. ~~The~~ The theme of one against the world is

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#3

also present in 1984. Because Winston is often alone, it becomes that he is the only one who is capable of fixing things. This theme, although it is similar to good versus evil, is more focused on the individual. Winston becomes the only hope the reader has in society - that maybe there can be good if Winston could prevail on his own.

The images used by Orwell, as well as the genre/setting and themes create a powerful social and political criticism of what the world could ~~be~~ become, and unfortunately, of what the world is becoming.

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The Great Gatsby<sup>s</sup> is a novel that uses social issues to contribute to the meaning of the work as a whole. Fitzgerald uses his characters and turns them into stereotypes of the different social classes to portray the social issues found in each class. Fitzgerald does this by using details, ~~signature~~ point of view <sup>and thematic presence</sup>, ~~foreshadowing~~ ~~and~~ ~~motifs~~ throughout the novel.

The theme of the novel is the <sup>superficiality of the happiness created</sup> ~~superficial drive of~~ ~~obsessive strength~~ <sup>by</sup> wealth, ~~an drive created by~~ <sup>loss</sup> ~~obsession~~ <sup>which leads to</sup> wealth. This is ~~obsession~~ repeated throughout the novel. Gatsby was driven to become rich and wealthy and jumped to an elite society from the motivation of Daisy's rejection. This caused him to be ~~unhappy~~ ~~and lonely~~ and wealthy but lonely. He was still obsessed with the idea of pleasing Daisy. Daisy, on the other hand, chose the life of being a rich bourgeois wife who was unhappy with her life by marrying Tom. They had their own social problems but chose to ignore them.

Fitzgerald uses details of how unhappy Daisy is about her marriage and how superficial the happiness of wealth is. The details used to describe Gatsby at his grand social parties show that he ~~is~~ ~~unhappy~~ even though he throws these parties. This unhappiness from wealth shaped the work by stating that these high class people pretend to be happy but behind every smile and laugh, they are sad with the choices they made in life.

The ~~pen~~ point of view created by the narrator shows insight ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> his opinions and views of how others see Gatsby and Daisy. The narrator has close relationships with both Daisy and Gatsby, and therefore, explains to the readers what they are really like and how ~~different~~ superficial they are at public series.





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In conclusion ~~Fitzgerald~~

In conclusion, Fitzgerald explains the issues of the novel by using the literary elements of details, thematic presence, and point of view to create the meaning of the work. Wealth does not always make a person happy. Choices in life matter. This is stated by Fitzgerald who conveys it through the writing ~~in~~ this novel.

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**2009 SCORING COMMENTARY (Form B)**

**Question 3**

**Sample: 3A**

**Score: 8**

A very apt discussion of imperialism as a social issue in *Heart of Darkness* forms the core of this essay. The student pertinently refers to literary devices or techniques, including allusion and symbolism, as strategies to convey political disapproval by the author, Joseph Conrad. Although some details from the novel are inaccurately recalled, there are enough direct and indirect references to the text to make this a well-supported argument. There are some impressive insights, such as the point that the colonial Belgian Company “has come to Africa with imperialistic intentions which only serve to damage the morality of the European colonists and destroy the country and lives of the locals.” The essay concludes by arguing that the novel “is essentially a political novel protesting imperialism in an age where Europe was obsessed with expansion”—linking the finely detailed observations with the large-scale contextualizing discussion the student consistently uses to frame the analysis. This is a powerful essay.

**Sample: 3B**

**Score: 6**

Well-organized and competent, this essay launches directly into a discussion of imagery and is convincing in defending its claim that the images in George Orwell's *1984* “are absolutely vital to its meaning.” Among the images the essay identifies are those of “dirt, desolation, poverty, isolation.” The discussion of setting is somewhat less compelling because, unlike the discussion of imagery, the essay provides little textual reference, though it does—in discussing telescreens—comment on how today “[i]t's increasingly easy to find someone and listen in on their conversations, as many government agencies can confirm.” Near the end of this extended analysis, the essay discusses themes of “good versus evil,” and of the individual's struggle “against the world.”

**Sample: 3C**

**Score: 4**

A very thin discussion of *The Great Gatsby*, this essay is also poorly written. There is some understanding of the social issues at stake in the novel, but the conceptualization is often murky: “Fitzgerald uses his characters and turns them into stereotypes of the different social classes to portray the social issues found in each class.” Perhaps more important, the key theme the essay identifies (“the superficiality of the happiness created by wealth”) is not convincingly presented as a political or social issue. The essay mentions but does not discuss technical devices. Beyond repeating the theme, the essay does not show how happiness is indeed created for Gatsby by wealth, or why happiness is superficial, or in what sense this is a social or political issue. The essay claims that “Fitzgerald uses details of how unhappy Daisy is about her marriage and how superficial the happiness of wealth is,” but it does not develop this idea. The essay moves on to mention the narrator's “point of view” as another technique, but again it does not demonstrate how this “shows insight to his opinions and views of how others see Gatsby and Daisy.” This essay does not rise out of the lower half.