

# AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

## 2011 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Question 2

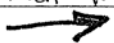
(George Eliot's *Middlemarch*)

The score reflects the quality of the essay as a whole — its content, style, and 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 Eliot's portrayal of the two characters and their complex relationship as husband and wife as Eliot develops these through literary devices. The essays make a strong case for their interpretation of the characters and their relationship. They consider literary devices such as narrative perspective and selection of detail, and they 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 and effectively organized. Essays scored a 9 reveal more sophisticated analysis and more effective control of language than do essays scored an 8.
- 7–6** These essays offer a reasonable analysis of Eliot's portrayal of the two characters and their complex relationship as husband and wife as Eliot develops these through literary devices. They provide a sustained, competent reading of the passage, with attention to devices such as narrative perspective and selection of detail. Although these essays may not be error-free and are less perceptive or less convincing than 9–8 essays, they present ideas with clarity and control, and refer to the text for support. Essays scored a 7 present better developed analysis and more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than do essays scored a 6.
- 5** These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible reading of the passage but tend to be superficial or thinly developed in their treatment of Eliot's portrayal of the two characters and their complex relationship as husband and wife and/or of Eliot's use of literary devices. Although the essays contain some analysis of the passage, implicit or explicit, the discussion of how literary devices contribute to the portrayal of character may be slight, and support from the passage may tend toward summary or paraphrase. These essays demonstrate adequate control of language but may be marred by surface errors. They are not as well conceived, organized, or developed as 7–6 essays.
- 4–3** These lower-half essays fail to offer an adequate analysis of the passage. The analysis may be partial, unconvincing, or irrelevant; the responses may ignore the complex relationship of the husband and wife or Eliot's use of literary devices to develop the characters. These essays may be characterized by an unfocused or repetitive presentation of ideas, an absence of textual support, or an accumulation of errors. Essays scored a 3 may contain significant misreading and/or demonstrate inept writing.
- 2–1** These essays compound the weaknesses of those in the 4–3 range. They may persistently misread the passage or be unacceptably brief. They may 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 scored a 1 contain little coherent discussion of the passage.
- 0** These essays do no more than make a reference to the task.
- These essays are either left blank or are completely off topic.

Arguments are rarely about their subject of quarrel. Many a spat over curtain color, dinner plans, and children's names have been proxy battles for the real issue—control. In ~~George~~ George Eliot's Middlemarch, the newly wedded Rosamond and Tertius Lydgate encounter a real issue—a lack of money. Yet in their argument, as in so many marriage decisions, money is not the ~~danger~~ <sup>danger</sup> confronting their happy marriage. Rather, by telling detail and omniscient perspective, F.S. George Eliot reveals that the true stumbling block in the Lydgates' relationship is their pride—Tertius's desire to maintain his pride as "provider" for his family, and Rosamond's want of a more elegant, self-pleasing existence.

With very little ~~obvious~~ <sup>obvious</sup> exposition, Eliot sets the scene in the passage expertly via her concise use of detail. The scene enters in medias res, with the lovers holding hands, and Rosamond blushing. While these details may initially seem trite, they offer excellent insight into the nature of the relationship. By the hands, ~~the~~ the reader can deduce that these newlyweds are, as should be expected, in love. Yet the blushing response and following question shows that there is not a lot of transparency in the relationship. Rather, it is a chess game of ~~discreet~~ discreet, manipulative moves to disarm the other of control in the relationship.

Even in the next action, after Lydgate says "No," this manipulation is emphasized. Not only does ~~Rosamond~~ Rosamond blatantly disobey her husband by exclaiming "then I must tell him!" but she also undermines his authority covertly, "moving 'two yards' distance from him." By including the detail of distance, Eliot emphasizes that this was not an emotional outburst, but rather a calculated maneuver to thwart her husband. 

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

2

2A  
(2 of 3)

her intention was to ~~subvert~~ subvert, she succeeded. Later in the passage, the narrator exposes that her moving away "made everything harder to say." These little details expose the deliberation of the couple in one of their first arguments.

Details also serve to <sup>highlight</sup> expose the "financial difficulties" the couple confronts, and show them to be less severe than expected. Perhaps the most telling portion of the passage is the description of what Dover, the appraiser, will do ~~to~~ to earn the Lydgates some more money. He will "take a good deal of the plate back again, and any of the jewelry we like." This choice detail ~~shows~~ shows that this couple is not broke, but rather has a "good deal" of plate silver and enough jewelry to choose which ones to sell. By showing the couple to be only slightly financially distressed, Eliot allows the reader to focus on the true issue of the passage - who will get <sup>his</sup> ~~the~~ way.

Another tactic Eliot employs to expose the pettiness of this argument is perspective. The narrator is 3rd-person omniscient, allowing for an unbiased peek into the thoughts and desires of each character. This serves the reader well by allowing him to see the motives behind each character's actions. This narrator shows the double fault at Lydgate's offending Rosamond, both the man's insensitivity and the difficult situation Rosamond placed him in with her disobedience. It also exposes the selfishness of Rosamond, only wanting to find in her marriage "more indulgence, more exactly to her taste." It also shows how she aims to take advantage of Lydgate's momentary humility to "attend to her own opinion." By showing the flaws behind the

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2.

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2A  
(3 of 3)

reserved argument, Eliot's narrator allows the reader to see both sides of this ~~conflict~~ conflict.

As all unbiased narrators must, Eliot does not solely implicate Rosamond in this passage, she also criticizes Lydgate for his pride. She first directly addresses it, saying that Lydgate's "proud resistance to humiliating circumstances" hindered him from being sympathetic to his wife's plight. Later, when Lydgate momentarily bows under his wife's yoke, his pride quickly rebounds when offended, with his "peremptoriness rising again." This same pride that refused to ask his wife's father for money will not ask his friends or family for help. He claims that she "doesn't understand" his predicament and dismisses her as inferior, yet he still wishes to be "gentle" and "imploving."

Ultimately, in this passage Eliot offers a warning to the early arguments in marriage. She exposes, by keen detail and omniscient point of view, that both husband and wife have their own motives in the marriage. Yet she does not condemn them. There is still love in their marriage, and one difficult time will not ruin a <sup>lifelong</sup> ~~lifetime~~ relationship. Yet she warns that unless the couple stop playing games and start being honest, squabbles will quickly escalate into fights.

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

Question 2

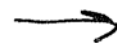
2B  
(1 of 2)

George Eliot in his novel "Middlemarch", makes effective use of literary devices such as ~~the~~ the narrative perspective, in which the novel is written and also attention to details ~~to~~ to characterize the relationship as husband and wife of Lydgate and Rosamond.

Eliot portrays Rosamond as pampered and, a bit selfish even. This can be seen in lines 23-25 where the narrator informs the reader, through Lydgate's thought process that Rosamond had never known hardship only indulgence. In addition, the selection begins with Rosamond being too angry to speak because Lydgate had not requested money from her father. This sort-of attitude continues throughout the passage until the end when Rosamond realizes Lydgate is right, that she was throwing a tantrum, and that she still loves him.

In contrast to Rosamond, Lydgate is portrayed as practical, pragmatic, proud, and wiser. The reader first sees his pride in the beginning when he is too proud to ask for money from Rosamond's father, which he admits when trying to see the situation from her perspective, and later when ~~he~~ he refuses to ask his friends for favors. The reader also sees the practical side of Lydgate when, in lines 80-85, he wants to sell plateware and jewellery for money to help through their hardship. Throughout the selection the reader may observe Lydgate's ~~an~~ circuit of continually consoling Rosamond because he cares for her, and lapsing back to his upsetting her again.

This shows the compassionate side of Lydgate, proving that though they may disagree and become impatient with



Question 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 2)

one another they still love each other. Another way in which Eliot shows their relationship is through his careful attention to detail especially in regard to space.

For instance, in lines 33-36 Rosamond's moving away from Lydgate hurts him as did her tears which "cut him to the heart". Lydgate also asks forgiveness of Rosamond in lines 45-47 when she becomes upset with him.

Through these devices George Eliot develops and portrays the relationship between Lydgate and Rosamond as one of hardship but ultimately love.

#

2

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

2C  
(1 of 1)

The relationship between the husband and wife is portrayed as one person in control. The person who seems to be in control of the relationship is the husband. He is bossy, has a bad attitude, does not listen to his wife, but he also knows how to persuade her to listen to him. She hates him because she had no idea his behavior would be so bad. The wife did not know that the luxury life she had before would crumble all of a sudden. The husband however, talked as if he knew this would happen but did not say anything. The narrative perspective jumps back and forth from the husband and the wife a lot. You can tell from each that they do not understand each other. The wife is finally beaten by the husband. She just gives up and does what ever he says. This brings back that the relationship they have is with the husband dominating everything that happens with them.

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**AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION**  
**2011 SCORING COMMENTARY**

**Question 2**

**Overview**

Students were asked to read carefully a passage from *Middlemarch* by George Eliot and to write an essay analyzing how Eliot portrays Rosamond and Tertius Lydgate and their complex relationship as husband and wife. The prompt invited students to consider such devices as narrative perspective and selection of detail.

This question intended to assess students' abilities to read closely, with attention to language, perspective, and detail, and to sort out contradictory elements in the two characters and their conflict over the financial difficulties they face. At the same time, the question intended to assess students' abilities to write an effective essay, one with a governing central idea about the complex relationship, organized in coherent units of analysis, and supported with appropriate evidence from the passage.

**Sample: 2A**

**Score: 9**

This masterful essay engages the prompt immediately with the suggestion that arguments are “proxy battles for the real issue — control,” and it addresses complexity directly with textual references that support sophisticated analysis. Interpreting “the blushing response and following question,” the essay proposes its own apt metaphor for the couple’s relationship: “it is a chess game of discreet, manipulative moves to disarm the other of control.” The essay confidently sustains this analysis with attention to the entire passage. Aware of the ways literary devices serve to enhance and make meaning (for example, the narrator’s insertions and Eliot’s use of perspective), the essay displays an eye for textual detail: it observes, for example, that the appraiser “will ‘take a good deal of the plate back again, and any of the jewelry [*sic*] we like’” and concludes from this that “this couple is not broke, but rather has a ‘good deal’ of plate silver and enough jewelry to choose which ones to sell!” By thus “showing the couple to be only slightly financially distressed,” it argues, “Eliot allows the reader to focus on the true issue of the passage — who will get his way.” The elements of composition are controlled and effective, and although not free from error, the essay clinches its persuasive line of reasoning with an insightful, sympathetic conclusion: “There is still love in their marriage, and one difficult time will not ruin a lifelong relationship.” Its strengths in interpretation and expression earned this essay a score of 9.

**Sample: 2B**

**Score: 5**

Without a clear initial direction or controlling idea, this essay takes up the two literary devices offered by the prompt and applies them to a paragraph of analysis of each character. Attention to the situation in the text is stronger than attention to Eliot’s language, which is perhaps why the situation appears oversimplified (“Rosamond . . . was throwing a tantrum”) and sometimes veers into misreading (“Rosamond realizes . . . that she still loves him”). Taken as a whole, the essay pays greater attention to the obvious strains in the relationship than to its complexities. It supports each point (“The reader also sees the practical side of Lydgate when, in lines 80–85, he wants to sell plateware and jewellery”) but is less successful in making the points add up to a convincing analysis of the passage as a whole. Evidence from the passage is supplied but appears mostly in the form of summary and paraphrase. The overall result is a response that is plausible but rarely seems to move beyond the superficial. Further development would have strengthened this mid-range essay.



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**Question 2 (continued)**

**Sample: 2C**

**Score: 2**

This essay makes an attempt to respond to the prompt, referring to “[t]he relationship between the husband and wife” and the changing “narrative perspective,” but the analysis is oversimplified, as in the assertion that Rosamond “hates” Lydgate. And although there are many ways to look at a complex, layered literary passage, when this essay contends that Rosamond “just gives up and does what ever [*sic*] he says,” the evidence necessary to persuade is not provided. The combination of reliance on paraphrase, a limited critical vocabulary (Lydgate “has a bad attitude”), extreme brevity, and a lack of attention to complexity in the relationship or supporting literary analysis, limits this essay to a score in the low range.