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# AP English Language and Composition

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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

## 2018 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Question 1

**General Directions:** This scoring guide is designed so that the same performance expectations are applied to all student responses. It will be useful for most of the essays, but if it seems inappropriate for a specific essay, assistance should be sought from the Table Leader. The Table Leader should always be shown booklets that seem to have no response or that contain responses that seem unrelated to the question. A score of 0 or — should not be assigned without this consultation.

The essay's score should reflect an evaluation of the essay as a whole. Students had only 15 minutes to read the sources and 40 minutes to write; the essay, therefore, is not a finished product and should not be judged according to standards appropriate for an out-of-class assignment. The essay should be evaluated as a draft, and students should be rewarded for what they do well. The evaluation should focus on the evidence and explanations that the student uses to support the response; students should not be penalized for taking a particular perspective.

All essays, even those scored 8 or 9, may contain occasional lapses in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. Such features should enter into the holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. In no case should a score higher than a 2 be given to an essay with errors in grammar and mechanics that persistently interfere with understanding of meaning.

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**9** – Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for the score of 8 and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their argument, thorough in development, or impressive in their control of language.

#### **8 – Effective**

Essays earning a score of 8 **effectively** defend, challenge, or qualify the notion that eminent domain is productive and beneficial. They develop their position by effectively synthesizing\* at least three of the sources. The evidence and explanations appropriately and convincingly support the student's position. The prose demonstrates a consistent ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not necessarily flawless.

**7** – Essays earning a score of 7 meet the criteria for the score of 6 but provide more complete explanation, more thorough development, or a more mature prose style.

#### **6 – Adequate**

Essays earning a score of 6 **adequately** defend, challenge, or qualify the notion that eminent domain is productive and beneficial. They develop their position by adequately synthesizing at least three of the sources. The evidence and explanations appropriately and sufficiently support the student's position. The language may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

**5** – Essays earning a score of 5 defend, challenge, or qualify the notion that eminent domain is productive and beneficial. They develop their position by synthesizing at least three sources, but the evidence and explanations used to support that position may be uneven, inconsistent, or limited. The student's argument is generally clear, and the sources generally develop the student'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 student's ideas.

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## 2018 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Question 1 (continued)

#### 4 – Inadequate

Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately** defend, challenge, or qualify the notion that eminent domain is productive and beneficial. They develop their position by synthesizing at least two sources, but that position may be inappropriately, insufficiently, or unconvincingly supported by the evidence and explanations used. The sources may dominate the student’s attempts at development, the link between the argument and the sources may be weak, or the student may misunderstand, misrepresent, or oversimplify the sources. The prose generally conveys the student’s ideas but may be inconsistent in controlling the elements of effective writing.

**3** – Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but demonstrate less success in defending, challenging, or qualifying the notion that eminent domain is productive and beneficial. They are less perceptive in their understanding of the sources, or the evidence and explanations used may be particularly limited or simplistic. The essays may show less maturity in control of writing.

#### 2 – Little Success

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in defending, challenging, or qualifying the notion that eminent domain is productive and beneficial. They may merely allude to knowledge gained from reading the sources rather than citing the sources themselves. The student may misread the sources, fail to develop a position, or substitute a simpler task by merely summarizing or categorizing the sources or by merely responding to the prompt tangentially with unrelated or inaccurate explanation. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as grammatical problems, a lack of development or organization, or a lack of control.

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

**0** Indicates an off-topic response, one that merely repeats the prompt, an entirely crossed-out response, a drawing, or a response in a language other than English.

— Indicates an entirely blank response.

\* For the purposes of scoring, synthesis means using sources to develop a position and citing them accurately.

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

#1 1A  
(1 of 4)

Since the beginning of American history, conflict has arisen over the idea of "eminent domain" or the ability of the government to take control of privately owned land. Based on constitutional advocacies and beliefs in personal freedoms, many Americans oppose the idea. Although eminent domain can at times be a cause for concern, it can be perfectly productive and beneficial when a utilitarian approach of supporting the most people is taken.

When laws allowing eminent domain are utilized unfairly, it can have extremely negative outcomes. If the government does obtain land that is later used either for personal gain or obstruction of justice, it cannot be allowed. Sometimes the government can have good intentions, or at least persuade individuals to forfeit land with false good intentions. In reality, the implications of this land acquisition can have severe impacts. Timothy P. Carney explains in a piece for the Washington Examiner that in certain situations, eminent domain lacks "central planning" which can lead to the failure to "deliver" the rebirth, community, benefits, and jobs" originally intended and promised by the government. Carney further states that these instances can drive out homeowners, despite the so-called promises they originally made (source B). Instances like these defy all intentions of American democracy by denying basic freedoms and the principles of utilitarianism and majority rule that make American politics function. Another implication of eminent domain is explained by Elya Samin from the Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity, who shows that the governmental transfer of ~~own~~ property can at times "victimize the



#1

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

1A  
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poor, racial minorities, and the politically weak." Samin offers several examples to expand on this claim through showing scenarios of how structural racism has "forcibly displaced several million people"; most of which are poor and racial minorities. Even further, Samin explains that these people being displaced often lack the means necessary to fight back against strong government corporations or interest groups (Source C). Over racism and discrimination causes deep harms to society ~~use~~ as a whole and eliminates the utilitarian approach of benefiting the most possible people. If eminent domain persists in such a way, it ~~is~~ destroys any ~~semblance~~ resemblance of American democracy and replaces it with discrimination and conflict.

Despite the many problems eminent domain can cause, this law can also be used for good. Removing private property in certain areas to create space that benefits the majority will rarely create problems or situations in which a large number of people do not benefit. For example, the United States Department of Justice explains that this land can be confiscated to create parks and to set aside "open space for future generations"; ~~is~~ ~~allows~~ to preserve ~~the~~ "places of historical interest and remarkable natural beauty" and ~~also~~ to protect "environmentally sensitive areas" (Source A). Reasoning like this not only seems plausible and well intended, but also sets a precedent for eminent domain to be beneficial to the general public. An example that springs to mind of eminent domain use that helped the general



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1A  
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population took place in my hometown a few years ago. Multiple car accidents and injuries had taken place near one intersection and it got to a point that driving there felt unsafe. The city then decided to destroy the intersection and replace it with a roundabout that would create a better way for people to be aware of their surroundings and avoid collisions. The city needed to encroach on private land in order to obtain the space necessary for a roundabout, but in the end, most citizens were happy with the results and less injury took place in the long run. Eminent domain pursuits like this pave the way for a better future as well as a better quality of life for everyone. Thus, eminent domain use that prioritizes results that benefit everyone creates a much more content society, formed on the basis of utilitarianism. Any land confiscation that can support the greater good is done productive and beneficial.

Constitutionality often comes up in discussions like these over the use of eminent domain. Many Americans believe the constitution must be followed no matter how problematic it may be for the people. Although the constitution does specifically specify that there should be no taking of private ~~state~~ property, the Department of Justice also explains that fifth amendment only provides for confiscating property without "just compensation" (source A). ~~There is~~ ~~the just~~ ~~comp~~ This just compensation does indeed exist when eminent domain use benefits the majority. Anything that benefits as many Americans as possible should be precedent enough to



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1A  
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make an exception and provide for the greater good of society.

Looking back on history, numerous examples of violation of utilitarianism have surfaced because of eminent domain. It has been used to carry out racist, discriminatory, and unfair policies. However, if the government works to only utilize eminent domain in situations that benefit the public as a whole, it can have a much more successful and beneficial impact on society.

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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.

1 1B  
(1 of 3)

In theory, the government's <sup>power</sup> ~~practice~~ of eminent domain is ~~good~~ <sup>beneficial to everyone</sup> ~~power~~. Enabling government "to take private property and transfer it to other private interests... to promote 'economic ~~and~~ development,'" ~~to~~ to establish "federal parks, preserves, historic sites, and monuments," and to build other infrastructure, ~~the~~ eminent domain appears to be a vital tool in furthering and bettering people and their quality of life. ~~practice~~ (Source C) (Source A). In practice, ~~not only has~~ ~~the~~ ~~of eminent domain proved itself unsuccessful, but~~ eminent domain has not only proved to be disappointing in its result, but also harmful to the individuals it directly displaces. Whether its unfair compensation, failure to benefit the local economy, and even forcing people into ~~less~~ worse positions than ~~before~~, before, eminent domain has ~~not only caused~~ caused more harm than good overall.

A ~~key~~ key to the use of eminent domain is the "just compensation" for taken private property (Source A). Yet often a time, those affected are not provided with such. As ~~Source F~~ Source F details, Richard Stebbins was offered a mere " \$9,249 for a ~~...~~ strip of his property," when





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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.

1B  
(2 of 3)

a "jury ~~had~~ decided ~~that~~ ... that the land ... [was] worth \$27,000<sup>00</sup> in actuality. ~~That~~ ~~is~~ about a 300% increase from offered value to <sup>real</sup> ~~actual~~ value! If ~~landowners~~ ~~are~~ ~~not~~ properly ~~and~~ compensated, then the fundamental ~~concept~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ execution of eminent domain fails.

In addition, eminent domain has been repeatedly used on the offering of "false promises". (Source B). For example, Pfizer had offered to build a plant in New London in the last decade. The process would drive out surrounding homeowners, as those in favor argued the results of the plant would "provide appreciable benefits to the community" such as "new jobs and tax revenue" (Source B). However, the plant was abandoned in 2009, meaning the homeowners had been driven out for nothing, their properties taken for nothing, and the project yielding absolutely nothing. Similar was the ~~case~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~1981~~ ~~Poletown~~ case, which had "displaced some 4,000 people and ... businesses ... for ... a new factory" (Source C). The "6000 promised jobs" did not come, "numerous houses, businesses, and schools" destroyed, actually damaging the ~~economy~~ local economy. (Source C). Such examples illustrate that ~~without~~ ~~certainty~~ ~~and~~ without absolute certainty, the



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1B  
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promises made ~~to~~ to justify eminent domain frequently fall short, and individuals suffer the consequences of actions that they couldn't control. ~~So~~ Under this system, eminent domain is unjustifiable.

Ultimately, the reality of eminent domain's impact ~~on~~ on individuals, ~~the~~ local economies is demoralizing, and shows itself <sup>more</sup> ~~as~~ unproductive than helpful.

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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.

1 1C  
(1 of 3)

The United States government is no stranger to taking what does not belong to them. This is clearly seen ~~in the~~ all throughout its history and even goes back to when it wasn't even the "United States of America". Before the U.S. government declared eminent domain and labeled it as the "acquisition of property for public use" (Source A) the US had done the same to Native Americans.

The ceasing of land in the United States has now been labeled as something for the greater good, whether that be "establishing parks and setting aside open space for future generations, preserving places of historic interest... protecting environmentally sensitive areas" (Source A) or "[delivering] rebirth, community benefits and jobs" (Source B). Regardless of the circumstances the taking the land from people with promises of just compensation (Source A) is not fair or right.

~~Entire~~ Eminent domain



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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.

1C  
(2 of 3)

is precisely what people labeled wrong decades, even centuries ago, but it still stand and even today its most prominent victims are "the poor, racial minorities and the politically weak" (Source C). The government claims to stand on the side of the people and speak as if they are the defender, but it is clear that the side being fought for is that of the rich.

The forced removal of people from their homes has always been about money and still is today (Source B). Before the government found a way to justify the immoral and unfair theft, ~~they~~ it was done for the same reasons. First with Native Americans being pushed out of their home lands and stuffed into reservations, then with African people being stolen from their home land to become slaves and now with U.S. citizens being bullied into forfeiting their homes to the



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1C  
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government.

The use of this rule has may have preserved lands, but it has also effectively destroyed communities and mistreated families. With the United States government working with corporations (source B), they have "displaced several million people" (source C) and ~~robbed others~~ (source have attempted to rob others (source F).

The use of eminent domain has left many people broken and lost and with the US government on its side, the wronging will continue.

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## 2018 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 1

#### Overview

This year’s synthesis question asked students to use material from the six provided sources and write a “well-developed essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies the notion that eminent domain is productive and beneficial.” To achieve this task, students needed to read all the sources, drawing support from the information to write their essay.

To do well, students were expected to understand that they were, in essence, creating an argument using the supplied information, as well as knowledge that they already possessed. Students also needed to understand that, with sources arguing among one another, students did not have to accept each source as “correct,” but rather, they needed to evaluate the provided information based on their own knowledge and perceptions of the world.

Responses were expected to integrate the information from the sources with the students’ positions, not merely repeat the information. Therefore, students were expected to understand how to integrate the support for competing arguments into their own.

#### Sample: 1A

##### Score: 8

This essay presents an effectively qualified claim that eminent domain “can be perfectly productive and beneficial when a utilitarian approach of supporting the most people is taken.” In the second paragraph, the student offers well-reasoned, effective discussions of source B (e.g., “Instances like these defy all intentions of American democracy by denying basic freedoms and the principles of utilitarianism and majority rule that make American politics function”) and source C (e.g., “Overt racism and discrimination causes [*sic*] deep harms to society as a whole and eliminates [*sic*] the utilitarian approach of benefitting the most possible people ... destroy[ing] any resemblance of American democracy”) that both further the idea of the central claim. The third paragraph provides a convincing example from the student’s own experience that again illustrates the importance of the utilitarian approach. Additionally, the fourth paragraph presents a counterargument regarding the constitutionality of eminent domain and then offers an effective rebuttal. The student’s control of language, although not flawless, is consistently demonstrated throughout the essay.

#### Sample: 1B

##### Score: 6

This essay adequately develops the claim that “eminent domain has caused more harm the [*sic*] good overall.” The student uses sufficient sources to support their claim. In the second paragraph, the response presents an adequate discussion of “just compensation” that appropriately uses source F to support the student’s claim (e.g., “If landowners aren’t properly compensated, then the fundamental execution of eminent domain fails”). Moreover, the third paragraph provides an adequate explanation of “false promises” and uses sources B and D to sufficiently support the argument (e.g., “Such examples illustrate that without absolute certainty, the promises made to justify eminent domain frequently fall short, and individuals suffer the consequences of actions that they couldn’t control”). There are lapses in diction and syntax, but the prose is generally clear.

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**Question 1 (continued)**

**Sample: 1C**

**Score: 4**

This essay develops a claim that makes a comparison to Native American land seizure in an inadequately developed manner. The second paragraph is dominated by source material and provides insufficient explanation: e.g., “Regardless of the circumstances taking land from people with promises of just compensation (Sourc [sic] A) is not fair or right.” The third paragraph provides an unconvincing explanation of a claim in source C (e.g., “The government claims to stand on the side of the people and speaks as if they are the defenders, but it is clear that the side being fought for is that of the rich”). Furthermore, the link between source B and the argument in the fourth paragraph is weak. The response’s overall inadequacy is demonstrated in the insufficient and oversimplified treatment of several sources in the last paragraph: e.g., “With the United States government working with corporations (Source B), they have ‘displaced several million people’ (Source C) and have attempted to rob others (Sourc [sic] F).”