



## **Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2023 AP<sup>®</sup> English Language and Composition Set 1 Free-Response Questions**

• Number of Students Scored	562,328		
• Number of Readers	2,550		
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	58,029	10.32
	4	110,997	19.74
	3	146,624	26.07
	2	165,818	29.49
	1	80,860	14.38
• Global Mean	2.82		

The following comments on the 2023 free-response questions for AP<sup>®</sup> English Language and Composition were written by the Chief Reader, Akua Duku Anokye, Associate Professor, Arizona State University. They give an overview of each free-response question and of how students performed on the question, including typical student errors. General comments regarding the skills and content that students frequently have the most problems with are included. Some suggestions for improving student preparation in these areas are also provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend a College Board workshop to learn strategies for improving student performance in specific areas.

## Question 1

**Task:** Synthesis

**Topic:** Urban rewilding

**Max Score:** 6

**Mean Score:** 3.65

### ***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

Students responding to this question were expected to read six sources on the topic of urban rewilding and then write an essay that synthesized material from at least three sources and developed their position on the extent to which rewilding initiatives are worthwhile for urban communities. Students were expected to respond to the prompt with a thesis that takes a defensible position; use evidence from at least three provided sources to support their line of reasoning clearly, properly citing the sources; explain how the evidence supports their line of reasoning; and use appropriate grammar and punctuation in presenting their argument.

As per the Course and Exam Description, students were expected to be able to read the prompt, understand the task, use sources provided to write paragraphs that reflect their ability to establish claims and provide evidence, and demonstrate their understanding of prose and their ability to write using cogent, meaningful discourse.

### ***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

This year’s synthesis question asked students to develop a position on “the extent to which rewilding initiatives are worthwhile for urban communities to pursue.” While students seemed very familiar with broader conversations about conservation and climate change, urban rewilding itself seemed to be a newer concept. An interesting observation from readers was that the makeup of the sources led most students to take a position in favor of urban rewilding, with one response offering: “I believe urban rewilding will have a greater impact than some are claiming. It may not prove to work a miracle, but when combining it with other strategies, the impact we will have on the environment will be clear to see.” However, few responses engaged fully in the offer to qualify their position—to what extent it is worthwhile—while many more directly embraced the concept as a universal good.

As mentioned earlier, many of the sources could be used to support urban rewilding, although they offered varying visions of what urban rewilding could look like and varying assertions on what urban rewilding might impact. From air quality to species repopulation to mental health, students had a wide variety of ways to develop their own positions. Even Source D, which used a very specific definition of urban rewilding, conceded that while there might be benefits, urban rewilding could not be a pathway towards re-establishing full ecosystems. An interesting byproduct of this source arrangement was that many, many students attempted to incorporate a refutation into their response. It was exciting to see students attempt this rhetorical choice; those who succeeded did so by providing commentary on the sources rather than juxtaposing oppositional sources with each other. In general, students showed a great deal of engagement and facility with the task of reading sources and understanding how to present sources as evidence. Teachers are doing an excellent job of helping students understand the value and role of evidence in argument, with few student responses offering only lists of opinions and assertions without a grounding in the discourse community provided by the sources.

One noted pattern was that responses that scored across the full range of Row B often used sources very similarly. Readers frequently encountered responses that adeptly pulled a relevant quote from a source and then followed it with a paraphrase of that source. For example, “Introducing rewilding to urban areas however, can combat ‘... hotspots for harmful pollutants, such as nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter’ (Chatterton, 2019). Chatterton goes on to elaborate on how urban rewilding exhibited through rooftop farms and sky gardens can also contribute to urban overheating as a result of providing shade and insulations to buildings.” The challenge for readers was to determine whether the commentary that followed the quotation assumed the value of the source was self-evident (which did little to forward the line of reasoning) or whether the response clearly established a line of reasoning, explaining how this evidence was persuasive and contributed to the student’s thesis.

**What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?**

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One opportunity for refinement is in developing a nuanced/nonabsolute position. Many responses asserted that urban rewilding would be “the solution to our problem,” which often led to responses that were simplistic in their line of reasoning, often overgeneralizing the extent to which a source could “prove” the point being made, or oversimplifying the point the source was trying to make.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher-scoring responses recognized the complexity of urban rewilding and had more nuanced defensible positions. For example, one response argued: “While many believe the impacts of urban rewilding are not worth the work needed to begin this process; however, I believe that while the impacts are not fixing every problem that we hope it would, it is still worth the time and effort because it provides several great techniques of problem-solving that can be used in other techniques achieving similar goals and the benefits it has on humans is very evident.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Similarly, when commenting on a source, lower-scoring responses tended to include commentary that overgeneralized or oversimplified a source’s argument. These responses tended to look at a source as merely supporting or challenging urban rewilding, which often led to a superficial understanding of the source and thus simplistic use of it in the essay. The commentary became repetitive and ultimately struggled to develop a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The commentary seen in higher-scoring responses was more developed and insightful; these students responded to the sources and considered what they were suggesting. For example, instead of merely paraphrasing after including a quotation from a source, one response offered: “Small actions and efforts by humans can add up and create a larger lasting impact on the future of our world.” This type of commentary indicates an understanding of what the source is suggesting and how it can be integrated into the student’s own argument, making the claim more developed and fully supported. The connections between the evidence and claim were more explicit.</li> </ul>

**Based on your experience at the AP<sup>®</sup> Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?**

The fundamental skill of synthesis is the ability to identify and develop the connections between ideas. Students often focus on the idea of evidence as “support” for their claim, which leads to cherry-picking quotes that seem to “support” their thesis. Stronger responses explain those quotes; weaker responses paraphrase them. However, in both cases the scope of the essay is limited because the student is only evaluating connections as a binary—they support or they do not. To fully engage in conversation with the sources, students need to approach the synthesis task with a broad understanding of how ideas can connect—in addition to supporting the same claim, they can be in opposition, they can look at the same concept through different lenses, or with different priorities, or on different scales. They can represent a cause, an effect, an exemplar, an underlying principle, a problem, a solution, an old misconception, a new truth, or an exception. It is only by coming at synthesis with an understanding of the complex ways ideas interact that students can truly engage with the sources.

To develop this skill, teachers need to model developing and explaining these connections between ideas for students and provide opportunities to practice developing and explaining those connections themselves. This can be in formal writing, but it can also be through class discussion, concept maps, quick-writes or almost any other classroom practice. The key element is to provide opportunities and hold students accountable not just for identifying connections but explaining the connections in depth. It is especially effective to build those connections across units or classes. The larger a student’s internal library of connections, the more readily they can build connections within and among sources on the synthesis prompt (and in all areas of academic or intellectual exploration).

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

- Teachers will find example responses for this free-response question on the [AP Central AP English Language and Composition Exam page](#), along with scoring notes and specific commentary explaining why each point was or was not earned.
- The AP English Language and Composition [Course and Exam Description](#) includes a diverse collection of resources, including the Instructional Approaches section, which has a dedicated description of approaches for the Synthesis FRQ.
- Teachers will find formative assessment practice for Synthesis in Unit 3, Unit 6, and Unit 9 [AP Classroom Progress Checks](#). These FRQs are scaffolded to provide students support as they practice synthesizing sources and constructing their own argumentation.
- Teachers may also make use of the released [Synthesis FRQs in the AP Classroom Question Bank](#) as a part of classroom practice for students. Simply filter the Question Type for FRQ: Synthesis.
- Many of the [AP Daily Videos](#) located in AP Classroom will support building students’ skills specifically for the Synthesis FRQ. The videos that accompany Units 3, 6, and 9 are particularly useful for students who need practice for this FRQ. Listed below are some of the AP Daily videos that offer a range of entry points for students who are working to develop and refine their Synthesis skills.
  - Unit 3: Skill 3.A Daily Video 2
    - After being introduced to the Synthesis FRQ, students can watch this video to learn about line of reasoning. It specifically addresses how to connect commentary to evidence as a means of strengthening a claim, something highlighted in the “Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps” table above.

- Unit 3: Skill 6.A Daily Video 2
  - In this video, students learn how to develop meaningful and appropriate commentary for the synthesis essay. This lesson will help students respond to the sources, which is a skill highlighted in the “Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps” table.
- Unit 6: Skill 3.A Daily Video 1
  - This video explores how source information may reveal a source’s position, credibility, and/or bias. This lesson will encourage a close reading of the sources, which will make students more apt to have a deeper understanding of the sources.

## Question 2

**Task:** Rhetorical Analysis

**Topic:** Michelle Obama speech to school counselors

**Max Score:** 6

**Mean Score:** 3.58

### ***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

Students responding to this question were expected to read an excerpt from a 2017 speech delivered by Michelle Obama at an event honoring outstanding school counselors and then write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Obama made to convey her message about her expectations and hope for young people in the United States. Students were expected to respond to the prompt with a thesis that analyzes the speaker’s rhetorical choices; select and use evidence to support their line of reasoning; explain how the evidence supports their line of reasoning; demonstrate an understanding of the rhetorical situation; and use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating their argument.

As per the Course and Exam Description, students were expected to be able to read and understand the speech and identify the strategic choices Obama made related to the rhetorical situation, explain how those rhetorical choices contributed to the purpose of the address, identify and describe their claims, and analyze and select the appropriate evidence to support their claims.

### ***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

Students found the speech to be an accessible one, and most recognized themselves in the targeted audience of this excerpt. The more insightful students recognized that this excerpt served almost as an aside, with remarks directed at students during a speech that was honoring outstanding school counselors, but a failure to recognize this broader rhetorical context did not negatively affect students’ ability to respond to the prompt with apt analysis. Stronger responses also understood the significance of this being Obama’s final speech as First Lady, which is information found both in the provided introduction as well as stated by the First Lady in the text of the speech itself. Additionally, many students demonstrated an awareness of the transition of power from the 8-year Obama administration to the incoming Trump administration.

Many students seemed to have a familiarity with Obama. Students were aware of her focus on youths during her time in the White House and mentioned some of her other initiatives, such as getting kids to exercise and eat healthier school lunches. The stronger responses noted the significance of ending her time there by addressing the youth in her last formal remarks as First Lady, which Obama points out at the beginning of the excerpt.

Obama’s speech is not reliant upon a use of rhetorical devices, but many students still anchored their responses in naming particular devices; the most commonly identified ones were repetition, parallelism, anaphora, appeals to ethos and pathos, personal anecdotes, tonal shifts, and varying types of diction (inspiring diction, patriotic diction, common diction, hopeful diction, etc.). Responses that were anchored in traditional rhetorical devices performed neither better nor worse than essays that took a broader approach to the types of choices a speaker makes. Some essays were also a hybrid of traditional devices and broader choices (e.g., “establishing her credibility, employing parallelism, and appealing to their sensibilities to evoke desire and patriotism”). By and large, students were also able to identify choices Obama made by describing the text. An example of such nondevice-driven choices is illustrated in this thesis statement:

“Through her attention on specific groups of people and her connection of her own story to the power of hope, Obama effectively delivers her message to young people that as someone who has a place in America, they have a duty to better themselves in order to strive for progress.”

Obama’s speech has a strong and clear line of reasoning, which many students noted by discussing her change in purpose and tone at several points: beginning with her inclusive call to young people from all walks of life to work hard and get a good education; followed by the recognition of the responsibility that accompanies that right to contribute to their communities; shifting to a message of hope; and finally acknowledging students who have already been working for their dreams and highlighting the responsibility of adults, like the counselor honoree of the event, to provide the support and hope to the young people she has addressed in the speech. Many successful students developed their responses by working chronologically through the speech, narrating Obama’s choices with evidence and commentary to build their own line of reasoning mirroring the framework of Obama’s speech.

To earn the point in Row A of the scoring guidelines, responses needed to “respond to the prompt with a defensible thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices.” Because the prompt specifically tasks students with analyzing the rhetorical choices Obama makes to convey her message about her expectations and hope for young people in the United States, an acceptable thesis needed to include reference to choices as well as a specific purpose or message. Students were able to earn the point by minimally identifying particular choices and naming the message as stated in the prompt without elaboration. The point was not awarded if the statement listed choices with no mention of purpose at all or with only the generic “to get her point across” or “to convey her message.” Many theses were found among two sentences in close proximity to each other (generally, two consecutive sentences, always within the same paragraph). Most often, theses were found in the first paragraph, but many were also found in the conclusion.

Although Row C of the scoring guidelines offers several ways for a response to earn the point, most did not earn the point only for employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive. The responses that were vivid and persuasive also tended to demonstrate sophistication of thought and/or understanding of Obama’s rhetorical situation. The responses that earned the sophistication point suggested a student who is insightful and critical as a reader and skillful and deliberate as a writer. In fact, one made this same observation about the effectiveness of Obama’s choices: “Regardless of how beautiful your prose is or how forceful your delivery is, one will never be inspired to do something impossible. The First Lady realizes this and so she ends her speech by showing the audience tangible examples of her hope come true. . . . It would be cruel to ask so much from an audience—to put the burdens of their freedom and future so solidly upon their shoulders—without giving them their due recognition.”

Many responses clearly demonstrated Obama’s purpose and offered ample evidence of the rhetorical moves she makes but did not earn the sophistication point because they did not address the speech’s complexities or tensions throughout. Although many responses demonstrated an understanding of Obama’s rhetorical situation, they did not explicitly address the significance or relevance of the identified rhetorical choices except where Obama had already noted that rhetorical context with her own words (e.g., discussion of anecdotes). Although many responses seamlessly integrated quotes within the analysis or offered a vivid phrase or choice word or two, the overall style was not particularly vivid or persuasive enough to rise to the level of sophistication.

**What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?**

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many weaker responses did not demonstrate an adequate ability to discuss the role of syntax and grammar. Frequent claims were made about the use of polysyndeton, asyndeton, dashes, and different forms of parallelism. When provided, the examples were not always representative of the named choice, and students were ill-prepared to discuss why they mattered to Obama’s message. For example, after making the claim that “Michelle used parallelism to help highlight key components of her speech,” one response then provided evidence from the speech that failed to demonstrate parallelism and commentary that did not adequately support that claim about the role of parallelism in Obama’s discussion of President Obama and her humble roots: “Obama used parallelism to really drive home her point and make each point the same importance. She said ‘Something that my husband ... something that has carried us ... something better is always possible’ (Obama lines 55–61).”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger essays consistently and clearly explained why Obama repeated particular words or phrases in their commentary, connecting the effect of that choice on what the response identified as Obama’s purpose or message: “Parallelism is a rhetorical choice seen to be used by Obama to enforce her strong belief in education. Obama repeats the phrase ‘so you’ as a form of anaphora when she explains that getting an education opens doors ‘so you can ...’ (lines 48–51). The repetition of everything a good education unlocks reinforces Obama’s desire to educate American students.”</li> <li>Though it was not typically done well, some students were able to analyze the rhetorical effect of the dashes on Obama’s overall purpose in what they seemed to recognize as a transcript of Obama’s spoken words when she delivered the speech: “The consistent hopeful tone helps push the authors purpose, but also riddled throughout the speech are many dashes which further elaborate on the speaker’s thoughts and introduce asides. These asides help break the wall between the speech and the listener and truly connect Obama to her audience. For example, the early parts of the speech Obama talks about ‘our glorious diversity.’ After this there is a strategically placed set of dashes which contain an explanation for this diversity: ‘our diversities of faiths and colors and creeds.’ This explanation is consistently seen in many places in the text and is also used as an introduction to an aside. The asides allow the First Lady to directly talk to her audience, interjecting personal anecdotes and other expanding thoughts she might have. Connecting with the school counselors is a major point of emphasis in this speech since Obama truly wants to thank them for their work.”</li> </ul>



- Weaker responses claimed that Obama *used* ethos, pathos, or a call to action as rhetorical choices rather than discussing these as *effects* of the choices she made: “Michelle used ethos to connect with her audience. ‘I want you to remember that in this country, plenty of folks, including me and my husband—we started out with very little.’ This shows that Obama wants her audience to know she is just like them so they will trust her.” Educators should encourage students to see many of the choices they identify as ways to demonstrate pathos, logos, and ethos rather than as separate choices.

- Stronger essays provide more than one direct reference to the speech, both quotes and paraphrased references, as evidence to demonstrate the effect of a particular choice Obama makes to elicit a particular impact on her audience, such as to inspire them to answer a call to action or build her own credibility: “She makes specific analogies to her own poverty—‘me and my husband, we started out with very little’—and her own journey along the path to the American success story. In these analogies, she identifies the theme of hope in the face of adversity that she aims to instill in her audience. She finds hope in she and her husband’s choice to run for office, in her own father’s dedication to his blue collar job, and she tells her audience that this hope is an inherent part of American character, that they too possess it. If she could do it, so can they.”

**Based on your experience at the AP<sup>®</sup> Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?**

Students would benefit from learning to reach for more depth of analysis. In the classroom, teachers could require students to write three to five sentences analyzing one element or rhetorical choice in a piece they are studying in class. While this may be difficult for many young writers, the practice throughout the year can help students learn to go beyond the obvious and surface-level effects to provide more insightful commentary.

Subsequently, embedding quotations is a skill that students need to practice. Doing this will help students rely less on the speaker’s words and more on their own in their responses, thus developing their own commentary. They would also benefit from practicing paraphrasing in order to reference longer pieces of evidence without quoting large chunks, which would allow them time and space to focus on their analysis. Students need to learn to include what the speaker says in the text, but to focus on *how* the speaker says it (the choices they make) and *why* they say it (the impact of those choices on an audience to achieve a purpose). Providing sentence stems to scaffold instruction could be helpful. Teaching students to include the phrase “in order to” in the discussion of evidence and/or an author’s rhetorical choices will help them connect the choices to the purpose, leading to a better depth of analysis.

To help students build a line of reasoning, teachers can have them practice using transitions within ideas presented in a paragraph as well as between paragraphs. This establishes a connective thread among ideas, thus clarifying and enhancing the line of reasoning. Again, providing sentence frames to scaffold instruction can prove beneficial.

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

- Teachers will find example responses for this free-response question on the [AP Central AP English Language and Composition Exam page](#), along with scoring notes and specific commentary explaining why each point was or was not earned.
- The AP English Language and Composition [Course and Exam Description](#) includes a diverse collection of resources, including the Instructional Approaches section, which has a dedicated description of approaches for the Rhetorical Analysis FRQ.
- Teachers will find formative assessment practice for Rhetorical Analysis in Unit 1, Unit 4, and Unit 7 [AP Classroom Progress Checks](#). These FRQs are scaffolded to provide students support as they practice examining the rhetorical situation and rhetorical choices that authors/speakers employ.
- Teachers may also make use of the released [Rhetorical Analysis FRQs in the AP Classroom Question Bank](#) as a part of classroom practice for students. Simply filter the Question Type for FRQ: Rhetorical Analysis.
- Many of the [AP Daily Videos](#) located in AP Classroom will support building students' skills specifically for the Rhetorical Analysis FRQ. Listed below are some of the AP Daily videos that offer a range of entry points for students who are working to develop and refine their Rhetorical Analysis skills.
  - Unit 2: Skill 1.B Video 2
    - For students needing additional support in discussing ethos, this video specifically addresses techniques a writer uses to appeal to an audience. This lesson supports students in their understanding and analysis of the appeal, which is a skill addressed in the “Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps” column above.
  - Unit 4: Skill 1.A Daily Video 2
    - As noted above, higher-scoring responses were cognizant that this was Obama’s final speech. In this video, students are provided tutelage on exigence and occasion and then study a Rhetorical Analysis FRQ for practice.
  - Unit 6: Skill 7.A Daily Video 3
    - Even though this video focuses exclusively on diction analysis, it includes a thorough discussion of how to incorporate commentary that consistently, not repetitively, connects the rhetorical choice to purpose.

### Question 3

**Task:** Argument

**Topic:** Maxine Hong Kingston on creating a community of voices

**Max Score:** 6

**Mean Score:** 3.51

#### ***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

Students responding to this question were expected to read a Maxine Hong Kingston quote on the impact of a community of voices and write an essay that argued their position on the extent to which Kingston’s claim about the importance of creating a community of voices is valid. Students were expected to respond to the prompt with a thesis that presented a defensible position; provide evidence to support their line of reasoning; explain how the evidence supported their line of reasoning; and use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating their argument.

As per the Course and Exam Description, students were expected to be able to select evidence to develop and refine their claims, use appropriate approaches of organization and reasoning to support their arguments, and make stylistic choices that advance the argument.

#### ***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

This year’s argument question asked students to respond to the following prompt: “In a 2016 interview published in the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, Maxine Hong Kingston, an award-winning writer famous for her novels depicting the experiences of Chinese immigrants in the United States, stated: ‘I think that individual voices are not as strong as a community of voices. If we can make a community of voices, then we can speak more truth.’ Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Kingston’s claim about the importance of creating a community of voices is valid.”

The prompt was highly accessible and gave the students choice. A response to either of Kingston’s claims (the strength of a community of voices and/or being able to speak more truth through a community of voices) was sufficient and allowed students to use varied and insightful pieces of evidence to support positions—such as the American Revolution, civil rights movement, social media, etc.—that students have familiarity with and feel comfortable describing. Furthermore, the prompt gave students the opportunity to discuss their voice and their community through numerous personal examples.

Most students were able to develop defensible thesis statements. Responses that had difficulty presenting a defensible thesis often oversimplified their position and/or restated the prompt, as in “A community of voices is better than an individual voice as people are stronger when they are together” or “I am on Kingston’s side as I personally would say a community is stronger than an individual.” Responses with these thesis statements had difficulty developing their position after the first paragraph. Stronger responses identified nuance within Kingston’s claim, such as one response that claimed, “While in many instances, it takes one voice to create a ripple effect of opinions and outbursts to occur, it takes a community to make change through the power of fighting for rights, working together to make decisions and rallying together.”

Again, the prompt allowed for students to use a wealth of experiences as evidence to support their position. Many students taking this course are also taking U.S. History, and responses utilized numerous historical events as evidence, including Seneca Falls, Rosa Parks, World War II, as well as Gandhi’s Great Salt March

and Cesar Chávez and the farm workers movement. In addition to history, many responses used personal experiences including bullying, friendship, and group projects or social movements such as the LGBTQIA+ Movement, Black Lives Matter, and the Writer’s Guild of America strike to discuss the power in a community of voices. Weaker responses struggled with connecting their evidence to their argument and would often provide summary rather than commentary. As a result, these responses struggled to develop a line of reasoning. Stronger responses consistently connected each piece of evidence to their argument with adequate commentary, creating a strong line of reasoning.

***What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?***

Responses often showed that while students had a great deal of evidence and experiences to rely on to address the prompt, there were struggles with either connecting the prompt to their initial claim or providing substantial, substantive commentary to support the evidence. At times, responses would mention evidence and expect that the reader would understand their position, rather than explain why that particular piece of evidence served their argument.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weaker responses were based on thesis statements that addressed one side of Kingston’s claim, for example, “I’m on Kingston’s side as I personally would say a community is stronger than an individual.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger responses recognized the complexities within the power of an individual voice and/or a community of voices, such as, “Kingston’s claim is largely correct, however, a community of voices is only more powerful when it doing what is right for everyone.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weaker responses substituted summary for argument when addressing Kingston’s statement.</li> <li>• Weaker responses provided evidence that is general and lacking explanation. One response stated, “if you walk into your principals office with a group of people that are all feeling the same about something and come up with a really strong argument they might figure out ways to fix it” and “If you make it powerful and you have a good group of people as well you will get somewhere.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger responses adequately explained and connected evidence to the argument. For example, one response wrote, “This is exemplified in <i>Letter From Birmingham Jail</i>, where King promotes direct action through the boycotting of local businesses. Due to the large amount of people within this movement, their protests placed an immense amount of pressure on the government and other citizens to lobby for African American equality. Women’s suffrage and Black equality were only successful because the groups formed communities in which their actions could have a greater impact.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weaker responses made an attempt to identify the complexities between the individual voice and the community of voices, but they did not do so consistently or sufficiently.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger responses articulated the implications and limitations of the task, like discussing a community of voices failing to act: “The world stayed ignorant to Hitler when he was alone. It wasn’t until he had millions protecting him and his truth that people cared.”</li> </ul>

**Based on your experience at the AP<sup>®</sup> Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?**

Providing greater instruction to assist students in creating a line of reasoning would help students write successful responses. Many weaker responses may list what pieces of evidence will be used in their argument, but these pieces of evidence are often simply that: a list of items that do not flow or build upon one another. As the evidence and commentary section provides a greater opportunity to earn points, this would be one way to help students improve their performance.

In addition to strengthening the line of reasoning, having instruction that repeatedly allows students to read, write, revise, and discuss will help students grow rhetorically. Students have many thoughts; however, they may struggle fully expressing them. Instead of having students complete activities to prepare for the AP exam, teachers can encourage them and provide the opportunities to read and write on numerous topics, to share why this could be relevant to them and the greater society at large while sharing their own perspectives. The collaborative process will not only help students spend time explaining their positions but also allow them to gain evidence that can be used as counterarguments to strengthen their position through their discussion with others as they revise their written pieces.

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

- Teachers will find example responses for this free-response question on the [AP Central AP English Language and Composition Exam page](#), along with scoring notes and specific commentary explaining why each point was or was not earned.
- The AP English Language and Composition [Course and Exam Description](#) includes a diverse collection of resources, including the Instructional Approaches section, which has a dedicated description of approaches for the Argument FRQ.
- Teachers will find formative assessment practice for Argument in Unit 2, Unit 5, and Unit 8 [AP Classroom Progress Checks](#). These FRQs are scaffolded to provide students support as they practice synthesizing sources and constructing their own argumentation.
- Teachers may also make use of the released [Argument FRQs in the AP Classroom Question Bank](#) as a part of classroom practice for students. Simply filter the Question Type for FRQ: Argument.
- Many of the [AP Daily Videos](#) located in AP Classroom will support building students' skills specifically for the Argument FRQ. Listed below are some of the AP Daily videos that offer a range of entry points for students who are working to develop and refine their Argument skills.
  - Unit 4: Skill 4.B Daily Video 3
    - As referenced in the “Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps” table above, stronger theses identify the complexities of the task. In this video, students are provided a method to improve the quality of their thesis statements and thus take a more nuanced position.
  - Unit 5: Skill 6.A Daily Video 1
    - For students struggling with developing a line of reasoning in the Argument FRQ, this video specifically addresses how to arrange body paragraphs that build upon each other conceptually.
  - Unit 6: Skill 4.B Daily Video 1
    - Similarly, to further help strengthen line of reasoning skills, this video provides students with an example of concept mapping to determine body paragraph ideas. With an emphasis on prewriting strategies, this video guides students to consider their line of reasoning when drafting a position.