AP® Seminar
Performance Task 2
Scoring Guidelines

Performance Task 2: Individual Written Argument Scoring Guidelines

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General Scoring Notes

When applying the rubric for each individual row, you should award the score for that row based solely upon the criteria indicated for that row, according to the preponderance of evidence.

0 (Zero) Scores
- A score of 0 is assigned to a single row of the rubric when the response displays a below-minimum level of quality as identified in that row of the rubric.
- Scores of 0 are assigned to all rows of the rubric when the response is **off-topic**; a repetition of a prompt; entirely crossed-out; a drawing or other markings; or a response in a language other than English.

Off-Topic Decision:

For the purpose of the IWA, if the response is not in any way related to a theme connecting at least two of the stimulus materials, it will be counted as off-topic and will receive a score of 0. Such responses should be rare.
- Considering the student-oriented scoring approach of the College Board, readers should reward the student who derives their ideas from the materials, even if they wandered away from them as they pursued their topic.
- If you can infer any connection to a theme derived from two or more stimulus materials, the response should be scored. A failure to adequately incorporate the stimulus materials falls under rubric Row 1, not here.

A READER SHOULD NEVER SCORE A PAPER AS OFF-TOPIC. INSTEAD, DEFER THE RESPONSE TO YOUR TABLE LEADER.

NR (No Response)

A score of NR is assigned to responses that are blank.

Word Count

The Individual Written Argument task instructions stipulate a word count of no more than 2,000 words. At times, responses might exceed this limit. Students are allowed a 10% cushion. You should score these papers by discounting the words that are over 10% (or 2,200 words).

Individual Written Argument (IWA)   48 points

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row 1 **Understand and Analyze Context** **(0 or 5 points)**	**0 points** The response does not incorporate any of the stimulus material, or, at most, it is mentioned in only one sentence. OR The response includes a discussion of at least one of the stimulus materials; however, it does not contribute to the argument.	**5 points** The response demonstrates the relevance of at least one of the stimulus materials to the argument by integrating it as part of the response. (For example, as providing relevant context for the research question, or as evidence to support relevant claims.)
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Typical responses that earn 0 points include a reference to the stimulus material that: • Is tangential. • May misrepresent what the sources are discussing/arguing or may use the source in such a way that ignores its context. • Is only used for a definition or facts that could be obtained from other, more relevant sources. • Is no more than a jumping-off point for the student's argument, no more than a perfunctory mention. • Could be deleted with little to no effect on the response.	**Typical responses that earn 5 points include a reference to the stimulus material that:** • Reflects an accurate understanding of the source and demonstrates an understanding of its context (e.g., date, region, topic). AND • Presents a reference to the source, which, if deleted, would change or weaken the argument.
	Additional Notes • References to stimulus materials may be included multiple times in the response; only one successful integration of stimulus material is required to earn points.	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row 2 **Understand and Analyze Context** **(0 or 5 points)**	**0 points** The response either provides no context. OR The response makes simplistic references to or general statements about the context of the research question.	**5 points** The response explains the significance or importance of the research question by situating it within a larger context.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Typical responses that earn 0 points: • Provide unsubstantiated assertions without explanations (e.g., "this is important"). • May provide contextual details, but they are tangential to the research question and/or argument. • Provide overly broad, generalized statements about context. • Provide context for only part of the question or argument.	**Typical responses that earn 5 points:** • Provide specific and relevant details (i.e., what, who, when, where) for all elements of the research question and/or argument. AND • Convey a sense of urgency or establish the importance of the research question and/or argument.
	Additional Notes • Context is usually found in the first few paragraphs.	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Row 3 **Understand and Analyze Perspective** **(0, 6, or 9 points)**	**0 points** The response provides only a single perspective. OR The response identifies and offers opinions or unsubstantiated statements about different perspectives that may be overly simplified.	**6 points** The response describes multiple perspectives and identifies some relevant similarities or differences between them.	**9 points** The response evaluates multiple perspectives (and synthesizes them) by drawing relevant connections between them, considering objections, implications, and limitations.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	Typical responses that earn 0 points: • Provide only one perspective. • May use a lens or lenses that all work to convey the same point of view. • Convey alternative perspectives as personal opinions or assertions without evidence. • Provide perspectives that are isolated from each other without comparison. • Provide perspectives that are oversimplified by treating many voices, stakeholders, or stances as one.	**Typical responses that earn 6 points:** • Make general comparisons between perspectives describing only basic agreement or disagreement. • Explain that disagreement/agreement exists, but they do not explain how by clarifying the points on which they agree or disagree.	**Typical responses that earn 9 points:** • Elaborate on the connections among different perspectives. • Use the details from different sources or perspectives to demonstrate specific agreement or disagreement among perspectives (i.e., evaluate comparative strengths and weaknesses of different perspectives by placing them in dialogue).
	Additional Notes • A lens is a filter through which an issue or topic is considered or examined. • A perspective is a point of view conveyed through an argument.		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Row 4 **Establish Argument** **(0, 8, or 12 points)**	**0 points** The response provides only unsubstantiated opinions or claims. OR The response summarizes information (no argument). The response employs inadequate reasoning due to minimal connections between claims and evidence.	**8 points** The argument presents a claim with some flaws in reasoning. The response is logically organized, but the reasoning may be faulty or underdeveloped. OR The response may be well-reasoned but illogical in its organization. The conclusion may be only partially related to the research question or thesis.	**12 points** The response is a clear and convincing argument. The response is logically organized and well-reasoned by connecting claims and evidence, leading to a plausible, well-aligned conclusion.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	Typical responses that earn 0 points: • Base the argument on opinion(s). • Seek to explain a topic, rather than take a position (e.g., report, summary, chronicle, etc.). • Provide a contrived solution to a non-existent problem or completely lack a conclusion.	**Typical responses that earn 8 points:** • Organize the argument well OR link evidence and claims well in discrete sections, but do not do both. In other words, the response may fail to explain how evidence supports a claim—i.e., it lacks commentary—OR the overall organization of the response is difficult to follow, even though it has done an adequate job of commenting on the evidence. • Provide evidence that often drives the argument, rather than contributing to the response's argument. • Provide a conclusion/resolution that lacks either enough detail to assess plausibility or is not fully aligned with the research question.	**Typical responses that earn 12 points:** • Organize information in a way that is often signposted or explicit. • Provide commentary that explains fully how evidence supports claims (i.e., the commentary will engage with the content of the evidence to draw conclusions). • Provide an argument that is driven by student voice (commentary). • Integrate alternate views, perhaps by engaging with counterclaims or using them to demonstrate a nuanced understanding. • Provide a solution/conclusion that is fully aligned with the research question. • Present enough detail to assess the plausibility of the conclusion/solution (perhaps with an assessment of limitations and implications).
	Additional Notes		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Row 5 **Select and Use Evidence (0, 6, or 9 points)**	**0 points** Any evidence presented in the response is predominantly irrelevant and/or lacks credibility.	**6 points** The response includes mostly relevant and credible evidence.	**9 points** The response includes relevant, credible, and sufficient evidence to support its argument.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	Typical responses that earn 0 points: • Include many sources that are not credible for the context in which they are used. • Include no well-vetted sources (i.e., scholarly, peer-reviewed, credentialed authors, independently verified) beyond the stimulus materials. • May include a well-vetted source that is not used effectively (e.g., trivial selection, not aligned with claim, misrepresented).	**Typical responses that earn 6 points:** • Draw from a variety of sources that are relevant to the topic and credible for the context in most cases, but those sources are primarily non-scholarly. • Include many sources that are referenced rather than explained. • Provide evidence that does not fully support claims (e.g., there are some gaps and trivial selections). • May cite several scholarly works, but select excerpts that only convey general or simplistic ideas OR include at least one piece of scholarly work that is used effectively.	**Typical responses that earn 9 points:** • Provide evidence that fully supports claims. • Effectively connect evidence to the argument, even if the relevance of the evidence is not initially apparent. • Provide purposeful analysis and evaluation of evidence used (i.e., go beyond mere citation or reference). • Make purposeful use of relevant evidence from a variety of scholarly work (e.g., peer-reviewed, credentialed authors, independently verified, primary sources, etc.).
	Additional Notes • Review the Bibliography or Works Cited. • Review individual instances of selected evidence throughout (commentary about the evidence). • General reference guides such as encyclopedias and dictionaries do not fulfill the requirement for a well-vetted source.		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Row 6 **Apply Conventions** **(0, 3, or 5 points)**	**0 points** The response is missing a bibliography/works cited OR the response is largely missing in-text citations/footnotes.	**3 points** The response attributes or cites sources used through the use of in-text citations or footnotes, but not always accurately. The bibliography or works cited references sources using a generally consistent style with some errors.	**5 points** The response attributes, accurately cites, and integrates the sources used through the use of in-text citations or footnotes. The bibliography or works cited accurately references sources using a consistent style.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	Typical responses that earn 0 points: • Include internal citations, but no bibliography (or vice versa). • Provide little or no evidence of successful linking of in-text citations to bibliographic references (e.g., in-text references are to titles but bibliographic references are listed by author; titles are different in the text and in the works cited).	**Typical responses that earn 3 points:** • Provide some uniformity in citation style. • Include unclear references or errors in citations (e.g., citations with missing elements or essential elements that must be guessed from a url). • Provide some successful linking of citations to bibliographic references. • Provide some successful attributive phrasing and/or in-text parenthetical citations.	**Typical responses that earn 5 points:** • Contain few flaws. • Provide consistent evidence of linking internal citations to bibliographic references. • Include consistent and clear attributive phrasing and/or in-text parenthetical citations. **Note:** The response cannot score 5 points if key components of citations (i.e., author/organization, title, publication, date) are consistently missing.
	Additional Notes • In AP Seminar, there is no requirement for using a particular style sheet; however, responses must use a style that is consistent and complete. • Check the bibliography for consistency in style and inclusion of fundamental elements. • Check for clarity of in-text citations. • Check to make sure all in-text citations match the bibliography (without extensive search).		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Row 7 **Apply Conventions** **(0, 2, or 3 points)**	**0 points** The response has many grammatical flaws, is difficult to understand, or is written in a style inappropriate for an academic audience.	**2 points** The response is mostly clear but may contain some flaws in grammar or a few instances of a style inappropriate for an academic audience.	**3 points** The response creates variety, emphasis, and interest to the reader through the use of effective sentences and precision of word choice. The written style is consistently appropriate for an academic audience, although the response may have a few errors in grammar and style.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	Typical responses that earn 0 points: • Contain multiple grammatical errors that make reading difficult. • Use an overall style that is colloquial or in other ways not appropriate for an academic paper.	**Typical responses that earn 2 points:** • Contain some instances of errors that occasionally make reading difficult. • Lapse into colloquial language. • Demonstrate imprecise word choice.	**Typical responses that earn 3 points:** • Contain few flaws. • Use clear prose that maintains an academic or scholarly tone. • Use words and syntax to enhance communication of complex ideas throughout.
	Additional Notes • Readers should focus on the sentences written by the student, not those quoted or derived from sources.		