AP English Literature and Composition
Question 2: Prose Analysis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)

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Sample Reference	Row A	Row B	Row C
E	1	4	1
I	1	3	0
F	1	3	0
A	1	2	0
D	1	2	0
B	1	1	0
C	1	0	0

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Sample E
Score: 6/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C1)

Row A: 1/1
The response earned the point in Row A because it responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis: "Through the use of strongly unfavorable diction to underscore Zenobia's unpleasant and false disposition and repeated insistances on her actions as performance, Hawthorne portrays the narrator's attitude toward Zenobia as one of contempt and disapproval" (paragraph 1).

Row B: 4/4
The response earned four points in Row B because its commentary consistently explains how the numerous pieces of evidence support the line of reasoning. Specific evidence is accompanied by clear commentary throughout the response, e.g., the narrator "stresses his dislike of Zenobia when he says he 'malevolently [beholds] her true character,' implying Zenobia has been hiding her true personality. By claiming she is a 'passionate, luxurious' woman 'lacking simplicity, not deeply refined, incapable of pure and perfect taste,' the narrator harshly criticizes her debautchery and makes evident his disapproval" (paragraph 2). The commentary continues to engage significant details from the entire passage to build toward conclusions: Zenobia's "defining falseness causes the narrator to both distrust and detest Zenobia" (paragraph 3), and "[t]hroughout the passage, the narrator's criticism of Zenobia and her extravagant lifestyle reveal his attitude toward her to be one of extreme contempt and disapproval" (paragraph 4). The response advances the line of reasoning at each turn with focused commentary on the significance of particular words and details.

Row C: 1/1
The response earned the point in Row C because its complex literary argument demonstrates sophisticated thought and is rendered in persuasive prose. It recognizes contradictory aspects of the narrator's attitude (frustration, attraction, dislike, distrust, contempt) toward Zenobia and his attempt to break what he deems her façade: the narrator "longs to witness a genuine reaction from her, good or bad, simply to learn if she is capable and willing of any form of emotional vulnerability. This thirst for 'a glimpse of something true' reveals his struggle to accept this new version of the woman he once knew, who has now become 'self-complacent, condescending,' and inauthentic."

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Sample I
Score: 4/6 Points (A1 – B3 – C0)

Row A: 1/1
The response earned the point in Row A because it responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis that presents an interpretation of Hawthorne's portrayal of the narrator's attitude toward Zenobia: "The shift and internal resolution that the narrator experiences create a resolution in her attitude towards Zenobia. Where at first she was complacent in her acceptance of Zenobia's oppulent lifestyle, she turns scornful and resentful as she regains control over Zenobia's proud aura and facad" (paragraph 3).

Row B: 3/4
The response earned three of the four points available in Row B because its commentary is uneven in its support of the thesis. It attempts to develop two arguments, one that interprets the passage as a discourse on selfishness and selflessness ("The narrator, though portrayed as selfless, is not perfect in her opinions, and Zenobia's selfishness is not wholly consuming either" [paragraph 1]) and the other, cited in Row A above, that responds more directly to the prompt. The essay does not fully integrate one of these claims into the other. Nevertheless, the response does provide specific evidence to support these claims and the commentary does explain the relationship between these pieces of evidence and the thesis. For example, in paragraph two, the student notes how the narrator "appears at first lost in the opulence and decadence of Zenobia's house.... Though disgusted by the extent of luxury, the narrator caves briefly to the conflicting sides within herself, and momentarily accepts the belief that Zenobia has every right to 'make herself as gorgeous as she pleased'" to illustrate the narrator's "complacent…acceptance of Zenobia's oppulent lifestyle," and then in paragraph three reveals the narrator's shift in perspective by explaining how "[t]he metaphor of lightning and flame used to describe Zenobia's actions reveal not only the power of her true emotions, but also the victory the narrator feels in her selfrighteousness."

Row C: 0/1
The response did not earn the point in Row C, because, while it does identify the shifts in the narrator's attitude toward Zenobia and attempts to provide a broader context for its interpretation of the passage in the claim about selfishness and selflessness, it oversimplifies the complexities of the passage; e.g., "shifts of the narrators attitudes… help create the realization that labels, such as selfish or selfless, are not perfect, and people cannot be defined by just one word." Because of these oversimplifications, it does not ultimately display the sophistication of thought needed to earn the point.

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Sample F
Score: 4/6 Points (A1 – B3 – C0)

Row A: 1/1
The response earned the point in Row A because it takes a clear position that responds to the prompt with an interpretation: "Hawthorne employs disapproving diction and a scornful tone to convey the narrators cold, distasteful attitude towards Zenobia in this excerpt" (paragraph 1).

Row B: 3/4
The response earned three points in Row B because it offers specific evidence, provides some commentary to explain the relationship between the evidence and the line of reasoning, and analyzes how two literary elements, diction and tone, contribute to the interpretation of Zenobia's attitude. Some of the commentary is limited in its explanation, but the response highlights particular words: "proud," "imposing," and "incapable of pure and perfect taste" (paragraph 2), to illustrate the narrator's disapproval of Zenobia's "mask." The third paragraph attempts to describe the effect of the tone in the passage, but it falls short of distinguishing tone from diction; yet the paragraph does continue to build on the argument about the narrator's disapproval of Zenobia, and therefore continues the line of reasoning, even if it is flawed.

Row C: 0/1
The response did not earn the point in Row C because, although there is some attempt to contextualize the interpretation, this attempt consists of a sweeping generalization: "…humans are proud. They are often selfish, narrow minded and... morally unsound" (paragraph 1). The relationship between this statement and the thesis about the narrator's attitude toward Zenobia is not developed and the response oversimplifies the complexities of the passage.

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Sample A
Score: 3/6 Points (A1 – B2 – C0)

Row A: 1/1
The response earned the point in Row A because it responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis: "The narrator's attitude toward Zenobia and their corresponding actions [are] most clearly expressed through Hawthorne's use of parallel contrasts and character monologue. It is through these techniques that it is revealed that although the narrator is fond of Zenobia, they are also critisizing of the choices she has made" (paragraph 1).

Row B: 2/4
The response earned two points in Row B because, although it provides some specific evidence to support the thesis, it misinterprets cited evidence, e.g., an observation about the contrast between Zenobia's "gorgeous" house and the "homely" farmhouse leads to a conclusion about "the assumed plainness of the narrator hailing from the farmhouse" (paragraph 2). Conclusions are asserted rather than explained, they tend to be oversimplified and rely on inference, and they do not strengthen the argument: "the narrator's critique of the excessive house can be translated to his critique of Zenobia's excessive wants" (paragraph 2); "by having the narrator express his criticism in the form of a monologue, a stronger effect is created" (paragraph 3).

Row C: 0/1
The response did not earn the point in Row C because, while it communicates ideas clearly (as shown in the examples cited above in Row A and B, ultimately, it does not demonstrate sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument, and it oversimplifies the complexities of the passage.

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Sample D
Score: 3/6 Points (A1 – B2 – C0)

<u>**Row A: 1/1**</u>

The response earned the point in Row A because it responds to the prompt with a simple, defensible thesis that presents an interpretation of the passage: the passage "portrays the narrator's love and obsession for Zenobia. Throughout the section, the author uses a lot of diction and imagery to signify the narrator's attitude towards Zenobia" (paragraph 1).

<u>**Row B: 2/4**</u>

The response earned two points in Row B because, while it provides some specific and relevant evidence relating to description, imagery, and setting, the commentary provides scant, and often oversimplified, explanations of how this evidence supports the thesis; e.g., "The diction used is positive toward Zenobia. She has a 'proud figure', 'passionate', 'luxurious', 'lack of simplicity'. Everything about Zenobia that the narrator thinks is perfect" (paragraph 2). Additionally, the response cites details from the passage into its commentary, but that commentary offers more description than analysis, and so the line of reasoning remains unclear; e.g., "The furniture was 'exceedingly rich'. It was very fresh and it shocked the narrator that 'the fulfillment of every fantansy of an imagination', something everybody dreams of" (paragraph 3).

<u>**Row C: 0/1**</u>

The response did not earn the point in Row C. While it responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis and attempts to flesh out its position, it does not consistently focus on that thesis about the narrator's "love and obsession for Zenobia" (paragraph 1). The response contains language that is ineffective and interferes with the communication of ideas; e.g., "The first sentence of the interchange caught the narrator's eye for Zenobia" (paragraph 2); "Soon enough with the diction, it soon broke her" (paragraph 2).

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Sample B
Score: 2/6 Points (A1 – B1 – C0)

Row A: 1/1
The response earned the point in Row A because it presents a simple defensible position that responds to the prompt with an interpretation of the narrator's attitude: "The narrator feels as though Zenobia may not be entirely authentic…Hawthorne is able to portray these feelings through the use of first person point of view and sophisticated diction" (paragraph 1).

Row B: 1/4
The response earned one point in Row B because it offers only one specific piece of evidence from the passage: "To this day, however, I hardly know whether I then beheld Zenobia in her truest attitude, or whether that were the truer one in which she has presented herself" (paragraph 2). While the one piece of evidence is specific, the commentary for that evidence is scant and doesn't fully make the connection between the evidence and the thesis. Additionally, the response does not extend further to discuss the other claims laid out in the thesis about diction and how both the "first person point of view and sophisticated diction establish the tense tone of the excerpt" (paragraph 1).

Row C: 0/1
The response did not earn the point in Row C. It responds to the prompt with a defensible position and attempts to flesh out its thesis, but it oversimplifies complexities in the passage.

Sample C
Score: 1/6 Points (A1 – B0 – C0)

<u>**Row A: 1/1**</u>
The response earned the point in Row A because it presents a simple, defensible position that responds to the prompt: "Hawthorne portrayed the narrator's attitude twords Zenobia as a lier or as an unhonest person through the use of literary techniques such as imagery and violent diction" (paragraph 1).

<u>**Row B: 0/4**</u>
The response did not earn any points in Row B because it provides thin evidence for the line of reasoning and provides no commentary: the narrator "gives the reader a clear image of how Zenobia looks when he discovers the truth about her" (paragraph 2). While the essay points to "the last paragraph" as evidence, that reference is too general to understand the point that the response wants to make.

<u>**Row C: 0/1**</u>
The response did not earn the point in Row C. While it responds to the prompt with a defensible position, it does not exhibit sophisticated thought or develop a complex literary argument; and the writing contains substantial compositional errors (such as those shown in Row A) that do not enhance the argument and impede the clear communication of even simple ideas.