

**AP English Literature and Composition
Question 1: Poetry Analysis
Scoring Commentaries on 2020 Rubrics
(Applied to 2019 Student Responses)**

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HH	1	4	1
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T	1	4	0
V	1	3	0
EE	1	3	0
E	1	2	0
SS	0	1	0

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Sample HH

6/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C1)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it includes a clear defensible thesis that directly responds to the prompt by recognizing complexity in the landlady’s portrayal and discussing how Page communicates that complexity: “The landlady’s complexity makes the audience feel something less intense than condemnation, but also less sympathetic than pity, as reinforced by Page’s implementation of active verbs, abrupt punctuation and selective personification.”

Row B: 4/4

The response earned four points in Row B because it provides specific evidence in the body paragraphs that are directly connected to the thesis, and it consistently connects that evidence to the thesis with explicit commentary. For example, in the second paragraph the student notes the active verbs used throughout the poem and explains that those verbs show the landlady is physically dependent on the tenant’s actions for her mental well-being. Although the student appears to struggle at times, for example in paragraph three when the student notes punctuation and sentence structure, the commentary provided even brings that evidence back to the initial thesis, showing that it relates to the landlady’s “formulaic” thinking.

Row C: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row C because it identifies and explores the poem’s complexities throughout the student’s interpretation. The thesis acknowledges how “The landlady’s complexity makes the audience feel something slightly less intense than condemnation, but also less sympathetic than pity” (paragraph 1), and it supports that idea successfully throughout the rest of the response. Additionally, the ideas in the response develop further in complexity as the student notes the mirroring of content and form. In paragraph four, the student writes, “Page’s personification adds human traits to inanimate objects the same way that the landlady creates an image of people she does not personally know.” The response finally returns to the thesis without being repetitious, noting that “the audience is left with a mix of complex emotions between anger and empathy” (paragraph 5).

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Sample OO

6/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C1)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it presents a defensible thesis in response to the prompt when it notes that “Page portrays the landlady as a curious and inquisitive presence who may just have dark motives.” Such a statement requires evidence and development and is not simply a statement of fact or a description. The thesis further discusses how Page conveys the landlady’s complexity through “imagery and tone.”

Row B: 4/4

The response earned four points in Row B because it marshals specific evidence in a clearly organized way that connects directly back to the thesis stated in paragraph one. Paragraph two focuses on the images of body parts, and the response notes the eye of the camera, the “tickling ears” and even the landlady’s “curious” flesh. The commentary builds the connection between those images and the thesis, but then also extends it to new observations: the landlady becomes almost like a machine and, then, also notes how the tenants respond. In the third paragraph, the response again gives examples of how tone is constructed by mentioning possessives, repetition and, finally, diction with its focus on the connotations of the word “catch.” The response provides numerous examples to support its points and offers consistently developed commentary throughout.

Row C: 1/1

The response earned the sophistication point in Row C because it explores complexities within the poem throughout the student’s interpretation and because it situates the poem in a larger context at the beginning, noting that the landlady’s position is similar to other workers in our society who have “unique perspectives on populations” (paragraph 1). As the response progresses, the sophistication of thought and complex understanding of the poem become readily apparent through the student’s careful choice of evidence and nuanced commentary. For example, in paragraph two, the student notes that “Page’s use of imagery which isolates the Landlady’s senses make her feel like she is a machine, designed and engineered for ultimate invasion of privacy and gives her an almost ominous and omnipresent feeling.”

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Sample T

5/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis about the complex portrayal of the landlady: “Through [Page’s] use of irony and metaphors, the poet demonstrates that impersonal connections spark curiosity in the other party revealing the immoral nature of humanity to always lean towards discovering the faults of others.”

Row B: 4/4

The response earned all four points in Row B because it provides specific evidence to support the line of reasoning and offers consistent commentary to explain both how the evidence supports the claims and how multiple literary elements contribute to the poem’s meaning. In the second paragraph the response includes a full discussion of irony, noting several different lines from the poem and offering comments about what those lines reveal about the landlady. The third paragraph focuses on metaphors and, again, makes several references to the poem, each of which are connected back to the thesis about the landlady’s behavior. The commentary connected to the “camera eye” is a good example of how a student develops an interpretation with well-chosen evidence and thoughtful explanation.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C. While it crafts a complex, defensible thesis, the essay falls short of clearly articulating or successfully proving it. The relationship between the “impersonal connections” and the “immoral nature” is potentially intriguing, but the response does not fully connect the two ideas, relying instead on “irony” to develop the idea of impersonal connections leading to a desire to know something more permanent and then, relying on “metaphors” to question the landlady’s moral motivations. The essay develops the points separately and then simply reasserts the claim without fully integrating the points to prove it.

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Sample V

4/6 Points (A1 – B3 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A because it presents a defensible thesis about the landlady’s relationship with the tenants in response to the prompt. In the first sentence, the response states: “In the poem ‘The Landlady,’ a speaker describes how a landlady views her tenants yet does so in a way that portrays the landlord to be overbearing and much too curious.” By including the ideas of “overbearing” and “much too curious,” the response creates an assertion that needs support, not just a simple description. At the end of the first paragraph, the response also suggests a reasonable line of argument: “The landlady’s curiosity for those who stay with her and her desire to sift through their things in order to get to know them is express using literary elements such as imagery, metaphors, and similes, and towards the end, it’s clear that she gets to know them more intimately than the boarders probably hoped or expected.”

Row B: 3/4

The response earns three points in Row B because it offers specific evidence and connects that evidence to the thesis with clear commentary. The response in paragraph two, for example, refers to the line about “shutters on her camera eye,” and analyzes that image as reflective of the landlady’s desire to know more. That idea is then expanded by the boarders’ attempts to make “their lives become exact.” The response also identifies asyndeton and attempts to connect that device to meaning as well, but the result is more of an assertion than an explanation of how the device works to convey that meaning. The third paragraph, that discusses the “shift” that the response identifies, then, is less clear and less developed, but is not overly simplistic or misinterpreted.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C because the plan suggested in the initial paragraph—using “imagery, metaphors, and similes”—is not developed in the essay itself. The response does attempt to identify a “shift” “between line 20 and 21,” but the response has difficulty supporting that claim. Instead, the response seems to reiterate throughout that the landlady wants more knowledge. The result is an essay that does not illustrate sophisticated thinking (the landlady simply wants to know “more about them than most”) nor complex literary argument (the idea of a shift is not clearly developed). Little evidence exists for alternative interpretations or contradictory evidence, and the response does not attempt to position the poem in larger contexts.

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Sample EE

4/6 Points (A1 – B3 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

Noting that the portrayal of the landlady is “ominously intimate” as depicted “through the use of techniques like imagery, selection of detail, and tone,” the response immediately establishes a thesis that needs to be defended and suggests some complexity of thought, thereby earning the point in Row A. The thesis is developed and becomes more substantial in the closing paragraph of the essay: “the speaker depicts the landlady as someone who shares a sort of ominous intimacy with those who inhabit her rooms, evoking not only fright but also trust.”

Row B: 3/4

The response earned three points in Row B and follows the tri-part organization (“imagery, selection of detail, and tone”) introduced in the thesis through the rest of the essay. It offers specific evidence that illustrates each of the three literary elements in individual paragraphs and connects those pieces of evidence to the line of reasoning. However, the commentary is uneven, better developed in paragraph three than it is in paragraph two, where the commentary is more limited. Another example of limited commentary would be in paragraph three, where the response notes the “intimacy” of the line “like a lover must know all, all, all,” but then does not comment on the effect of the repeated words to help develop the claim. The response offers specific evidence to support the claims, but in two places the commentary fails to fully support a key claim.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C. While it does recognize complexity in the depiction of the landlady (especially in the closing paragraph), it does not present a nuanced understanding of that depiction or handle alternative interpretations. The response, overall, does not demonstrate sophistication of thought or consistently develop a complex literary argument.

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Sample E

3/6 Points (A1 – B2 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point in Row A with its assertion that the landlady is portrayed as “a predator, as if she was stalking her prey...through the poets use of diction, and tone.” That idea is repeated in the closing of the essay where the landlady is described as a “threat,” portrayed in an “evil’ light” through the poet’s use of “a creepy tone, and negative diction.”

Row B: 2/4

The response earned two points in Row B because it includes some specific relevant evidence in the second paragraph, but also misreads that evidence. For example, after quoting the description of the landlady who “peers stippled with curious flesh,” the response then suggests that the word “flesh” refers to the boarders instead of the landlady. Additionally, the response notes the “high energy verbs” and suggests that such choice provides “suspense” but does not explain how that connection might be made. The third paragraph discusses tone with no specific evidence and instead becomes repetitious.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row C because it does not demonstrate sophistication of thought (relying only on the repetition of a single, simple claim) nor does it develop a complex literary argument (unintentionally misreading evidence instead).

Sample SS

1/6 Points (A0 – B1 – C0)

Row A: 0/1

The response did not earn the point in Row A as it offers no defensible thesis. What might be a thesis at the end of the essay is a misreading of the poem (the landlady is not the speaker giving a speech) and is not defensible.

Row B: 1/4

The response earned one point in Row B because it does provide general textual references that might, at best, be considered vaguely relevant to each other as evidence. For example, the response notes the structure of the poem and references generally some images from the poem. It also attempts some explanations, but those observations are not developed with clear commentary aimed toward a clear thesis. Still the number of references and the vague attempts at commentary earn the response a point.

Row C: 0/1

The response does not have a thesis to develop and does not demonstrate sophistication of thought or argument.