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# AP Seminar Performance Assessment Task 2

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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# AP Seminar Performance Task 2: Individual Written Argument (IWA) Rubric

## EFFECTIVE 2017–18 ACADEMIC YEAR

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.

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**.

## AP Seminar Performance Task 2: Individual Written Argument (IWA) Rubric

Row/Proficiency	No points earned for...	Points earned for...		Max Points
<b>1 UNDERSTAND AND ANALYZE CONTEXT</b>	<p>The response does not incorporate any of the stimulus material, or, at most, it is mentioned in only one sentence.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>The response includes a discussion of at least one of the stimulus materials however it does not contribute to the argument.</p>	<p>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.)</p> <p><b>5 Pts</b></p>		5
<b>2 UNDERSTAND AND ANALYZE CONTEXT</b>	<p>The response either provides no context</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>The response makes simplistic references to or general statements about the context of the research question.</p>	<p>The response explains the significance or importance of the research question by situating it within a larger context.</p> <p><b>5 Pts</b></p>		5
<b>3 UNDERSTAND AND ANALYZE PERSPECTIVE</b>	<p>The response provides only a single perspective.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>The response identifies and offers opinions or unsubstantiated statements about different perspectives that may be overly simplified.</p>	<p>The response describes multiple perspectives and identifies some relevant similarities or differences between them.</p> <p><b>6 Pts</b></p>	<p>The response evaluates multiple perspectives (and synthesizes them) by drawing relevant connections between them, considering objections, implications, and limitations.</p> <p><b>9 Pts</b></p>	9
<b>4 ESTABLISH ARGUMENT</b>	<p>The response provides only unsubstantiated opinions or claims.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>The response summarizes information (no argument). The response employs inadequate reasoning due to minimal connections between claims and evidence.</p>	<p>The argument presents a claim with some flaws in reasoning.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>8 Pts</b></p>	<p>The response is a clear and convincing argument.</p> <p>The response is logically organized and well-reasoned by connecting claims and evidence, leading to a plausible, well-aligned conclusion.</p> <p><b>12 Pts</b></p>	12

(Continued)

## AP Seminar Performance Task 2: Individual Written Argument (IWA) Rubric

Row/Proficiency	No points earned for...	Points earned for...		Max Points
<b>5 SELECT AND USE EVIDENCE</b>	Any evidence presented in the response is predominantly irrelevant and/or lacks credibility.	The response includes mostly relevant and credible evidence. <b>6 Pts</b>	The response includes relevant, credible and sufficient evidence to support its argument. <b>9 Pts</b>	9
<b>6 APPLY CONVENTIONS (CITATION)</b>	The response is missing a bibliography/works cited OR the response is largely missing in-text citations/footnotes.	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. <b>3 Pts</b>	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. <b>5 Pts</b>	5
<b>7 APPLY CONVENTIONS (GRAMMAR AND STYLE)</b>	The response has many grammatical flaws, is difficult to understand, or is written in a style inappropriate for an academic audience.	The response is mostly clear but may contain some flaws in grammar or a few instances of a style inappropriate for an academic audience. <b>2 Pts</b>	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. <b>3 Pts</b>	3

## Reality in Virtual Reality

A survey conducted by Pew Research Center in 2016 found that only 22% of Americans trust the information communicated by professional news outlets (Mitchell). Due to a desire for a more accurate relay of information from the journalist to the audience, virtual reality, also referred to as VR, has begun to emerge as a new form of journalism. VR is analogous to a person skyping into an event as it happens but is more immersive and interactive. VR journalism involves producers creating a three-dimensional situation to mirror the actual event as closely as possible while allowing viewers to fully immerse themselves into and interact with the seemingly real environment. Through the viewers' newfound ability to interact with the media they are viewing, the viewers become an indirect eyewitness to the event being documented. As such, VR could allow for more accurate communication of information by giving the viewer the ability to understand the event being documented from their own point of view rather than the journalist's (Schlesinger).

However, viewers argue that VR journalism is still susceptible to inaccuracy, saying that despite the elimination of the journalist's bias, the producer's bias still exists, compromising the accuracy of the VR footage (Burgess) (Kent). Additionally, psychologists argue that such immersion could potentially have negative implications for the viewers, specifically when the event being documented is traumatic, as the VR footage could have similar effects as violent media or video games (Vail-Gandolfo). The potential for incorrect communication of information as well as the psychological harms VR may have raise the question: Should the Federal Communications Commission, an organization with the power to regulate the

communication of information, and therefore, potentially VR journalism, regulate VR content when used with journalism to document traumatic events?

The purpose of using VR as a form of journalism is to induce a more emotional response in the viewer (Kent). However, because VR journalism is still a form of journalism, producers must adhere to a journalists' code of ethics. The American Press Association, or the APA, has adopted such a code for journalism developed by the Committee of Concerned Journalists in 1997 under the Project for Excellence in Journalism. The development of this code of ethics involved four years of research which included twenty public forums around the country, an analysis of journalism history, and a national survey of journalists (APA). As such, the APA's established code of ethics can be used as a basis for determining whether VR journalism fulfills its purpose as a form of journalism. The guidelines outlined in the APA's code fall under a single requirement: journalists must provide reliable and accurate information while mitigating the effects of any possible biases (APA). As such, it is necessary to determine the extent of biases in VR journalism and their effect on the accuracy of the information being communicated accuracy of VR journalism.

When discussing the nature of virtual reality, Gershon Dublon and Joseph Paradiso<sup>1</sup> stated that virtual reality allows one to "be [somewhere] in real time." (Dublon and Paradiso). Therefore, virtual reality allows the viewer to take on the role of an indirect eyewitness to the event being documented. When addressing different concerns about accuracy that arise depending on how information is documented and how it is accessed, and by whom, Arthur

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<sup>1</sup> Gershon Dublon is a Ph.D student at MIT Media Lab and had worked as a researcher at the Embedded Networks and Applications Lab at Yale. Joseph Paradiso is the Alexander W. Dreyfoos Professor at the MIT Program in Media Arts and Sciences, and he directs the MIT Media Lab's Responsive Environments Group.

Schlesinger<sup>2</sup> stated that eyewitness-documented history proves to be more accurate than alternative methods (Schlesinger). As such, allowing the viewer to take on such a role provides for more accurate relay of information from the producer to the viewer by giving the viewer a relatively more comprehensive understanding of the event rather than one limited by the journalist's possibly biased viewpoint (Schlesinger). Therefore, by being an indirect eyewitness, the viewer would be able to better understand and experience the event in its totality rather than be restricted by the journalist's point of view. As such, the use of VR in journalism shows potential as it may be able to mitigate, if not eliminate, miscommunication and misunderstanding of information due to journalist biases.

However, creating VR footage involves recreating an event in three dimensions based off of two-dimensional footage and pictures. This process involved in VR journalism presents challenges as the producer must choose between leaving certain aspects unclear or recreating events how he/she thinks they occurred. As such, either viewers are allowed to believe the VR is of low quality or producers open up questions about the credibility of their media. Additionally, because the goal of VR journalism is to produce an empathetic response in the viewer, its credibility may be questioned as producers could potentially omit or add in information to create the desired emotional effect for the viewer (Kent). On top of conflicting with objectivity, according to Jack Burgess, an assistant producer and author for the British Broadcasting Commission, omitting or adding information is dangerous as, due to the level of immersion that comes with VR, empathy can “easily distort people’s impression of the facts of an event.” As such, although the use of VR in journalism could potentially mitigate biases and

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<sup>2</sup> Arthur Schlesinger was an American historian, social critic, and public intellectual, who studied at Phillips Exeter Academy, Harvard, and University of Cambridge.

miscommunication, it in fact invites new forms of inaccuracy while previously existing ones still stand.

On top of distorting one's impression of the documented event, omitting or adding information to increase emotional responses in the viewer raises psychological concerns due to the violent and traumatic nature of the event being documented, as well as the level of immersion involved with VR. Because youths<sup>3</sup> and adults respond differently to violent stimuli, they must be looked at separately. Due to youths' still undeveloped brains, violence in media incites the encoding of violent "scripts, schemas, or beliefs" (Bushman and Huesmann). As such, media violence causes long-term effects in youths, whereas, for adults, said "scripts, schemas, and beliefs" are already present, meaning that violence in media can only have short-term effects, although these short-term effects are more prominent for adults than they are for youths. (Bushman and Huesmann). Because violence in the media has the most prominent long-term effects on youths, it is necessary to determine the effect of VR and violence on the psychological state of the youths.

In a study that looked at the influence of media violence as a whole on the youth, Craig Anderson, a member of and contributor to the Association for Psychological Science, determined that in the short-term, spanning from a few minutes up to a few days, media violence increased the likelihood of "physically and verbally aggressive behavior, aggressive thoughts, and aggressive emotions." Anderson also found that in the long-run, media violence exposure leads to a more aggressive persona and thought process, as well as more aggressive beliefs about social

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<sup>3</sup> Bushman, the Professor of Communication and Psychology at Ohio State University, and Huesmann, the Amos N. Tversky Collegiate Professor of Communication Studies and Psychology and Research Professor in the Institute for Social Research of the University of Michigan, define youths as those who have not yet reached the age of eighteen, and adults as those eighteen and above.

behavior and desensitization, which are considerably less reversible than the short-term effects. Additionally, a study conducted by Sandra Calvert and Siu-Lan Tan aimed to analyze the effects of violence on youth when the medium is more immersive than simple media. To measure the physical arousal of the participants, the conductors took their pulse while they were either viewing or playing the violent video game. Additionally, to measure aggressive thoughts, the conductors administered a post-gaming test for the participants to complete. The study determined that aggressive thoughts and physical arousal increased for the participants playing the game as compared to those only observing. As such, the conductors concluded that immersion has a more profound mental as well as physical impact than observation. Therefore, violent VR journalism covering traumatic and violent events would have a more negative effect on viewers than traditional media coverage due to higher level of immersion.

On the other hand, an article by the Canadian Broadcasting Commission described a study that determined the viewers' change in thought processes after viewing the VR video by requiring the viewer to take the Implicit Association Test<sup>4</sup>. This study discovered that after the viewers experienced the VR through a "dark-skinned avatar" for about ten minutes, the viewers seemed considerably less racist, suggesting that the immersive nature of VR can contribute to changing one's attitudes towards what is being documented. However, the study did not conduct a follow up regarding the viewers' long-lasting attitudes towards other races. As such, the study's results could have been because of the recency of the experience, rather than understanding towards people of color. This study, indicative of a broader phenomenon regarding VR research, suggests that although VR results in increased empathy among the

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<sup>4</sup> According to Harvard, the Implicit Association Test is a test that determines racist tendencies by analyzing the speed at which one can correctly match positive qualities to African American people and negative qualities to Caucasian people and vice versa, before and after viewing the content.

viewers, such empathy is simply a short-term reaction to the VR footage. However, the previously mentioned negative psychological effects of violence in VR do have long-term consequences as opposed to the short-term empathetic reaction. Therefore, the use of VR with journalism proves to have greater and more permanent risks than benefits.

Because virtual reality journalism proves to have considerable psychological risks associated with it, VR in regards to journalism requires an established standard. VR journalism involves communication of information to the public and the Federal Communications Commission, or the FCC, regulates communication through news and broadcasting services. Therefore, an analysis of the FCC's legal powers is necessary to determine if the FCC can constitutionally regulate VR content when used with journalism. When describing their role in the government, the FCC stated that they regulate interstate and international communications by radio, television, wire, satellite, and cable across the country. In addition, the FCC is also the "United States's primary authority" for regulations pertaining to communication and different technological innovations, and the FCC can reform media regulations as needed due to new technological innovations (FCC). As such, VR could fall under the "technological innovations" category, therefore subject to FCC regulation. However, the FCC regulates specifically communication through technology, not technology as a whole. Therefore, the FCC may not be able to regulate all VR content, but it is able to regulate VR media when used for journalistic purposes as journalism's main goal is to communicate information to the public, thus falling under the FCC's jurisdiction. Because the FCC would be regulating a area of technology not previously regulated, the public's response towards new regulations holds importance as such regulation could be perceived as an infringement on the producer's freedom of speech, as well as

the viewers' ability to consume products. According to the FCC, in order to establish new rules, the FCC notifies the public about their plan regarding the new rules and the FCC will seek the public's comment, which will be considered in developing final rules. As such, the FCC could propose regulation about VR journalism and reform it based on the public's response, therefore taking into account other concerns that may arise and potentially mitigating widespread disapproval..

A possible solution, as suggested by Jack Balkin from the Virginia Law Review, is to create a contract-type agreement between the producers and the viewers. Balkin suggested that similar to how a business can choose between "sole proprietorships, partnerships, and the corporate form" based on what the business's goals are and how they relate to the "legal rights that each form provides," the government could provide producers with a variety of different types of legal regimes for the producers to operate under (Balkin 2091). Although Balkin's solution focused on the use of VR with video games, his proposed solution can be refined to apply to VR with journalism as well. With VR, producers would be allowed to choose a legal regime to operate under, thus forming new rules and standards for "legal relationships" between producers and viewers (Balkin 2091).. The producers would then design their VR media according to the chosen legal regime, all while being fully aware of their legal limitations. set guidelines to follow depending on what the purpose of their VR video is. Similarly, viewers would choose which VR videos based on the legal regime it follows, thus being fully aware of the goal of the producer in creating the video. For example, viewers would be made aware of whether a producer aimed to communicate accurate information through the VR footage, or if the goal was simply to elicit an emotional experience. Therefore, VR production and content can

be effectively regulated without restricting the freedom of speech of the producers, while mitigating concerns about the accuracy of VR journalism. However, this solution does not address the psychological harms VR footage of a traumatic event can have on the viewers.

To accommodate for this limitation, a rating system, similar to ones used for movies and television shows, could be applied to VR videos based on its content. For example, a violent VR video would be rated similar to how violent movies are rated “R,” thus informing viewers about its content, as well as communicating its unsuitability for younger viewers. Therefore, viewers would better understand what the VR video contains and would be able to decide whether or not they feel comfortable with such content. However, because ratings are merely suggestions, viewers could still expose themselves to psychological harm. Despite these limitations, the FCC should require producers to follow a guideline that they themselves can choose from and implement a rating system for VR content in relation to journalism to effectively regulate VR journalism while still protecting the producer’s freedom of speech, mitigating concerns regarding inaccuracy, and warning consumers about violent content.

Word Count: 2189

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Performance Task 2 IWA

April 24, 2018

How Do Adult's Perception of Video Games Affect Children?

Word Count: 1,827

## How Do Adult's Perception of Video Games Affect Children.

Video games are one of the most popular sources of entertainment all over the world. It is played by people of all ages nearly everyday. Due to the many amount of players, there are those who do not play that raise many opinions of video games. Often children do not think of much of video games besides that they are simply games to enjoy. Meanwhile those who are older and more aware of consequences will pass judgement on the games and how they affect society. Many adults will argue that video games are a negative influence for young children. An adult's perception of video games effects their children's ability to play video games as they are the ones purchasing the game and in control of their kids. Due to the many negative perception of video games from parents, it will often lead parents to avoid buying their children video games. However video games can be beneficial to everyone in multiple ways.

There are many mixed opinions about video games. Some adults believe that video games are a waste of time. According to a survey conducted by PEW Research Center, "Attitudes about video games," found that "About one-quarter of all adults (26%) think most video games are a waste of time, while a similar number (24%) do *not* think this is true of most games. One-third thinks some video games are a waste of time while others are not, and 16% are not sure. Whites (28%), those ages 65 or older (32%), and those with at least a high school diploma (27%) are more likely than others to think most video games are a waste of time."(Duggan) Those who play games were also reported to agree with most positive depictions of gaming while those who did not play mostly disagreed. The survey gave a general perception of what different age groups, in the United States, thought of gaming with a fairly large amount of adults believing that some games were a waste of time.

The typical parent will also fear that when children play games, they develop unhealthy habits such as becoming anti-social, staying indoors, and even becoming addicted to the games. There is a wide variety of video gaming genres and types to choose from. One of these options is “single player” where only one person gets to play. In this situation, a child can be so involved in the game or personally prefer single player games that they become anti-social. When the child becomes so interested in a game, they may invest all their time into it and choose to stay inside playing it rather than going outside to interact with others and exercise. And last but not least, when a child is so invested in a game they can become obsessed with it. The New York Times article “Video Games: Diversion or a Danger” Dr. Michael Lewis, professor of psychiatry, psychology and pediatrics at the Rutgers University Medical School-University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey states, “..the intensity of the experience is worrisome.” The intensity and exposure to violent graphics are what mainly worries adults. When playing, children are not simply viewing an alien get killed, but they are the ones doing the killing. They are put in place of the killers. The professor also addresses these common fears in parents, "especially in children between the ages of 2 and 6, when there is some concern about the nature of the construction of reality. One of the dangers is that electronics can replicate reality in ways that mechanical games can't. We must ask: What is the point at which the game seems to be real?"(Lewis) An adult's fear or worrying can cause certain actions in order to prevent dangerous or bad situations from occurring. It is important for parents to make wise judgements in order to help their children. An adult's perception on the matter of video games greatly affects their children's ability to play.

Despite all these negative beliefs, video games are actually proven to be beneficial for children. They can be a learning tool because they strengthen a wide range of cognitive skills

such as memory, spatial navigation, reasoning and perception. According to the article “Do action video games improve perception and cognition?” by Richard Walter, psychologist at Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology, “frequent action game players outperform non-gamers on a variety of perceptual and cognitive measures, and some studies suggest that video game training enhances cognitive performance on tasks other than those specific to the game.”(Walter) This shows that not only can a person who plays video game do well in a situation pertaining to the game but also in other fields. If adults are more aware of these benefits and willing to overlook other perspectives of gaming, children will be allowed to play more games and eventually develop strong comprehensive skills they can use in school and even in life.

One of the most popular misconceptions about video games is that violent video games cause violent thoughts and actions. Violent video games have yet to be proven to cause violent behaviors, therefore, this statement cannot be considered true. There is still ongoing research and debate on whether or not violent games do cause violent tendencies in children. "However, to understand the impact of video games on children's and adolescents' development, a more balanced perspective is needed," Sabela Granic, Ph.D., of Radboud University Nijmegen in The Netherlands tells “Video Game Play may provide learning, health, and social benefits, review finds.” This means that even if violent games do cause a person to become violent, you must also look at the benefits of playing violent video games. The media also plays a role in shaping one’s perspectives. Many people will often believe the majority of stories on the news to be true without questioning the credibility of the story or if the story is exaggerated. This can be a bad habit as new stations will report more on negative events rather than positive ones. For example

stories such as Adam Lanza, gunman of Sandy Hook elementary school. According to Daily Mail “Did violent video game Call of Duty spark gun-crazed loner’s killing-spree?” the Sandy Hook killer was reported to have been obsessed with the popular violent video game Call of Duty. “The walls of his room, where he spent all his time, were covered with posters of guns and tanks, according to a plumber who worked at the killer’s home...”(Parkinson.) Adam Lanza was believed to have played the game for hours in advance in preparation for the massacre. When adults hear stories such as Adam’s they can become fearful and believe that children can become violent through playing such games. Parents should be able to make decisions for themselves and their children rather than trusting what they see or hear on the news or from others. In the Washington Post, “If video games spur gun violence, it’s only in the United States” by Philip Bump, he states, “of the 200 countries with the highest rates of deaths from gun violence and the 100 countries that spend the most per capita on video games, only the United States is in the upper quintile on both metrics. Otherwise, the global pattern mirrors what that Villanova professor suggested about individual school shooters: More gaming correlates loosely to fewer violent gun deaths.”(Bump) Therefore when you consider the two variables “interest in video games” and “incidents of gun violence” from all around the world, there is not much connection at all. Looking at data from every country, video games do not play a big role in gun violence besides in the U.S. which has an amendment stating any citizen has the right to bear arms.

It is important for adults to have the correct understandings about video games, however it is often times difficult to do so when they are not gamers and grew up differently. In the interview “Attitudes Towards Muslim Women in the West,” with Lila Abu-Lughod, professor of Anthropology and Women’s and Gender Studies at Columbia University in New York, professor

Abu-Lughod addresses views of Islamic women. After the 9-11 attack in 2001, eyes have been directed towards the Muslim society in an attempt to better understand the culture. “Many aspects of societies around the world cannot be understood without reference to the history and influences of the major religions in terms of which people live their lives.” (Abu-Lughod) In other words, she is saying that without the correct knowledge and history of why people do what they do, we cannot fully understand their actions. So adults who do not play games can not understand the perspectives of the gamers. It is hard to understand what you have not experienced or be interested in the topic which can lead to misjudgements. Mental health professional, Victoria L. Dunckley M.D. states in her article “This is Your Child’s Brain on Video Games” Parents need to learn the science behind how screen-time over stimulates the nervous system, how this manifests as an array of symptoms and dysfunction, and what that *looks like in their own child.*” By learning the information, parents can change the course of their child’s life. The information helps parents to make informed and mindful screen management decisions, and balances different perceptions so that they can be kept from being swayed by society and misleading media.

There are many ways to manage game play in children. As parents would like for their children to develop many cognitive skills, they do not want their children to be affected by the negative consequences of playing video games. First and foremost, the adult must have a clear understanding as to how video games actually affect kids-both positive and negative aspects. From there adults can decide and manage their children’s game play. There are a wide variety of games to choose from; racing, adventure, first-person shooter, puzzles and strategy, and sports. There are also different medias for game play; phones, tablets, consoles, and desktops. By

managing a child's game time, adults can prevent the possibility of their child becoming addicted to the game. Michael Manos, PhD, Head of the Center for Pediatric Behavioral Health at Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital, says in the article "Managing Video game and Tv Time for Children," "children from about ages 3 to 10 should be limited to one hour of screen time a day (including video games, the computer and TV) for anything other than schoolwork." So it is not even recommended for a kid to spend long time playing games anyways. An adult's view of video games are very important when impacting their child's life and development ages. Kids are not old enough to make wise judgements so it is their guardian's responsibility to make judgements for them. Adults are the drivers therefore it is important for them to have the correct information on a matter before taking actions for their kids.

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The Ethics, Social, economic, and scientific effects on the creation of super soldiers

Words 1,815

When watching superhero movies, you can see many different ways that the superheroes got their power. This can include radioactivity, being born with it, and having it bestowed upon you by a god. There is one way that I want to focus on today. Technology, that alters the perception and the physical attribute of people (in the military) creating super soldiers. Now it's no secret that many people have fanaticized about being super soldiers and that many people have often thought that it would help the military. I am here, however, to answer one question. Ethically, scientifically, economically, and socially, is it a good idea to pursue and make "Super soldiers". Will the benefits of super soldiers outweigh the risks and what are the benefits and drawbacks of creating super soldiers?

There are many different ways this topic can be viewed and many different lenses to view this topic. I am going to explore the ethical, social, economic, and science lenses in this paper. Only facts will be presented in this paper and opinions will be influenced on said facts, no misnomers or false information is going to be spread.

The first thing I am going to mention however is the all the art that the concept of super soldiers has inspired. While the artistic lens won't change my argument at all it is still important to go over the art and culture that the concept that super soldiers have inspired. In America at least, soldiers are already idolized as heroes and incredible humans. Imagine if those soldiers got super human abilities. They would be idolized even more in our culture. With that culture of idolization would also come a culture of fear however. Because of their ability to surpass ordinary humans and fight at a level far beyond that of normal people, there would be a culture of fear surrounding them. What if, for some reason, we need to fight against them. It makes it infinitely harder.

That is the possible new culture that would surround super soldiers but what about the art? There are already many pieces of art created about the concept of super soldiers. Think about "Captain

America" and "Halo". Two very influential pieces of art that are based off of the concept of super soldiers. There are also many pieces of art based on super soldiers turned evil, like "The Terminator". Along with these there are also many pieces of art about regular soldiers, pieces of art such as *Saving private Ryan* and many others. These pieces of art have all influenced modern culture and ideals not just in America, but the rest of the world too. What would happen to art if super soldiers were real, and they did fight in wars in mass numbers. For the first time, the art involving super soldiers would be realistic and grounded in fact. This would help not only educate people further on the matter, but it would also affect the culture of America forever.

While that is how art will be affected there are much more pressing issues surrounding super soldiers than the next big block buster. There are many questions that surround this topic as I stated above.

This first question that probably comes up is how we are even going to make these super soldiers. Genetic alteration is often a fear that sprouts up when delving into this topic, however genetic manipulation is still in the future and while it is scary to discuss, it is not the focal point of this paper. Another way to create super soldiers is to use body enhancing technologies. These include a special exoskeleton that can enhance running speed and endurance, special bullet proof material that is incredibly lightweight and strong, and other technological advances. A lot of this technology is available today and can be a great help to soldiers, and combined, can elevate them to super soldier status. With the advancement of technology, it is very clear that we could be seeing super soldiers in the near future. As close to ten years away, we could be seeing soldiers on the level of soldiers in movies or games that look super human. This brings the issue I mentioned earlier up, socially, ethically, and scientifically, are super soldiers a good idea? I am going to start with a social/political lens to answer this question.

Politically it could be a bad idea to create super soldiers for a couple of main reasons. The first main reason is that, with the advancement of protection and defense, there is naturally going to be advancement in weapons to break through the defense. This means that wars could become even more destructive for the civilians roped into the conflict ending more lives. There is nothing worse politically, at least in America, than ending lives when it is not needed. This could hurt the political environment of Americas and overall weaken moral in the government, causing instability. It is also not a good idea to have people dying period. Socially that generates distrust in everyone and can cause upheaval resulting in even more innocent deaths if riots break out. Social and political unrest has never ended well for anyone in the human race as it causes wars to break out, resulting in even more death. With military development there is also a risk that these weapons will one day fall into the hands of the wrong person, or person with deadly intent. This could cause, even more death, and result in an overzealous ban of all weapons or at the very least, a divide between the public which is currently being observed today. There are good things with this development of protection technology however. With the enhance soldiers, if there is no fighting in civilian areas, there could actually be less death. Because wars would be ended quicker and soldiers would be more protected. However, currently, there is still a lot of fighting in civilian areas, therefore, with the current war model, the above-mentioned scenario would happen.

Ethically a lot of the same concerns, if there are more weapons and deadlier weapons fighting in civilian areas, there is more possibility for death. There is another ethical concern however that is worth mentioning, it is a possibility that soldiers could abuse this power to force their will on civilians of other places, or their homeland. For example, if a country goes under a military government, this advanced technology and these super soldiers could enforce their will even harder and kill people even easier when they disobeyed, effectively promoting military rule if a government is not able to handle its people. This can suppress freedom of speech and the spread of ideas. This could silence a whole group

of people and cripple the will of citizens living under military rule. This is not a good thing for anyone involved as countries under strict rule have the most problems with hunger and economy, look at North Korea. Quoting the second amendment literally, the second amendment says this. "A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."(Jefferson 1791) This means that if our government no longer protects our rights, we have the right to bears arms against the government. If the government has access to super soldier technology this could make the second amendment significantly harder to protect.

Economics is probably the trickiest subject to try and explain in the whole argument of super soldiers because there are positive and negative effects that come with talking about economy and it connects a lot with the political lens. First the positives. The main positive is that with more technology needing to be produced for the military, the more money is spent on creating those technologies. This supplies people with jobs and brings an overall boost to the economy. Generally speaking, when military spending goes up, the economy rises along with it.

The negative side of the economy is a lot harder to understand and connects to the political lens a lot. Basically, the U.S. government has a lot of private companies that supply the military with the arms necessary. This is true with a lot of the rest of the world but I am going to focus on the U.S. because the problem is most notable here. When the military is supplied by private companies it gives the companies a lot of power over the politics of the military and the military has control over the economics of the company. Thus, if the CEO of one of these companies happens to get into political power, they might use their power to say, increase military spending, which benefits their pockets but might not benefit the people. This whole predicament of the U.S. and Private Suppliers is called the Military Spending Complex(MLC). With the introduction of the technologies that create super soldiers, the MLC might gain even more power, causing even more corruption to be possible.

With these two conflicting ideas of politics I have presented, there comes a question. Which one outweighs the other. The answer that is given to this question will be different for everyone but in my opinion, I would rather have a tougher economy than a more corrupt government, because the less stability a nation has can also cause said nation to have a weakened economy, thus damaging the positives of the economy anyway.

Scientifically there are a lot more benefits to pursuing super soldier technology. In the scientific community technological advances are always considered good. Thus, the advancement of super soldier technology is considered good. But there are a lot of benefits to this scientific advancement. Generally speaking, a lot of these super soldier projects focus on defense and healing soldiers, not killing other soldiers. These advancements, in healing especially, could help the scientific community. For example, if we find a better way of nullifying pain, without being addictive, that could provide a huge advancement in medicine. There is also the ability to stop bleeding easier and other medical advances that could save people's lives. Finding a way to not need sleep could also greatly improve people's productivity and in turn, create more scientific advances, and make the world a better place to live.

In conclusion there are a lot of drawbacks to creating super soldiers, especially ethically and socially. However, mainly in the lens of science, there are a lot of benefits of creating super soldiers. But this is an argumentative piece so I need to form an argument. If humanity can stop fighting wars in civilian areas and keep fighting to the battle field, then yes super soldiers are a worthy endeavor. However, based on the current track record of humanity, I have to say that the risks outweigh the benefits, and it is not worth it to pursue super soldier projects.

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## 2018 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Performance Task 2 Individual Written Argument

#### Overview

This prompt assessed students' ability to:

- Review a packet of stimulus materials and determine a theme that links at least two of those sources;
- Formulate a research question directly related to that theme;
- Conduct research and locate credible and scholarly materials relevant to answering that research question;
- Formulate a well-reasoned argument with a clear line of reasoning and a plausible conclusion;
- Evaluate counterarguments in the process of developing his or her own argument; and
- Write 2000-word argument with claims that are logically organized and supported by credible, scholarly evidence.

#### Sample: A

**1 Understand and Analyze Context Score: 5**

**2 Understand and Analyze Context Score: 5**

**3 Understand and Analyze Persp Score: 9**

**4 Establish Argument Score: 12**

**5 Select and Use Evidence Score: 9**

**6 Apply Conventions Citation Score: 5**

**7 Apply Conventions Grmr Style Score: 3**

#### HIGH SAMPLE RESPONSE

**This response was determined to be on-topic.** The response ties together “Extra Sensory Perception” as well as “The Historian as Participant” to develop its research question about the potential relationship between eyewitness accounts and immersive virtual reality (VR) with the intention of finding a more accurate way of conveying news events to reduce the mistrust that often surrounds journalism.

#### Row 1: Understand and Analyze Context (5)

The response earned 5 points on this row because it effectively connects two of the stimulus materials to clarify the ideal implementation of virtual reality journalism. The response explores the potential of virtual reality journalism via the “Extra Sensory Perception” article and seamlessly links this concept to the power of eyewitness accounts via “The Historian as Participant.” This statement is explicitly made at the conclusion of the opening paragraph: “... VR could allow for more accurate communication of information by giving the viewer [access] from their own point of view than from the journalist’s.”

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### Performance Task 2

#### Individual Written Argument

#### Row 2: Understand and Analyze Context (5)

The response earned 5 points on this rubric row because it establishes the lack of trust in national American media (through its introductory statistic) and suggests that VR journalism would provide “the viewer a relatively more comprehensive understanding of the event rather than one limited by the journalist’s possibly biased viewpoint.” The response exposes the tension that exists between the American public and journalism, and, in offering a potential means to ease this tension, contextualizes the research question for the reader. The response further elucidates the context by explaining the controversy surrounding virtual reality journalism itself: “However, viewers argue that VR journalism is still susceptible to inaccuracy, saying that despite the elimination of the journalist’s bias, the producer’s bias still exists, compromising the accuracy of the VR footage (Burgess) (Kent). Additionally, psychologists argue that such immersion could potentially have negative implications for the viewers, specifically when the event being documented is traumatic, as the VR footage could have similar effects as violent media or video games (Vail-Gandolfo).” Therefore, not only is the overall need for something like VR journalism contextualized but so is the need to specifically analyze the practice.

#### Row 3: Understand and Analyze Perspective (9)

The response earned 9 points on this rubric row because it presents a highly nuanced evaluation of multiple perspectives. For example, the response explains the ideal intention of VR journalism and clarifies the potential corruption of that ideal, as journalists/producers must create the scene in 3D: “However, creating VR footage involves recreating an event in three dimensions based off of two-dimensional footage and pictures. This process involved in VR journalism presents challenges as the producer must choose between leaving certain aspects unclear or recreating events how he/she thinks they occurred. As such, either viewers are allowed to believe the VR is of low quality or producers open up questions about the credibility of their media.”

Additionally, the response discusses the potentially damaging psychological impacts of recreating visceral or violent news events and implores refined federal regulation. Such recognition reveals an awareness of the limitations and objections that VR journalism would still face. Still, these acknowledgements of alternate perspectives do not hinder the impact of the argument as “mitigation of biases,” and “empathetic reactions” remain compelling reasons to explore the possibility of VR journalism. Thus, the response casts numerous perspectives in conversation with one another to weigh the merits of VR journalism’s ability to assuage the public’s distrust of media.

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**Row 4: Establish Argument (12)**

The response earned 12 points on this rubric row because the argument that VR technology could improve communication to viewers is sustained and convincing. The response demonstrates a thoughtful understanding of the potential for re-creating immersive experiences for consumers and recognizing the possible problems the production of such news pieces could cause (i.e., “... psychologists argue that such immersion could potentially have negative implications for the viewers”). Additionally, although the evidence provided supports the argument, the commentary propels the argument. The response’s discussion of the current power and limitations of the FCC is an example of this (i.e., “Therefore, the FCC may not be able to regulate all VR content, but it is able to regulate VR media when used for journalistic purposes”).

The narrative shows the argument’s effectiveness through the signposted organizational style. To guide the reader’s understanding, the response uses effective transitions such as “However, viewers argue ...,” “The purpose of using VR ...,” “On the other hand ...,” “A possible solution ...,” and “To accommodate for this limitation ...” Moreover, rather than using those transitions vaguely, the response explains how one idea connects to the previous one. For example, “Because virtual reality journalism proves to have considerable psychological risks associated with it, VR in regards to journalism requires an established standard.”

Finally, the conclusion is well-aligned in that it responds to the issue brought up in the argument about the psychological impacts by suggesting “a rating system, similar to ones used for movies and television shows, could be applied to VR videos based on its content.” Moreover, the response is well-reasoned by basing it in sound research about contract agreements. The details about the limitations of VR and possible ways to overcome them provide enough fodder for a reader to determine the effectiveness of this solution.

**Row 5: Select and Use Evidence (9)**

The response earned 9 points on this rubric row because the sources represent a variety of scholarly work beyond the stimulus documents. Additionally, relevant voices such as the American Press Association and a producer for the BBC add significant weight to this conversation about innovations in journalism thereby suggesting purposeful use. Also, by explaining the methodology in the Sandra Calvert and Siu-Lan Tan study on video game violence, the response moves beyond mere citation by engaging with the details of the source. In the discussion that follows this evidence, the response makes apparent the relevance of a study that examines the effects of video games to the argument: “As such, the conductors concluded that immersion has a more profound mental as well as physical impact than observation. Therefore, violent VR journalism covering traumatic and violent events would have a more negative effect on viewers than traditional media coverage due to higher level of immersion.” Another example of effective source analysis occurs in about the middle of the narrative when the response states that “... as such, the study’s results could have been because of the recency [*sic*] of the experience, rather than understanding towards people of color.”

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**Row 6: Apply Conventions (Citation) (5)**

The response earned 5 points on this rubric row because while it does have a few flaws relative to citations, key components are present for every citation. Although the body of the response does not distinguish between the two FCC articles mentioned in the list of works cited, this singular error does not preclude the response from earning a high score. Additionally, while the Works Cited page includes several entries that are not directly referenced in the body of the paper, the narrative contains no in-text citations that are not also included on the Works Cited list. This inclusion of consulted works does not decrease the efficacy of the narrative’s citation.

**Row 7: Apply Conventions (Grammar and Style) (3)**

The response earned 3 points on this rubric row because it contains few errors in grammar or style. It demonstrates a strong control of the language. Examples of an appropriate academic tone include the passages: “... however, because VR journalism is still a form of journalism, producers must adhere to a journalists’ code of ethics” and “... therefore, by being an indirect eyewitness, the viewer would be able to better understand and experience the event in its totality rather than be restricted by the journalist’s point of view.”

**Sample: B**

**1 Understand and Analyze Context Score: 5**

**2 Understand and Analyze Context Score: 5**

**3 Understand and Analyze Persp Score: 6**

**4 Establish Argument Score: 8**

**5 Select and Use Evidence Score: 6**

**6 Apply Conventions Citation Score: 3**

**7 Apply Conventions Grmr Style Score: 2**

**MEDIUM SAMPLE RESPONSE**

**This response was determined to be on-topic.** The response situates a conversation about the impact of video games in the context of adults’ perception of them. Because their perception lends relevance to the area of inquiry, the response’s topic is clearly situated in the overall stimulus theme of perception.

**Row 1: Understand and Analyze Context (5)**

The response earned 5 points for this rubric row. The response makes use of the “Attitude Towards Muslim Women in the West” to clarify the point that “that without the correct knowledge and history of why people do what they do, we cannot fully understand their actions.” The response then connects that more general point specifically to adult understandings of video games by explaining “adults who do not play games can not understand the perspectives of the gamers. It is hard to understand what you have not experienced or be interested in the topic which can lead to misjudgements.” Its interaction with the source indicates an understanding of Abu-Lughod’s main point, which is then aptly applied to its own argument.

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#### Row 2: Understand and Analyze Context (5)

The response earned 5 points for this rubric row. The response began with some general statements about video games (e.g., “Often children do not think of much of video games besides that they are simply games to enjoy), but then situates the inquiry by clarifying the worries that adults/parents have about playing video games (i.e., “that video games are a waste of time” and that “[children] develop unhealthy habits such as becoming anti-social, staying indoors, and even becoming addicted to the games.”) The response uses this context as a way to situate the actual effects of playing video games, as well as provide a rationale for why those beliefs exist.

#### Row 3: Understand and Analyze Perspective (6)

The response earned 6 points for this rubric row. The response uses evidence to describe various perspectives (e.g., different parent views/worries, benefits of playing video games, the belief that video games spur violent behaviors, etc.) and compares them. For example, the response transitions from a discussion of the worries about video games to its benefits by explaining, “Despite all these negative beliefs, video games are actually proven to be beneficial for children.” While the response acknowledges the relationship between perspectives, it does not expound on where the two perspectives disagree, which prevents it from ascending to the highest score point.

#### Row 4: Establish Argument (8)

The response earned 8 points for this rubric row. The response provides some description of its explicit organization and some commentary between evidence and claims. While the response sometimes conveys why it’s moving on to its next point — e.g., “Despite all these negative beliefs, video games are actually proven to be beneficial for children. — it sometimes does not provide that level of explanation. For example, the response states, “One of the most popular misconceptions about video games is that violent video games cause violent thoughts and actions,” but does not elaborate. Moreover, while the response provides commentary linking evidence and claims, it often relies on phrases such as “this means that” to explain the connection, rather than fully engaging with the evidence. Finally, to resolve the problem of adult misconceptions, the response suggests, “First and foremost, the adult must have a clear understanding as to how video games actually affect kids-both positive and negative aspects. From there adults can decide and manage their children’s game play.” While such a conclusion is aligned with the problems identified in the argument, it does not provide adequate detail that would clarify the solution.

#### Row 5: Select and Use Evidence (6)

The response earned 6 points for this rubric row. While the response selects sources that are tightly relevant to the discussion of video game play in children, the sources are predominately journalistic (e.g., The New York Times and Washington Post). Regardless, the response still draws from some acceptable scholarly sources for its argument (i.e., the Pew Research center source, the Frontiers article, and the APA source).

#### Row 6: Apply Conventions (Citation) (3)

The response earned 3 points for this rubric row. While the response includes citations with the essential elements, the errors and style interfere with linking between the works cited and in-text citations. For example, the response often provides in-text citations that connect the quote with the publication, and only later the author (e.g., “According to Daily Mail”). Moreover, the Works Cited page is not in alphabetical order.

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**Row 7: Apply Conventions (Grammar and Style) (2)**

The response earned 2 points for this rubric row. Its word choice and style communicates the argument in a way that is understandable to the reader. Consider this example, “The information helps parents to make informed and mindful screen management decisions, and balances different perceptions so that they can be kept from being swayed by society and misleading media.” However, the response is predominated by broad and general language which reduces the clarity and precision. For example, “An adult’s fear or worrying can cause certain actions in order to prevent dangerous or bad situations from occurring. It is important for parents to make wise judgements in order to help their children. An adult’s perception on the matter of video games greatly affects their children’s ability to play.”

**Sample: C**

**1 Understand and Analyze Context Score: 0**

**2 Understand and Analyze Context Score: 0**

**3 Understand and Analyze Persp Score: 0**

**4 Establish Argument Score: 0**

**5 Select and Use Evidence Score: 0**

**6 Apply Conventions Citation Score: 0**

**7 Apply Conventions Grmr Style Score: 0**

**LOW SAMPLE RESPONSE**

**This response was determined to be on-topic.** The response is determined to be “on topic” due to its focus on how technology might enhance or augment the human experience, or, more specifically, the United States’ military capabilities. This emphasis on technology relates directly to the stimulus materials “Extra Sensory Perception” and “Scents and Sensibility.”

**Row 1: Understand and Analyze Context (0)**

The response earned 0 points for this row because it fails to deploy or use any of the resource materials in the development of the argument. More importantly, while the focus of the paper’s discussion of the development of “super soldiers” includes the impact of technology on society — a central premise within the “Extra Sensory Perception” article from the stimulus materials — and how society might perceive these soldiers, this article is neither referenced nor accurately contextualized. A brief mention of “genetic manipulation” appears on page 2, which may be a tangential attempt to include Richard Axel’s “Scents and Sensibility” lecture; however, the response then states that “[this] is not the focus of the paper.” As a result, there is no evidence to infer that the response engages the stimulus material in any way while formulating the argument.

**Row 2: Understand and Analyze Context (0)**

The response earned 0 points for this row because it consists of broad claims disassociated from any clear or relevant question, issue, or concern. There exists a bevy of closed questions throughout the response; however, the central question appears to be: “What are the benefits and drawbacks of creating super soldiers?” As a result, the context for this question appears to be popular heroes/characters in movies, video games, and comic books, which are referenced throughout the response, e.g., Captain America, the Terminator, and *Halo*. Such a context does not convey the significance of the inquiry, as necessary to receive a “5” in this rubric row.

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**Row 3: Understand and Analyze Perspective (0)**

The response earned 0 points for this row because the attempt to employ multiple lenses does not satisfy the expectation of multiple perspectives. Early on the response lists that it will consider the issue of super soldiers from “ethical, scientific, economic and social lenses”; however, the reflection that ensues is shallow and exclusive. For instance, the paragraph dedicated to political concerns is followed by a paragraph of ethical concerns that begins, “Ethically, a lot of the same concerns ...” In this way, the lenses exist to convey a shared perspective. The response maintains this pattern throughout before the response ultimately determines that the various lenses are “trickier” and “harder” to understand. There exists, then, a distinct lack of clarity regarding any perspective other than the general and uncertain opinion expressed by the response that “the risks are too great” to create super soldiers.

**Row 4: Establish Argument (0)**

The response earned 0 points for this row because the overall narrative reads as a summary without establishing a central argument. While the response initially asks the question: “Will the benefits of super soldiers outweigh the risks and what are the benefits and drawbacks of creating super soldiers?” it does not go on to provide evidence that supports a claim that would address this question. Throughout the response, the narrative defines what a “super soldier” is and what inspires the idea but fails to provide evidence for why creating this entity would be beneficial or conversely too great of a risk. For example, the narrative introduces “body enhancing technologies” that already exist in various forms but does not provide specific evidence that would support the use of these technologies; rather the narrative includes both the claim that “we could be seeing super soldiers in the near future” and the counterclaim that “it could be a bad idea to create super soldiers.” After more summary, the response indicates “The answer that is given to this question will be different for everyone,” and even acknowledges the rest of the summary is an opinion: “but in my opinion, I would rather have ...” Finally, the response does not provide a viable conclusion despite marking the last paragraph as such. The response merely offers two possible scenarios for the creation of “super soldiers” without arguing for one over the other.

**Row 5: Select and Use Evidence (0)**

The response earned 0 points for this row because most of the sources listed on the reference page are from publications that do not rise to the level of credible, academic sources (e.g., the *Daily Mail*). The one source listed on the reference page that may actually rise to the peer-reviewed level that could be considered relevant and acceptable, the McIntosh article from the *Journal of Human Security*, is not cited in the text.

**Row 6: Apply Conventions (Citation) (0)**

The response earned 0 points for this row because although the response does contain a bibliography, the sources are not cited in the text. The one internal citation quoting the Second Amendment does not have a corresponding entry on the reference page. This response clearly displays an unsuccessful linking of in-text citations and bibliographic entries. The reference page lists the source material article “Extra Sensory Perception,” but the response does not use the article in the text. Likewise, the response refers to several works of art in the text (i.e., movies, television series), but it does not provide citations for these references.

**AP<sup>®</sup> SEMINAR**  
**2018 SCORING COMMENTARY**

**Performance Task 2**  
**Individual Written Argument**

**Row 7: Apply Conventions (Grammar and Style) (0)**

The response earned 0 points for this row because the response contains numerous grammatical and punctuation errors throughout making the document difficult to read and inappropriate for an academic paper. The tone frequently lapses into a conversational style from the opening paragraphs to its conclusion (i.e., “you can see many different ways that the superheroes got their power”; “no misnomers or false information is going to be spread”; and “I have to say that the risks outweigh the benefits”). The response does not ascend to the level of 2 points because the number of errors and the colloquial language occur throughout the document, not just occasionally.