

AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
2006 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1

The score should reflect a judgment of the quality of the essay as a whole. Students had only 40 minutes to read and write; the essay, therefore, is not a finished product and should not be judged by standards appropriate for an out-of-class assignment. Evaluate the essay as a draft, making certain to reward students for what they do well.

All essays, even those scored 8 or 9, may contain occasional flaws in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. Such features should enter into the holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. In no case may an essay with many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics be scored higher than a 2.

- 9 Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for 8 essays and, in addition, are especially full or apt in their analysis or demonstrate particularly impressive control of language.

8 Effective

Essays earning a score of 8 respond to the prompt **effectively**. They effectively analyze how Price crafts the text to reveal her view of United States culture. These essays may refer to the passage explicitly or implicitly. The prose demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not necessarily flawless.

- 7 Essays earning a score of 7 fit the description of 6 essays but provide a more complete analysis or demonstrate a more mature prose style.

6 Adequate

Essays earning a score of 6 respond to the prompt **adequately**. They adequately analyze how Price crafts the text to reveal her view of United States culture. These essays may refer to the passage explicitly or implicitly. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

- 5 Essays earning a score of 5 analyze how Price crafts the text to reveal her view of United States culture but do so unevenly, inconsistently, or insufficiently. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the student's ideas.

4 Inadequate

Essays earning a score of 4 respond to the prompt **inadequately**. They may offer little discussion of how Price crafts the text to reveal her view of United States culture, misrepresent her view, or analyze the passage incorrectly. The prose generally conveys the student's ideas but may suggest immature control of writing.

- 3 Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for a score of 4 but are less perceptive about how Price crafts the text to reveal her view of United States culture and/or less consistent in controlling the elements of writing.

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Question 1 (continued)

2 Little Success

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in analyzing how Price crafts the text to reveal her view of United States culture. These essays may misunderstand the prompt, offer vague generalizations, substitute simpler tasks such as summarizing the passage, or simply list strategies. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing.

- 1** Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for a score of 2 but are undeveloped, especially simplistic in their analysis, or weak in their control of language.
- 0** Indicates an on-topic response that receives no credit, such as one that merely repeats the prompt.
- Indicates a blank response or one that is completely off topic.

BEGIN YOUR ANSWER TO QUESTION 1 HERE.

In her 1995 essay, "The Plastic Flamingo: A Natural History," Jennifer Price does provide a brief history of the flamingo, both plastic and live. Yet she does more than merely describe a bird. Rather, her word choice, tone, and use of examples ~~creates~~ create a far more insightful ~~and~~ significant ~~an~~ insight — analysis of American culture and the American mindset.

The ~~ps~~ essay begins with a sense of excitement, created by the very active verb "splashed" and an equally striking adjective, "boldness." Indeed, she begins the piece in a bold way. ~~She~~ ~~guides~~ ~~the~~ analysis, however, ^{becomes} anti-climatic when she stakes the two major claims. Essentially, ~~she argues~~ at face value, she argues that the pink flamingo was popular ~~to~~ because it was a flamingo and because it was pink. This ~~is~~ intentional use of the obvious, established by the second line, even emphasized with italics, already lays the foundation for her opinions on American culture. The fact that this object became popular for these reasons reveals the ~~degree to~~ ^{ways in} which the collective American mind forms its ~~own~~ desires.

The remainder of the opening paragraph simply establishes background about the flamingo. After that, ~~then~~ though, the author continues to give indications of what she thinks of culture in the United States. Her argument that Americans used flamingos to reveal prosperity (a point ~~to~~ that she raises with more very active language — the flamingo "inscribed" the laws "empirically"), and especially important notion following the Great Depression, appears to be a valid interpretation. The examples used are important. Price does appeal to authority in some ways by quoting from two well-known authors, ~~and these are authors who are perhaps no~~

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ADDITIONAL PAGE FOR ANSWERING QUESTION 1

Her other examples are more telling. She cites a gangster, Benjamin Bugsy Siegel, and his hotel, as basis for the striking nature of the flamingo. And when explaining the popularity of pink, she brings up Elvis. Thus, flamingos became popular across the U.S. — or, to use her ~~metaphor~~ ^{simile}, "cropped up like a line of semiotic spouts" — because of these sights with which Americans were familiar. Cotto while there may be a sound basis for this movement, such as post-depression affluence, Price goes beyond that. These examples show that American culture is trendy, that American buying purchasing patterns are based on those of public figures. Even the Ann Marlings quote ~~as~~ ^{she} ~~those~~ reflects that Americans bought pink because it was the cool thing to do.

Even more telling that Price's selection of quotes and examples is the tone she uses selectively but effectively. Her sarcasm is quite strong in the stand-alone fragment in line 15, "But no matter." The Americans nearly wiped out ~~the~~ this bird, but that was unimportant to them. ~~the~~ this surely contrasts with both generic gentiment and especially her scholarly audience. It therefore reflects what she thinks Americans find important. Things that certainly ~~would~~ that defied conventional wisdom and morality were ~~a~~ non-issues. Later in the essay, she asks a rhetorical question (lines 46-47). Besides entertaining the reader, she uses this device to further underscore the importance of the color pink. ~~She~~ Price then illustrates the further absurdity of making the plastic bird unnecessary brighter than the real one. This leads her to the conclusion that it is "no wonder" that the bird stood out in a brighter form ~~a~~ outside of its natural environment. Once again she is playing on the obviousness of what she is

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describing.

through these various techniques, Price is thus able to comment on both a specific phenomenon and its more general implications. Example, word choice and especially her help reveal that she finds flaws in the American thought process, especially what this is most true when it comes to the basis for the American founds. She is able to get this message across not specifically through her words, but the implications that occur on a second level.

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Next, Price describes the boldness of color that set apart the Flamingo and how distinct it is in the desert and tundra. His connection to culture is reinforced with the ~~concept~~ name of Elvis Presley a ~~blatant~~ huge cultural icon who himself bought a pickup car. He symbolizes pop culture of the time and its quest to be bold, a perfect example for Price to utilize. ~~Another example~~ ~~is~~ she also cites authority, Tom Wolfe, who comments that these colors are "Florida litteal."

Price concludes with a statement relating the subtropical species that "stands out so badly."

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BEGIN YOUR ANSWER TO QUESTION 1 HERE.

Price crafts the text to reveal that she views the United States as being a vivid culture. Throughout her essay she uses facts, diction, syntax, and imagery. She uses the pink flamingos to describe how she sees the United States culture.

Price uses a lot of case study to show the popularity of the pink flamingo. ~~She goes from the~~ She describes the good times about the pink flamingo, then she transitions ~~the text~~ to what was ironic about the popularity of the flamingo. She emphasizes the pink flamingo by italicizing flamingo and pink when she talks about their boldness in the first and third paragraph. "This was a little ironic, since Americans had hunted flamingos to extinction in Florida in the late 1800's for plumes and meat. But no matter." Price ~~views~~ reveals that she views the U.S. culture as being ironic because the good covers up the bad.

"Since the 1930's, vacationing Americans had been flocking to Florida... returning home ~~too~~ with flamingo souvenirs." People in the U.S. act like a bandwagon because ~~they if one person has something then they want~~ when it comes to pink flamingos they all want it. Price views the U.S. culture as being widespread but she does not see why they were called pink flamingos, "call the birds "pink flamingos" — as if they could be blue or green?" The culture of the U.S. is very ~~easy~~ easily influenced.

She uses long loose sentences filled with commas, and em dashes to add a little more about her view on culture. Price crafts the text to reveal how other cultures were influenced by the pink flamingo. "... Mexico and the ~~caribbean~~ Caribbean, it remains a major motif in art, dance, and literature." The U.S. culture has appeal to others and she views it as being easily influenced.

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AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
2006 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 1

Overview

This question called for interpretation and analysis of contemporary prose. Students read an excerpt from “The Plastic Pink Flamingo: A Natural History,” an article originally published in the *American Scholar*. In this piece, the author, Jennifer Price, examines the emergence of the plastic pink flamingo as a cultural icon in the United States during the 1950s. Students were asked to analyze how Price crafts the text to reveal her view of United States culture.

Sample: 1A
Score: 8

Here is an essay that writes itself into meaning. The introductory paragraph identifies three elements of craft but not Price’s view about United States culture. As the essay evolves, the student shifts the order in which the three elements are discussed; in analyzing the craft, the student discovers Price’s views. Throughout, the student wedds craft and cultural perspective and blends explicit and implicit evidence. The student skillfully integrates quotations and paraphrases to show Price’s emphasis on Americans’ superficiality, desire to show off wealth (“reveal prosperity”), and occasional moral shadiness (“Bugsy” Siegel as cultural icon, too). The essay moves smoothly, with clear transitions and an increasingly refined understanding of tone. Although the conclusion essentially summarizes, and although some missteps in diction and syntax occur, the essay overall is full, gaining momentum as it goes. It earned a score of 8.

Sample: 1B
Score: 6

That this essay begins by stepping back from the passage itself suggests that the student has a perspective on the passage and a plan for the development of the essay. The thesis identifies both Price’s strategies—how Price crafts the text—and Price’s view of United States culture. The body paragraphs offer implicit evidence of Price’s strategies and views, with a good summary sentence at the end of paragraph two and a simple transition into paragraph three. The fourth paragraph highlights the connection between Elvis and the flamingo as cultural icons and mentions a logos appeal. Although perhaps promising more than it delivers, this 6 essay adequately discusses Price’s craft and views.

Sample: 1C
Score: 3

This essay attempts, unsuccessfully, to use a formulaic organization built around facts, diction, and syntax. For “facts,” the student cites “case study” without apparently understanding the term. In paragraph two, the essay offers a nod to irony, noting the italicized “pink” and “flamingo,” but the student decontextualizes these words and then misreads by stating that Price regards United States culture as being ironic. The third paragraph begins with a quotation (no context), then goes on to discuss the propaganda device of “bandwagon” unsuccessfully. The quotation in this paragraph does not support the announced propaganda device. The fourth paragraph, devoted to syntax, offers a misreading in suggesting that the United States’s view of the flamingo has influenced the view of other cultures. Although the essay attempts analysis of craft and view, the analysis is not perceptive. The score for this essay is 3.