The score reflects the quality of the essay as a whole—its content, its style, its mechanics. Students are rewarded for what they do well. The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by 1 point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a 3.

9–8 These detailed, well-written essays provide insightful analysis of Hughes’s poem. They discern the differences between the worlds above and below the lily, and effectively address the poet’s implied attitudes toward nature as well as the way he defines the artist’s task. These essays may offer a range of interpretations and emphasize a variety of poetic techniques, but they are alike in their coherence and persuasiveness, maintaining consistent control over the elements of effective composition and illustrating the poem’s techniques with apt and specific examples. These essays need not be flawless. But the best essays will demonstrate the student’s ability to read poetry well and to write with clarity and sophistication.

7–6 These competent essays convey a coherent understanding of the poem, including both its attitudes toward nature and toward the artist’s task. Their interpretations may falter in some particulars or may be less detailed or precise. These essays demonstrate the student’s ability to express ideas clearly but do not exhibit the same maturity or control as the very best essays. They are likely to be briefer or more general and less well supported than the 9–8 essays.

5 These essays demonstrate some understanding of the poet’s attitudes, but they are more superficial and less convincing than the upper-half essays. Discussion may center on only part of the prompt or be inadequately supported by references to the text or overly generalized. Although the writing is adequate to convey the student’s ideas and is not marred by distracting errors, these essays are not as well conceived, organized, or developed as those in the upper half.

4–3 These lower-half essays reveal an incomplete understanding of the poem and/or a mistaken conception of the task. They may discuss the description of the scene without addressing the poem’s attitudes. Their assertions may be implausible or irrelevant or otherwise inexact. They may rely almost entirely on paraphrase. Often wordy and repetitious, the writing reveals uncertain control of college-level composition and may contain recurrent stylistic flaws. Essays that contain significant misreading and/or unusually inept writing should be scored a 3.

2–1 These essays compound the weaknesses of those in the 4–3 range. They may seriously misread the text or be unacceptably brief. Although some attempt may be made to answer the question, there is little clarity, organization, or supporting example. They may be poorly written on several counts and contain distracting errors in grammar and mechanics. Essays with little coherent discussion of the text should be scored a 1.

0 These essays give a response with no more than a reference to the task.

— These essays are either left blank or are completely off topic.
In "To Paint a Water Lily," the speaker examines the complex facets of nature by illuminating the challenges he faces as an artist in capturing its essence. When he looks upon the scene before him, he sees a vibrant microcosm of constant movement and activity, disguised by the placid stillness of the water lilies that drift at the surface of the pond. As an artist, he knows that to paint the water lily and do it justice requires more than a simple depiction of the plant itself—he must also somehow capture the heart of its environment, the buzzing and teeming life that surrounds it. The intensity with which the speaker describes this incredible undertaking and the sense of appreciation he feels for the striking complexity of nature is expressed through the use of form, language, imagery, diction, and figurative language.

The speaker begins by introducing the water lily not as a subject unto itself, but as a stage for the activity that goes on around it. He describes "a green tent of lily leaves" that "reeds the pond's chamber and paves the flies' finish arena,"—in other words, a cover for the activity below and the ground for the action above. The description establishes the speaker's view of nature as a complex entity with layers that reach beyond it seemingly still surface. The language used by the speaker to describe the lily leaves...
marked by alliteration and delicate imagery, also
reflects the speaker's appreciation of the beauty of
nature's "outer surface," the face it shows most plainly
to the casual observer. The speaker also personifies nature
by describing it as a "lady" with "two irises," namely
those that exist above and below its surface. "Study here,"
the speaker notes to himself (and by extension, the audience)
and only then can one develop a true understanding of
the essence of nature.

Though the speaker's aim is to portray a water lily
in a painting, he cannot help but pay attention to
the sights and sounds that also help compose the canvas
of nature. When he observes the air's dragonfly, he does
not merely see an insect that "bullet by." He hears the
"hum under the trees" and the "bottle shoots" and death
cries" that permeate the atmosphere. The heavy use of
auditory imagery in this scene reflects the speaker's perspective
of his surroundings not only as a visual but complete sensory
experience. He senses the combustive, buzzing, almost frenetic
environment in the air through "incredible," with knowing
appreciation. The dramatic sense he almost hears is
also complemented by what he sees before him, as flies
"rein in their arcs, spurt, or settle." The line which immediately
follows, in which the speaker uses simile to describe soaring
flies as "crawling like beads of molten metal through the spectrum,"
enhances the vibrancy of the scene and emphasizes interpretation rather than mere observation of nature.

The speaker’s shift in attention to the pool below the water lilies is equally evocative, but adopts a slightly darker tone to complement the thickness and mystery of the water below. There, creatures from “prehistoric bedazzled times” lurk about oblivious to both “age” and “hour” as if frozen in a timeless, fluid atmosphere of dark ambiguity. Evolution here is suspended (the fish “have evolved into immense there”) and the primitive appearance of the creatures just swim free (“jewelry leaves the set scene”) further emphasizes the isolation and otherworldliness of the environment.

The speaker marvels at what he sees as he sits down to paint a water lily. Such complexity surrounds him, masked by the simplicity of the floating water lily that float at the surface of the pond. In painting the water lily, the artist must immerse himself “deep in both words, and remember that although nature can appear to be “still as a painting,” an expensive universe of incredible depth and liveliness exists beyond the surface.

#
In "To Paint a Water Lily" by Ted Hughes, the water lily is presented in two ways: how a painter sees it and how another part of it is addressed by the painter. Painters only see the beauty of the water lily; they do not see the battle that is going on near it. The speaker believes that painters should see beyond the outside appearance and portray this by the use of imagery, figurative language, and extended metaphor.

An extended metaphor is used to compare the world of the insects and war. The image of the world as a battlefield is created by the poet's diction. For example, the water lily is "the flies' furrow arena." Imagery is used to portray the dragonfly as a warrior, as if it "eats meat... bullets fly." It stands in space to take aim." Like a soldier, the dragonfly has to fly around quickly and prepare to "take aim" or shoot at its enemies. The image of the water lily as a battle scene is clearly portrayed by "the battle shouts and death cries." These words enhance the image of war.

The speaker is addressing the painter and telling him or her to look at the other side of...
Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

water lily. The speaker points out the scene that go on within the water lily. The "Battle-shoals... Earliest incredible, so the eyes praise to see the colours of these flies rainbow theirs ones." The speaker suggests that the painter cannot hear the "Battle-shoals" of the insects fighting, so the painter only sees the beautiful appearance of colourful insects and fail to capture the other view of a lily.

The speaker wants
The rhyme and structure of the poem helps focus on the speaker's message. The end rhyme and complete scheme divides the poem into 13 stanzas and add to the feeling of enhance the image of the lily flower as a battlefield.

Imagery, figurative language and the extended metaphor help reveal the speaker's attitudes toward nature and the artist's task. The speaker's attitude is light serious as he addressed the artist. The narrator wants the artist to pay attention to the details beyond an ordinary picture of the water lily.

#
Ted Hughes evokes a sense of wonder, curiosity, and excitement as a tool to exemplify the speaker's attitude in the poem "To Paint a Water Lily." His use of diction, syntax, rhyme, scheme, and visual means exemplify his purpose. The dragonfly's nature is brought by the raw reality it goes through. The reader can not only see the visual nature of the dragonfly and its surroundings by the gustatory, gustatory reference in line five, but also given by the "Rainbow on their arks, spark or settle." The reader can better understand the double-sided nature that the dragonfly can put forth, further more illustrating the speaker as one that is fully fascinated by nature. The title suggests that the speaker is not only observing this scene to gather ideas for a painting, but that he too is connecting with his art. This is clearly shown through the auditory and tactile references in lines 5-6 and 13-14.
The rhyme scheme suggests that while the scheme could be harsh at times, the "lily leaves hoo-s the peashord's chamber and paves" are some what fanciful. This is possible through a delicate balance in the use of rhyming cacophonous cacophonistic, and euphonistic word choice.

The speaker's attitude is prevalent throughout the entirety of this poem. The reader can understand the speaker's inquisitive ways, as if a child looking on to the world for the first time. This child like nature is what brings true brilliance to this soon to be masterpiece, and overwhelming artistic genius.

#
The introductory paragraph of this sophisticated essay lucidly explains exactly what the prompt asks: the poet’s attitudes toward nature (its “vibrant” and “teeming” energies, masked by the “placid stillness” of the water lily) and the poet’s problem—how can all this invisible intensity be captured in a painting? This response conveys a strong sense of the poem’s governing elements: the structural importance of “paves” and “roofs”; the poem’s “complex … layers” beneath appearances; the personification of the lily as a lady with two minds. The style is fluid, controlled, and elegant, evoking as well as analyzing the poem’s effects, particularly its visual and auditory images. The final paragraph smoothly and very skillfully synthesizes the whole discussion, using key words like “complexity,” “simplicity,” “surface,” and “depth” to highlight what this discussion has explored.

Although hesitant at first, this essay clearly focuses on the issues of a painter’s problem—how to depict more than the water lily’s beauty—and on the means used to do it: imagery, figurative language, and extended metaphors. The second paragraph does that clearly and specifically, citing examples of all the ways in which the “warfare” in nature is depicted. The third paragraph clarifies the poem’s central issue: that the painter cannot depict the invisible “battle-shouts” and so must fail to capture the two-sided view of the lily Hughes’s poem presents. Although none of its ideas are fully developed, and the composition is not notably sophisticated, the essay remains well focused, clear, and sufficiently persuasive.

This student is aware of the poem’s strong sensory appeals but fails to define their purposes effectively. The essay notes the “balance” between beautiful and horrific images but never develops the implications of these images. The discussion is inadequate on the speaker’s attitude—calling it merely “inquisitive,” “facinated [sic],” and “child like”—and inaccurate about what the “artist’s task” might be. Finally, the discussion betrays its incapacity to recognize the structural importance of “roofs” and “paves.” The student calls these metaphors “some what [sic] fanciful” but goes no further. Such dead-end remarks demonstrate a less-than-adequate understanding of the poem’s language.