

**AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION**  
**2006 SCORING GUIDELINES**

**Question 3**

(Country Setting as a Source of Values)

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 well-focused and persuasive essays identify a country setting in a novel or play and analyze how that country setting functions in the work as a whole. Using apt and specific textual support, these essays fully explore the relationship between setting and the values of the characters and/or a society. Although not without flaws, these essays exhibit the student’s ability to discuss a literary work with significant insight and understanding; to sustain control over a thesis; and to write with clarity, precision, coherence and—in the case of a 9 essay—with particular persuasiveness and/or stylistic flair.
- 7–6** These competent essays identify a country setting in a novel or play and analyze how that country setting functions in the work as a whole. These essays have insight and understanding, but the analysis is less thorough, less perceptive, and/or less specific in supporting detail than that of the 9–8 essays. References to the text may not be as apt or as persuasive. Essays scored a 7 demonstrate more sophistication in substance and in style than those scored a 6, though both 7s and 6s are generally well written and free from significant or sustained misinterpretations.
- 5** These essays respond to the assigned task, but they tend to be superficial in analysis. They often rely upon plot summary that contains some analysis, implicit or explicit. Although the students attempt to discuss the function of setting in the work as a whole, they may demonstrate a rather simplistic understanding of the work. Typically, these essays reveal unsophisticated thinking and/or immature writing. The students demonstrate adequate control of language, but their essays lack effective organization and may be marred by surface errors.
- 4–3** These lower-half essays reflect an incomplete or oversimplified understanding of the work, or they may fail to develop the function of a country setting or its contribution to the work as a whole. They may rely on plot summary alone. Their assertions may be unsupported or even irrelevant. Often wordy, elliptical, or repetitious, these essays lack control over the elements of college-level composition. Essays scored a 3 may contain significant misreadings and demonstrate inept writing.
- 2–1** Although these essays make some attempt to respond to the prompt, they compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4–3 range. Often they are unacceptably brief or are incoherent in presenting their ideas. They may be poorly written on several counts and contain distracting errors in grammar and mechanics. The student’s remarks are presented with little clarity, organization, or supporting evidence. Particularly inept, vacuous, and/or incoherent essays must be scored a 1.
- 0** These essays make no more than a reference to the task.
- These essays either are left blank or are completely off topic.

3

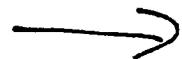
Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

3A1

In Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, a country setting is prominent for the first half of the novel, which takes place in Upper Cross. Although many writers may portray the countryside as a setting of ignorance and primitivism, Austen endows ~~the~~ her countryside with a nurturing, virtuous, and ~~and~~ peaceful quality.

The protagonist of *Persuasion*, Anne, goes to Upper Cross to keep her youngest sister ~~a~~ company. ~~She~~ The narrator tells readers Anne, who was always looked down on by her father & elder sister for being plain but intelligent and kind, will be happy and will fit in at Upper Cross for the two months she is to stay there. Here, the countryside is portrayed as virtuous. Only in this country<sup>setting</sup> is Anne, ~~a~~ ~~super~~ held in a superior light, for her qualities of intelligence, kindness and modesty are held in high regard there. These virtuous qualities are admired in the countryside.

The country setting is also shown as a peaceful place to be. There are woods for Anne to get lost in and to think about matters. It is in Upper Cross that the reader better understands Anne's qualities, for she is constantly undergoing



self-reflection and self-examination there to determine how to act and how she feels about her first and only love, who has returned. Uppercross is then contrasted with Bath, which can be called a city setting. In Bath, Anne is constantly surrounded by others and has little time to reflect on how she should act and the characters of the people around her. Thus, she makes some blunders in acting towards her love, Captain Wentworth, and the person he is jealous of, her cousin Mr. Eliot. It is not peaceful enough in the city for Anne to ponder over life's worries.

Uppercross, lastly, is portrayed as a nurturing place for Anne. She does not have to go through the tedious etiquettes that are expected of in the city and she is constantly near her valued friends & her guardian, Lady Russell. Under the influence of these people, Anne is able to better understand ~~that~~ who she is and develop into a woman who does not blame herself for her past (of ~~rejecting~~ ~~and~~ refusing Wentworth's first offer of marriage) or others. Thus, she



3.

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3A3

is nurtured by the comfortable quality of the countryside, where all her friends are near. All unwanted influences; such as Anne's father, elder sister, wicked cousin and conspiring acquaintance, Mrs. Clay; are gone from the country setting of Uppercross.

Since Anne is the main character in Persuasion, and the country setting has such a large influence over Anne, it then functions as a backdrop to Anne's character development in Persuasion. Without this setting, it would be difficult for readers to see Anne's growth, to understand her superior qualities as a character, and to see how Austen views a country setting compared to a city-setting as given by Bath. It is Uppercross that then becomes synonymous with Anne, our heroine of the novel.

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The Importance of Being Earnest is a comical play in which two separate settings serve to set up the confusion of the plot. The main character, Jack, essentially has two identities. He lives a life by the name of Earnest in the city, and another life by the name of Jack in the countryside. Each setting has its benefits, but the combination of the two creates the disorder of the play. The setting of the countryside in The Importance of Being Earnest serves as Jack's haven of tranquility from the drama of his ~~city~~<sup>urban</sup>-life and also serves to develop the confusion of the play which makes it a successful comedy.

When Jack wishes to escape from the hectic rumble of the city, he flees to his countryside home. His method for transferring back and forth between lives is the excuse of an ill brother. Jack maintains a fiancée in the city while at the same time a life with his "aunt" and additional family members in the countryside. In his attempt to reconcile the two worlds by claiming that his brother died, Jack is introduced to a situation of great confusion. His city-friend, who also has an alter-ego, pays a

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3

3B<sub>2</sub>

visit to the countryside claiming to be Jack's brother. From there the plot thickens into a web of confusion as Jack's fiancée shows up at the countryside home with her mother as well.

The countryside in this play from here out plays a significant role in the objective of the play. The plot was written to be comedic, and the comedic confusion arises from the sudden lack of separation between Jack's two worlds. Near the end of the play, there is an extensive conversation in which Jack's fiancée thinks he is engaged to someone else, she cannot discriminate between his two names, Jack's friend falls in love with a young girl close enough to be Jack's family member, and the confusion thickens. It is in this confusion that the true comedy of the story is at its height, and the agent of all the confusion was the countryside setting.

The Importance of Being Earnest is a play of trivial ~~amusement~~<sup>humor</sup>. The countryside setting in the story serves as an agent of confusion in conjunction with the urban world and functions as ~~the~~<sup>a</sup> means ~~to~~ to make the work a comedy.

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Q3

P1

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

301

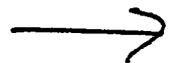
In various novels, the setting itself or norms of the setting may dictate values ~~and~~ of characters ~~and~~ or plot actions. Such happens in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*.

Nearly ~~every~~ bit of the novel may be attributed to setting. Each chapter is written in stream of consciousness as if the characters are incapable of thinking coherently. On top of that, it is written in dialect. Most importantly, actions of characters are implied to be blamed on setting.

A southerner himself, Faulkner knows all too well the backward ways of the south. So, he blamed ~~it~~ <sup>everything</sup> on the environment ~~as~~ instead of characters' ignorance; he treats them as if they didn't know any better.

The best example is Dewey Dell. Admittedly, she is more stupid than <sup>the</sup> Vardaman, but because of the setting, the reader thinks (as Faulkner wishes) that it is only because she grew up in the twisted South that she is so dumb. Why else would she give herself sexually twice thinking that the second would reverse the effects of the first?

Then there is <sup>little</sup> Vardaman. He catches a



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Q3 P2

30<sub>2</sub>

fish. It dies. His mother dies. His mother is a fish. The comically faulty syllogism is nonetheless blamed on the boy's environment in the mind of the reader. Oh boy. ~~And then,~~

Only a backwards upbringing would inspire Vardaman to drill holes in Addie's coffin, <sup>(with her face)</sup> right?

And let us not forget Anse. He never realizes Jewel is not his <sup>because he</sup> ~~is~~ is too oblivious to do the math. Then he goes that whole way to Jefferson to "bury his wife"... that or to buy false teeth to aid his vanity. He then picks up a new wife before the old one is even in the ground.

The setting is the scapegoat. Nearly the whole novel, the reader is aghast at the decisions of the Bundrens, but in the end, all the ridiculous dilemmas, poor decisions, and numerous oddities are ~~answered~~ "Well, it is the South..." <sup>answered in the mind of the reader by,</sup>

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# AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

## 2006 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 3

#### Overview

The prompt for Question 3, the “open” question, began by noting that many writers use a country setting to establish values within a work of literature and illustrated that proposition by pointing out that the country may be a place of virtue and peace or one of primitivism and ignorance. Students were then asked to choose a novel or play in which such a country setting plays a significant role and write an essay in which they analyzed how the country setting functions in the work as a whole.

The aim of the prompt was to assess students’ ability to connect the country setting to values, thereby linking artistry to technique with theme, idea, or meaning. The illustrative phrase, “a place of virtue and peace or one of primitivism and ignorance,” suggested to students that setting can convey a range of positive or negative attributes. Moreover, the prompt deliberately focused on setting to steer students away from plot summary, the too-familiar bane of Question 3. The emphasis upon “analyze how the country setting functions” was designed to discriminate between upper- and lower-level essays.

#### Sample: 3A

##### Score: 8

This essay provides a persuasive, detailed analysis of the setting in Jane Austen’s *Persuasion*. Well organized and fully developed, it offers three different ideas about how the setting establishes values in the novel. First, Anne’s virtuous “qualities of intelligence, kindness and modesty are held in high regard” in the countryside. Second, unlike in Bath, in the woods Anne can undergo the self-reflection and self-examination that enable her to “reflect on how she should act and [on] the characters of the people” surrounding her. Finally, the country nurtures Anne, helping her to “understand who she is and develop into a woman who does not blame herself for her past.” Using apt and specific textual support and developing its ideas in clear and lucid prose, this essay makes a strong case for its assertions.

#### Sample: 3B

##### Score: 6

This essay on *The Importance of Being Earnest* contrasts the two settings—country and city—in rich detail but doesn’t think deeply about the meaning or the values being addressed in the play. For example, the student gets sidetracked into discussing at length the “comedic confusion” arising from the lack of separation that occurs between Jack’s two worlds as the play progresses, but that digression does not fully respond to the question posed. While the essay does address the topic of a country setting by choosing an appropriate work and correctly understanding that the country “serves as Jack’s haven of tranquility from the drama of his urban-life,” the conclusion this student reaches is rather pedestrian: “The countryside setting . . . serves as an agent of confusion . . . [and] makes[s] the work a comedy.”

#### Sample: 3C

##### Score: 4

This essay on *As I Lay Dying* looks at the southern United States as a country that is backward and ignorant. This witty writer, who remembers plot details very well, organizes the essay around three characters who seem to illustrate backwardness, but this unfortunately leads the organization away from any focus on country or setting. As a result, the essay is thin on assertions that respond to the prompt; it makes claims that degrade the South (“Faulkner knew all too well the backward ways of the south. So, he blamed everything on the environment instead of characters’ ignorance.”), demonstrating, in the words of the scoring guidelines, an “incomplete or oversimplified understanding of the work.” The essay also fails to develop how the country setting functions in the work as a whole.