Question 2

The score should reflect a judgment of the essay’s quality as a whole. Remember that students had only 40 minutes to read and write; therefore, the essay 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 those that are scored an 8 and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their explanation and argument or demonstrate particularly impressive control of language.

8 Effective

Essays earning a score of 8 effectively take a position on Mitford’s view of the term “muckraker.” The evidence used is appropriate and convincing. 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 those that are scored a 6 but provide a more complete argument or demonstrate a more mature prose style.

6 Adequate

Essays earning a score of 6 adequately take a position on Mitford’s view of the term “muckraker.” The evidence used is appropriate. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

5 Essays earning a score of 5 take a position on Mitford’s view of the term “muckraker.” These essays may, however, provide uneven, inconsistent, or limited explanations or evidence. 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 inadequately take a position on Mitford’s view of the term “muckraker.” The evidence used may be insufficient. 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 demonstrate less success in taking a position on Mitford’s view of the term “muckraker” or in providing evidence to support that position. The essays may show less control of writing.
Question 2 (continued)

2 Little Success

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate little success in taking a position on Mitford’s view of the term “muckraker.” These essays may misunderstand the prompt or substitute a simpler task by responding to the prompt tangentially with unrelated, inaccurate, or inappropriate evidence. 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 explanation and argument, 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.
When Teddy Roosevelt coined the term “muckrakers,” he intended for it to be an insult. However, some, such as journalist Jessica Mitford, were delighted to adopt the name for themselves. Muckrakers are journalists who search “out and publicly expose real or apparent misconduct of a prominent individual or business.” Although in some instances journalists can take their stories too far, when the information is accurate and relevant, “muckrakers” can have a very positive influence on our society.

Teddy Roosevelt coined the phrase “muckrakers” to describe journalists who used propaganda to generate strong feelings and instigate the Spanish-American War. The war was largely considered unnecessary, but the muckrakers, or “yellow journalists,” had stirred up American sentiment in support of the war. At that point, there was nothing for the country to do but go to war. In this case, the journalists had gone too far since much of what they were writing was exaggerated. Also, many gossip columns and magazines are also “muckrakers” in a negative sense. Often times, a simple fight between two married people will be blown out of proportion and gossip magazines will report that those two people will be getting a divorce or that their marriage is on the rocks. In such instances, muckraking is not a positive term.

When “muckraking” is used correctly, however, the benefit to readers outweighs the negative effects of the reporting. One of the most obvious examples of positive muckraking is the Watergate
Scandal. When journalists announced the truth about the deception, the president was committing, Americans were more informed and were grateful that they had accurate information. Walter Cronkite's visit to Vietnam is another example of positive muckraking. Throughout Vietnam, Johnson assured the American people that things were going well in Vietnam and Americans were beating the Communist forces. Walter Cronkite had doubt about this verdict, however, so he went to Vietnam himself. He reported that the war was actually at a standstill, and nothing was being accomplished. While the effect of Cronkite's visit to Vietnam was not positive for President Johnson, the American people were more informed about the truth of Vietnam.

Muckraking obviously has its downsides, as demonstrated by the provocation of the Spanish-American War. However, when exposing the truth occurs within the correct boundaries, muckraking can have a very positive effect. The public deserves to be informed about what is going on in their country and around the world. It is the duty of journalists to present the most accurate portrayals of events and people possible. When journalists pursue information for public gain, they are doing their job and muckraking is acceptable. It is only when journalists attempt to discover information for personal gain, or to cause the ruin of an individual or company that they take their pursuit of stories too far. The defining line between good and bad muckraking is the motive.
Though muckraking was originally intended as an insult, muckraking now represents the purpose of journalism. Discovering and exposing the truth for the public leads to a more informed, thankful society.
What does one think about when they hear the word “muchraker”? I think of a person who was given the dirty job of picking up an animal’s “muck.” I would not want to do that, but a “muchraker” is also someone (journalist, news reporter... etc) who turns up dirt on a certain company or person. That doesn’t sound too good either.

Many “muchrakers” today go deep into their stories and sometimes exaggerate to make the topic seem worse than it really is. I believe that it is not necessarily good to be called a “muchraker,” but I also believe that there are times when it is necessary to tell the world of a certain misconduct.

John D. Rockefeller did a lot to make himself rich that he caused many other people to lose their jobs, money, homes, and dignity. He didn’t care about anybody else and his secretary Ida Tarbell knew this. She kept an eye on him and kept track of everything that Rockefeller was doing. After he died...
Tarbell wrote a book which included all of the ways that Rockefeller took to make his fortune. Tarbell's book caused the world to really look at the late Rockefeller and analyze his actions. The government made all of Rockefeller's actions illegal, and thanks to Ida Tarbell's "muckraking" skills the world knew the man that Rockefeller was.

With Ida Tarbell as an example, "muckraking" can be a good thing, but it can also have negative side effects too. What if there were "suspicious" acts going on in a certain industry, and I decided to look into it. Okay sounds fine so what is wrong with this? Let's say that I had a bias against the said company, and I really wanted them to sink down to the bottom of the food chain; I would pull as much dirt over them as I possibly could from this one little (possibly irrelevant) lead. I could take the "suspicious act", say, a storage container
Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

Filled with unmarked boxes, and say that the boxes were filled with illegal substances that were imported from some foreign country. Okay, well maybe that was a bit exaggerated, but that is what "muckrakers" do.

In conclusion, I can see how muckraking isn't completely bad, but it isn't the best either. People or companies could be looked into because of something someone said. It can possibly help society, but it could also destroy it.
A muttcracker is someone who "searches out and publically exposes real or apparent misconduct of a prominent individual or business." For a journalist being called a muttcracker is anybody's dream, not the best way to be known. If you were a gossip columnist and were called a muttcracker, you would know that you did your job right.

A journalist is more of a documentary type. A journalist's job is to find the truth, but not to expose the truth in an evil way. If a journalist is called a muttcrack, it proves they have gone too far with their job.

I understand how exciting it is to discover the truth and reveal the secrets a person is hiding. I believe it is unfair to the person who is revealed, but that is their job. They are paid to find the truth, even if it means to jeopardize their job, career, family even themselves.
my relatives, many of whom are journalists always tell me how thrilling their job is, but at the same time they are pressured because they have deadlines to meet. If they do not meet the deadline, most of the time they will not get paid. It's a huge deal when you can not get paid. Though, being a journalist as a career may be risky, you can get into lots of arguments, fights and you are constantly in danger if someone is absolutely furious by the exposure they may hunt you down. At that point your career may be over.

In conclusion being a called a muckraker is not the best name for a journalist maybe this is because I have a different definition and understanding of what a journalist is. Though, I believe being called a muckraker is a form of accomplishment for journalists.

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Question 2

Sample: 2A
Score: 8

This essay develops a clear position through use of contrasting examples and arguments. The piece begins by alluding to the prompt and showing that, indeed, the word “muckraker” originated in a time when journalists moved beyond reporting and toward controlling national events. The student then turns to the examples of Watergate and Vietnam, arguing that in both of these instances journalists shed light on situations that needed to be seen by the public. Finally, the student argues that muckraking can be positive when the situation requires extreme measures on the part of reporters. The essay is not without minor errors, but the prose style is solid and clear so that the reader can follow the student’s arguments with ease.

Sample: 2B
Score: 5

This essay is uneven in its development of a position on muckraking. The student nods to the problems with muckraking but then turns to an admired author, Ida Tarbell, whose investigation of John D. Rockefeller led to a balanced view of Rockefeller’s life. The example provides an interesting illustration of what good reporting can do, but then the essay takes a turn that does not follow from the illustration. The student begins to discuss “negative side effects” and loses the thread of the development of a position. The conclusion neither defends nor decries muckraking and leaves the reader somewhat perplexed as to the student’s position. The writing in the essay is itself uneven—sometimes even and clear, sometimes wandering and loosely connected.

Sample: 2C
Score: 2

This essay demonstrates little success in developing a position. Substituting a simpler task, the student merely describes some of the difficulties that journalists face in their work. The essay then takes a turn toward a personal example of family members who are journalists and who work hard at their jobs. The example discusses the travails of journalists without noting whether their reporting should or should not look for the darker side of the news. The writing in this essay lacks clarity and continuity, leaving the reader to endeavor to connect the sentences.