

AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
2007 SCORING GUIDELINES (Form B)

Question 2

(From *Reading in the Dark* by Seamus Deane)

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** Students submitting these well-written essays show themselves to be astute readers of this narrative. The essays identify with clarity and precision the strategies and techniques (selection of details or imagery, for example) that help convey the impact of the narrator’s contrasting and, perhaps, complementary early experiences with books and writing. They illustrate these techniques by means of apt and specific references to the text. These essays need not be flawless. Nonetheless, they exhibit an ability to discuss the passage with understanding and insight, sustaining control, and writing with clarity and sophistication.
- 7–6** These competent essays identify a plausible impact of the narrator’s early experiences with books and writing, as well as the linguistic strategies used to convey this impact. Their assertions about the effects on the narrator may be less convincing, or they may find fewer supporting examples from the text, than the highest scoring essays. These essays demonstrate the ability to express ideas clearly, but they do not exhibit the same level of mastery, maturity, or control as the very best essays. They are likely to be briefer, less incisive, and less well supported than the 9–8 essays.
- 5** Although these essays suggest awareness of the complex interplay of the narrator’s experiences and their ultimate impact, they are generally more superficial and less convincing than the upper-half essays. Discussion, though not inaccurate, tends to be overly generalized and inadequately developed or supported by references to the text. Although the writing is adequate to convey the students’ ideas and is not marred by distracting errors, these essays are not as well conceived, well organized, or well developed as the upper-half essays.
- 4–3** These lower-half essays reveal an incomplete or oversimplified understanding of the text. Their assertions about the impact of the experiences may be implausible or irrelevant. They may rely almost entirely on paraphrase. Often wordy and repetitious, the writing may reveal uncertain control of the elements 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 the essays in the 4–3 range. Often they are unacceptably brief. Although some attempt may be made to answer the question, the observations are presented with little clarity, organization, or support from the text. The essays may be poorly written on several counts and may contain distracting errors in grammar and mechanics. Essays that contain little coherent writing or discussion of the text should be scored a 1.
- 0** A response with no more than a reference to the task.
- A blank paper or completely off-topic response.

The author, Seamus Deane, writes about two different pieces of writing and the impact they had on him ~~writing~~. In doing so, he ~~does~~ never says which one he thought was better, nor does he explain what was so good in them or how they changed ~~what~~ his way of thinking. Instead, he simply recounts the immediate thoughts and emotions they brought up.

The first piece of writing is a novel, a stirring adventure with danger and love. Deane shows how the setting of the book gripped him: the rebellion, the time setting, is "the source of almost half the songs we sang--" (line 5). The rebellion is ~~an~~ intimate to him, yet legendary rather than realistic, since he knows it mostly from the songs written about it. Then Deane says there was "something exquisite in this blend" (13) of wild weather, danger, adventure, and love, about the opening. This blend, in fact, is his main impression of the novel and how it impressed him. About the characters, he dwells mostly on the heroine, Ann, who he decides is "too good for [the hero]" and does "all the interesting talking." ~~The Hero,~~ ~~on the other hand,~~ Deane even describes her, as if ~~she~~ he had seen ~~her~~ and admired her, putting himself in stead of the hero who is foolish and doesn't love her enough to stay with her and not get killed. When he has to stop reading, ~~the~~ his imagination sets to work, re-shaping the story "into endless possibilities." ~~the~~ (37)

The second piece of writing is an essay by ~~an ordinary~~ a country boy (which ~~is~~ implies ordinary, familiar, simple). Coming



after the stirring novel, it is surprisingly mundane ~~and poor~~. Yet Deane recounts all the details ~~in~~ in the essay from the particulars of the ~~dam~~ meal and the what is said ~~to~~ while waiting for the father. ~~By showing the readers what~~ Through the use of such detail, delivered with a voice which now seems to be overlapped with ~~the country boy~~ that of the country boy, the original writer of these details, Deane conveys ~~his~~ the ~~feeling~~ impact that the essay has had on him. He does not need to say directly that it was good. ~~that it~~ or such; ~~we can~~ by giving us the details and tone of the essay, he lets us, the readers, feel what he has felt, more poignantly than we would if he had tried to list his emotions ~~directly~~ explicitly.

The simple comment of the master is the only explicit mention of what was so great about the essay (and also what was not so great about the novel, or the author's ~~own~~ own essay written under the influence of the novel), yet we do not need more. The last paragraph describes what Deane realized about his own writing — the "truth," as in the ~~second~~ ~~essay~~ essay, holds solid and ~~and how~~ firm in his recollection while ~~the~~ "behind and above -- were those wispy, shabby figures" of the novel.

The final description of how the two writings ~~impacted~~ affected him is this passage itself. There is no ~~heroic~~ beautiful heroine, no adventure, and no "long or strange words" describing unknown places. It is the truth that Deane tells, or rather shows, us: ~~it is~~ "just telling the truth." is what he does.

A Simple Truth

In the passage, Seamus Deane flashes back to childhood experiences in a unique manner. The author remembers stories he read as a child to create his own narration. Deane uses his experiences with reading to convey a sudden realization and outlook on life.

This passage is unique because the author conveys his experiences from a child's memory. Although it is most likely Deane wrote the passage as an adult, the diction and sentence structure give the reader a sense that a child is narrating. Words such as "bad" to describe horrific weather and "dark" to describe a woman's hair imply the writer is inexperienced. Short simple sentence structure such as "That was the meal" in line 46 represent a loss of words to fully describe the situation. However, run on sentences are also noticeable such as in line 22 "which begins," "So I talked to her instead..." and doesn't end until



seven lines later. Additionally, most experienced writers are taught to "show not tell" yet the author of this passage rambles off the events without the use of ~~the~~ significant figurative or rhetorical devices. This simple style allows the passage to stand out while at the same time allowing the reader to experience the author's tellings from a child's point of view.

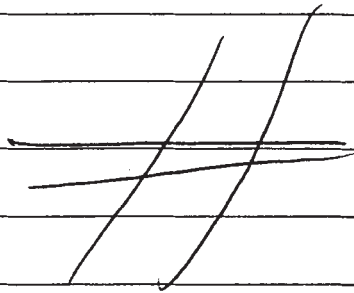
This passage possesses great meaning. The simple recollection of past happenings ~~and~~ leads up to the simple theme.

* It is the simple pleasures that are most remembered. The author explains how he "read and re-read" the opening several times of The Shan Van Vocht, yet it's the intimate conversations between Ann and Robert that had the greatest impact on Deane. Not only does Deane remember the story, he remembers his exact thoughts while he read the story. He describes the depiction of the ~~winning~~ country boys winning essay with the statement "everything was so simple..." ~~to~~ With this thought and



Deane's teacher's words that "that's just telling the truth," the author ~~learned~~^{has} a sudden realization about life. Although Deane ~~learned~~ had used "long or strange words" in his essay, it was the simple truth that was most influential.

Through a simple narration the author ~~established~~ establishes a simple truth. Deane's aphorism that "simple ~~pleasures~~^{pleasures} are the greatest pleasures leaves the reader ~~depressed~~ wondering "what do I enjoy most in life?" As the ~~the~~ author quotes, ~~it~~ it is "ordinary life" that is ~~worth~~ worth writing about; it is "ordinary life" that is worth remembering.



A book can affect a person in many ways, so can childhood experiences. This passage by Seamus Deane discusses his early years, and how his imagination had carried him into the world of a story he had been reading.

"The Shan Van Vocht" ~~was~~ is the book that has his mind wandering. He had been so enthralled by the book that he had imagined himself in the book among the characters. The book had also affected ~~his~~ his writing to the point that he had ~~stopped~~ stops writing about reality. Instead he writes about an imaginary world that ~~had~~ he "had seen only with the Ann of the Novel."

~~After realising that the truth would be~~ After his teacher shows them the story of a young "Country boy" that describes his simple evening, he realizes that the truth is far more interesting than his imaginary world.

The passage discusses how the simple ~~honest~~ honest essay by the country-boy is better than imagining. And the poet shows how this incident affects him, and allows him to come back to reality.

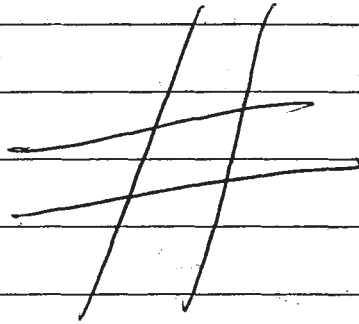


Question 2.

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

2C₂

"I felt embarrassed." is what the poet writes to show his emotions on the incident. He sees his use of big words as an embarrassment and dishonesty. And the honest essay had stayed in his mind for a long time.



**AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
2007 SCORING COMMENTARY (Form B)**

Question 2

Sample: 2A

Score: 8

This is a tightly constructed response to the question. The student notes that Deane discusses two different pieces of writing and considers their impact on him as a young boy, but ultimately the essay does not comment on which he thought was better. The student points to some of the specific features of each piece of writing: in the first case, the exquisite blend of “wild weather, danger, adventure, and love” is Deane’s “main impression of the novel.” The student notes that Deane or the speaker imaginatively enters the novel, describing his own imaginary conversation with the beautiful heroine, reshaping the story and thus opening up its “endless possibilities.” The student then discusses the second piece of writing, remarking that while Deane invokes the English teacher’s comment about how good the model essay was, this commentary is not necessary, because Deane “shows . . . ‘just telling the truth’ is what he does.” The idea that Deane’s essay itself models what it presents as the hallmarks of good writing is an important insight, although it arrives at the end of the essay and is asserted but not defended. This controlled essay, though not without some flaws, is itself an example of good writing.

Sample: 2B

Score: 6

The essay begins with unconvincing discussion of examples of both diction and sentence structure, but it develops into a competent analysis of Deane’s style and how he conveys the impact of early experiences of reading. In a reflexive comment, the student points out that “most experienced writers are taught to ‘show not tell.’” The student then analyzes what he or she shows us, observing that Deane arrives at a “simple truth”: that “‘ordinary life’” affords the greatest pleasure. The essay’s insights are not stellar, but they are presented with clarity and control.

Sample: 2C

Score: 3

This essay has a somewhat promising opening that paraphrases the question prompt and then indicates that in the passage Deane “discusses his early years, and how his imagination had carried him into the world of a story.” The rest of the response, however, is largely a retelling of the events in the passage, with fairly obvious conclusions about the impact of the two experiences Deane describes: “The passage discusses how the simple honest essay . . . is better than imagining. And the poet shows how this incident affects him, and allows him to come back to reality.” The student does attempt to integrate textual evidence but does so awkwardly: “‘I felt embarrassed’ is what the poet writes to show his emotions on [*sic*] the incident.” In sum, this response lacks the insightful analysis and controlled writing found in essays in the upper-half of the scoring range.