

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

## 2008 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Question 1

The score should reflect a judgment of the essay's quality as a whole. Remember that students had only 15 minutes to read the sources and 40 minutes to write; therefore, the essay is not a finished product and should not be judged by standards that are 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.

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- 9 Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for 8 essays and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their argument, skillful in their synthesis of sources, or impressive in their control of language.

### 8 Effective

Essays earning a score of 8 **effectively** develop a position on whether or not the penny should be eliminated. They support their position by successfully synthesizing\* at least three of the sources. The argument is convincing, and the student uses the sources effectively to develop a position. 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 are distinguished by more complete or more purposeful argumentation and synthesis of sources or a more mature prose style.

### 6 Adequate

Essays earning a score of 6 **adequately** develop a position on whether or not the penny should be eliminated. They synthesize at least three of the sources. The writer's argument is generally convincing, and the writer generally uses the sources to support a position, but the argument is less developed or less cogent than the arguments of essays earning higher scores. The language may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

- 5 Essays earning a score of 5 develop a position on whether or not the penny should be eliminated. They support the position by synthesizing at least three sources, but their arguments and their use of sources are somewhat limited, inconsistent, or uneven. The argument is generally clear, and the sources generally support the student's position, but the links between the sources and the argument may be strained. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the student's ideas adequately.

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\* For the purposes of scoring, synthesis refers to combining the sources and the student's position to form a cohesive, supported argument and accurately citing sources.

**AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION**  
**2008 SCORING GUIDELINES**

**Question 1 (continued)**

**4 Inadequate**

Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately** develop a position on whether or not the penny should be eliminated. They attempt to present an argument and support the position by synthesizing at least two sources but may misunderstand, misrepresent, or oversimplify either their own argument or the sources they include. The link between the argument and the sources is weak. The prose of 4 essays may suggest immature control of writing.

- 3** Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for a score of 4 but demonstrate less understanding of the sources, less success in developing their own position, or less control of writing.

**2 Little Success**

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in developing a position on whether or not the penny should be eliminated. They may merely allude to knowledge gained from reading the sources rather than citing the sources themselves. These essays may misread the sources, fail to present an argument, or substitute a simpler task by merely responding to the question tangentially or by merely summarizing the sources. The prose of 2 essays often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as a lack of development or organization, grammatical problems, or a lack of control.

- 1** Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for a score of 2 but are especially simplistic or are weak in their control of writing or do not cite even one source.

**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.

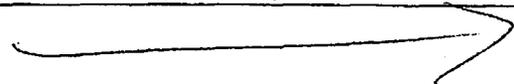
~~The United States of America is founded upon~~ 1 of 5

The United States of America draws its strength from its honored traditions. An American can look virtually anywhere and discover a reminder of why our nation has thrived for so long. From these monuments, both great and small, we are shown our past and our potential. As such, preserving these traditions is vital to the continued greatness of our country. And although it may seem insignificant and mundane, the use of the penny is no exception. From jingling in pockets to rolling off counters, the penny serves as an essential facet of everyday life, as well as a testament to our national roots.

~~The penny is far too important to modern American life to abolish.~~

As both a convenience and a recognized component of modern American life, the penny is far too entrenched to be easily uprooted.

In fact, the effort inherent in the abolition of the penny would be enormous, and simply not worth the "benefits" of so monumental



1

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

1A  
2 of 5

a change. In ridding our economy of the penny, the federal government would first need to confront a public greatly in favor of keeping the penny. As indicated by Source E, a poll by the prestigious Harris group, public opinion ~~is~~ shows a strong desire to keep the penny. Thus, anyone who aims to remove the penny must convince ~~a~~ two-thirds the population of these views. This campaign would be costly and logistically near-impossible. There are accordingly significant causes of this widespread support of the penny. As shown in Source A, state economies that depend on penny production for continued prosperity, such as Tennessee's, ~~is~~ would be adversely affected. On a more personal level, pennies serve as a familiarity to shoppers and cashiers, and bank-tellers and customers alike. In the end, pennies are simply the benefits to be reaped by ending the penny are not worth the investment involved.

Beyond mere convenience, the penny has intrinsic national value. Viewing Source G, one can easily see that the penny has



existed in our society since the country's earliest days. ~~It is emblematic of America's thrift,~~

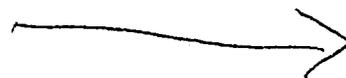
~~It~~ It is an emblem of our thrift, a portrayal of one of our greatest presidents, and a hallmark of our nation's storied past. The great symbols of our nation—the Washington Monument, the White House, Mount Rushmore—are carefully guarded and watched over. Great emphasis is placed on their preservation, for we see the value in honoring America's relics. Should the penny be treated any differently?

Ubiquitous and ordinary as it may seem, the penny is just as intrinsically valuable as all other sources of national pride.

Indeed, as documented in Source F, the federal government has already done well to secure the survival of the penny's symbolic worth by renewing the images of Lincoln.

So crucial is the penny as a mark of our ~~history~~ national attribute of economy and a portrait of our heritage that to ban it would be to ban a feature of American life.

The attack on the penny's use is led by those who overwhelmingly claim that the one-cent



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on this page as it is designated in the exam. 1A  
4 of 5

coin is useless, and worthy only of being phased out as soon as possible. Source C details these complaints: that the penny is economically unsound, that it is ignored by the population, that the rest of the world has already passed us by in banning low-denomination coins. Careful examination, such as that made in Source D of these arguments and the support behind them reveals the flaws of this reasoning. In store windows and ~~on~~ on price signs throughout the country, the fact that the penny is still "important to our pricing system" is made evident. Examination of the statistics that Americans largely push pennies aside ~~is~~ ~~to~~ reveals that only 5.6% of all pennies disappear. And as for keeping up with the rest of the world? To ~~at~~ rid ourselves of the penny would be change for the sake of change. We need not conform to this "trend", especially when it does not exist in Great Britain, Japan, and Germany.

Simply put, the penny is too valuable economically and historically to be banned. State economies

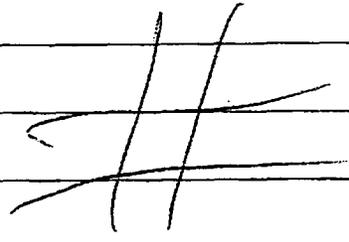


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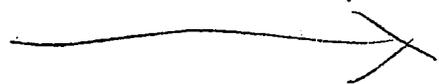
1A  
5 of 5

depend on it. Our past is preserved by it,  
And our traditions are honored by it. Has  
anyone ever called by destroying the  
"outdated" Lincoln Memorial? Similarly, the  
penny should be preserved and honored in our  
economy and society.



Through my own personal experience in the retail industry, I understand the frustration that occurs while waiting for a customer who says "Wait, I have pennies to get rid of." This frustration then spreads to the rest of the customers waiting in line, creating tensions that may ~~even~~ lead to angry customer arguments that could have been avoided. ~~So~~ So because of that little penny mishap, everyone who was there to witness it leaves the store and spends the rest of the day annoyed and in a bad mood, proving pennies "are literally more trouble than they are worth" (Safire). One cent is just not a big enough value ~~to~~ to turn shoppers and cashiers hostile towards one another.

It seems the penny is kept around today for more sentimental reasons than anything else. Abraham Lincoln's ~~profile~~ profile on the head of the penny reminds us daily of our history and how far the country has come. Or does it. In my experience, I have never (except when asked) considered the penny to be anything more than a piece



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1B  
2 of 2

of metal passing off as currency. The sentimental value of the penny comes from it becoming the first coin that "depicted a real historical figure" (Press release) and therefore makes our country hesitant to get rid of it.

Through the years, the value of American currency has ~~been~~ decreased, not allowing as much to be bought for the same amount of money. Pennies used to hold a higher value themselves, but as William Safire says "you can't buy anything with a penny anymore," the power of a penny just isn't what it used to be. By ~~abolishing~~ abolishing pennies, ~~each~~ there is the possibility of saving "4 hours per person a year" (Kahn) where normally that time would have been spent either digging for pennies, or watching other people dig for pennies. All this time saved will allow for more retail transactions to occur, which pushes more money into our economy, which might possibly help us out of our current ~~is~~ economic recession just a little bit faster. Stop the jingling!

"Find a penny, Pick it up, all through the day you'll have good luck." Right? The small one-cent piece is a well shown example of Americas progress as a nation. Although this is true, has our economy advanced to far to keep the penny in circulation? Source B states that every transaction wastes 2 to 2.5 seconds of the day, due to the penny, adding to 40 seconds a day wasted per person. It continues to state that if ~~each~~ ~~at~~ at \$15 an hour, each person is losing \$60 a year, costing the nation over \$15 billion a year. America is already trillions of dollars in debt, so how can we afford this much wasted time? We can't.

The Penny has been good to us throughout the years, but in today's society it has become useless. Source C states that there is no longer anything that can be bought by a penny. No "penny-candy" vending machines no longer accept pennies, for now they are only used to pay ~~the~~ the tax on items, and to throw in to wishing wells. Pennies are constantly being lost by ~~babes~~ owners, and finding homes in sewers, subway stations, and water fountains.



Question 1

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1C  
2 of 2

Based on how often we are throwing away pennies, we can only imagine the amount of money we are throwing away per year.

Although America loves the penny, for it symbolizes accomplishment, wealth, and luck, it is time we rid America of this useless coin. It is true that Lincoln would be proud to hear of President Bush's advancement to the penny (source F), He too would be sad to hear of how much time and ~~money~~ money this "pesky little bit of coinage." (source C).

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## 2008 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 1

#### Overview

This question asked students to use at least three of seven provided sources to develop a position on whether or not the United States should eliminate the penny coin. Although the penny is a common object, a part of many students' everyday experience, students were unlikely to have considered this particular issue and would therefore need to rely on the sources in order to understand the complex arguments related to this seemingly simple question. In addition to understanding and evaluating written sources, students were also asked to consider two visual sources: one representing data visually, and one providing historical information as well as an impetus for thinking about the penny as a material object.

#### Sample: 1A

##### Score: 9

This excellent essay is particularly effective. Sophisticated in its argument, it is both adroitly written and intellectually sound. The student uses all but one of the sources to advance a position that the penny is too "valuable economically and historically to be banned." Noting the arduous task the opponents of the penny will face in opposing the two-thirds of the population who favor keeping the it, the student recognizes the economic issues before defining the intrinsic national value the penny enjoys. The student recognizes the opposing position and develops a persuasive refutation that concludes with the observation that to "rid ourselves of the penny would be change for the sake of change." Although the conclusion is less convincing than the remainder of the response (it is somewhat overstated), this top-scoring essay as a whole is intelligent and persuasive. It effectively synthesizes six of the seven sources (even though only three were required); its organization is clear; its insights are compelling.

#### Sample: 1B

##### Score: 6

This essay is an adequate response that illustrates the use of a student's own experience. Beginning with a personal anecdote about work in the retail industry and the frustration that builds in both clerk and customer when they are inconvenienced by someone's search for those ". . . pennies to get rid of," the student moves on to an argument to abolish the penny coin. The student notes the sentimental and historical reasons for keeping the penny but asserts that the more important issue is the relative monetary worthlessness of the coin as well as the fact that the time saved by eliminating the need to search for pennies might allow for more retail transactions to occur, thus benefiting the economy. This concluding assertion is reasonable, but its lack of development renders it unconvincing. The underlying thesis has more potential than the essay delivers, but the prose is clear, and the argument—though it lacks depth—is generally convincing.

#### Sample: 1C

##### Score: 3

The essay inadequately develops a position on whether or not the penny should be eliminated. It begins with a rhyme: "Find a penny. Pick it up. [A]ll through the day you'll have good luck." (The same introduction was often used, frequently with limited success, in all ranges of responses to this question.) This essay does not effectively develop its assertion that the penny is an example of the country's "progress as a nation." Riddled by awkward constructions, absence of a clear thesis, lack of logical construction, very thin development, vague assertions, and awkward use of sources, this inadequate essay suggests both lack of understanding of the elements of analysis and lack of composition skills.