

AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
2009 SCORING GUIDELINES (Form B)

Question 3

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; the essay, therefore, 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 lapses 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 a score of 8 and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their argument, thorough in their development, or particularly impressive in their control of language.

8 Effective

Essays earning a score of 8 **effectively** defend, challenge, or qualify Ehrenreich's assertions about television. The evidence and explanations used are appropriate and convincing. The prose demonstrates a consistent ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not necessarily flawless.

- 7** Essays earning a score of 7 meet the criteria for a score of 6 but provide a more complete explanation, more thorough development, or a more mature prose style.

6 Adequate

Essays earning a score of 6 **adequately** defend, challenge, or qualify Ehrenreich's assertions about television. The evidence and explanations used are appropriate and sufficient. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

- 5** Essays earning a score of 5 defend, challenge, or qualify Ehrenreich's assertions about television. The evidence or explanations used may be uneven, inconsistent, or limited. 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** defend, challenge, or qualify Ehrenreich's assertions about television. The evidence or explanations used may be inappropriate, insufficient, or less convincing. The prose generally conveys the student's ideas but may be less consistent in controlling the elements of effective writing.

- 3** Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for a score of 4 but demonstrate less success in defending, challenging, or qualifying Ehrenreich's assertions about television. The essays may show less maturity in control of writing.

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Question 3 (continued)

2 Little Success

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in defending, challenging, or qualifying Ehrenreich's assertions about television. These essays may misunderstand the prompt or substitute a simpler task by responding to the prompt tangentially with unrelated, inaccurate, or inappropriate explanation. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as grammatical problems, a lack of development or organization, or a lack of control.

- 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 is the last time that anyone claimed that television represents real life? When has television ^{in general} ever been touted as a way to become more familiar with one's own position in the rat race of life? If this were the true purpose of media, Spongebob would spend his days fighting insurance lawsuits, Dr. Phil would interview ^{normal} middle-aged couch-potatoes, and Indiana Jones would spend his days cataloguing pottery fragments. Ehrenreich is right to call the world inside the black box "eerie and unnatural;" it was never intended to be anything else.

Television, save for news programs, documentaries, and the like, has always been a method by which ordinary people escape the day-to-day routine, a hiatus in the long slog of work and financial concerns, a thrilling or hilarious experience shared with friends, even a chance to bring the family together and enjoy a movie with one another.

My own family upholds the tradition of a weekly 'family movie night.' Every Sunday evening we gather in the living room with ^{good} food, and each other, and enjoy ^{The} Emperor's New Groove or George and the Dragon, ~~in~~ relishing in each other's company, grateful for the chance to have our parents all to ourselves, happy ~~to~~ to participate in a family ritual.

In addition, television has provided a vital service to humanity, and not just through news briefings



Question 3

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

and weather alerts, as vital as these may be. In the Communist country of North Korea, starring citizens told by the government to consider themselves fortunate, brainwashed to revere Kim Jung-Il as a cult figure, almost a deity, have but one broadcasted point of reference, one beacon of sanity: South Korean soap operas. Because of these soap operas, many oppressed North Koreans, forced ~~to~~ to maintain absolute secrecy when watching the programs for fear of discovery and subsequent punishment, are discovering that they have been lied to, deceived, and realizing that life really can be better.

Television, as well as most things, is best taken in moderation, and too much of it may turn an intelligent individual into a slavering ~~to~~ couch-potatoe. Despite this, I believe that television has ~~had a~~ done more good than bad, though it has the potential for both. In the end, the effect that television has on society is determined by the viewer. ~~With~~ I choose what I expose myself to, what I watch, what I think, what I believe, and thus I, not anyone else, choose whether television is something "eerie and unnatural," or a harmless diversion.

"Why do we keep on watching?"

Because it is our choice to make, and our decision whether or not to be influenced by what we see.

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Question 3

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In Barbara Ehrenreich passage in her story, *The Worst Years of Our Lives*, the assertion that couch potatoes ~~do~~ do not do anything except watch television is not necessarily true. Not only does watching TV pass the time, it also can be educational for children & adults ~~at~~ alike. People consider TV to be unhealthy & that it rots the mind, but does anyone hear about ~~a~~ a child suffering due to watching television, that would be a no. Television is not always about dangerous car chases or smoking cigarettes, television channels provide Fox News & Discovery Channel as well, which inform their audience rather than showing senseless violence.

Every morning, adults wake up & ~~get up~~ turn the TV on, going straight to the news channel. The possibility of learning more from TV is higher than losing knowledge because there are educational channels, like the news, out there. TV is another way to promote children & adults to be active because not everything seen on TV is out of the range of human capabilities. For example, if a TV commercial said that it's always good to jog at least twice a day for at least one mile per ~~day~~ jog, then the commercial might have convinced some viewers to take up jogging as a habit. TV is



a way for people to reach out to ~~viewers~~ viewers.

In contrast to Ehrenreich's assertion, characters on a TV show ~~do not~~ sometimes actually do act the way real people do, which could be much more frightening. Family Guy, a crude TV show, is almost a reflection on ~~real life~~ a real person's behavior, though the animation makes it less noticeable.

Many people would rather enjoy watching different scenarios on television than ~~watching~~ having real life portrayed because in actuality they may prevent people from actually doing events as the ones portrayed on TV. In conclusion, TV prevents viewers from making mistakes or doing dangerous actions that many of the TV characters do.

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Television has never played a significant role in my life. Whether it was because I was too busy or too athletic, or both, I have never been susceptible to a television's mind-controlling charms.

Due to this, it would be inadequate to concur with Ehrenreich's statement that "something eerie and unnatural ~~became~~ about the world" comes into existence after too many hours of television watching.

On the other hand, I can understand the writer's accusation that T.V. has "transformed people into root vegetable": my father complains about how I need to eat healthier and exercise more when, ~~he~~ ironically, he is the one sitting on the couch with three bags of different flavoured chips watching the football game.

In lines 13 to 17, Ehrenreich says that "you will never see people watching television." People only stare, ^{eyes} transfixed, glued to the ~~screen~~ ⁹² ~~36~~ inch flat-screen TV, half there, half not. It is disturbing. "Never really watching, hour after hour, the way real people do." Any more than an hour and a half of TV per day is approaching a danger zone. "Real people" have ~~the~~ lives. "Real people" get out of the house and socialize and have fun and work and experience lives. "Real people" do not sit around



3

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all day "watching" (if you can call it watching)
other people's lives.

All that television has instilled in people is an
under-laying laziness that gets the better of ~~most~~
many people.

So why do we keep watching?

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AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
2009 SCORING COMMENTARY (Form B)

Question 3

Sample: 3A

Score: 8

This effective essay refutes Barbara Ehrenreich’s claim that the world television represents is “eerie and unnatural” by arguing that “it was never intended to be anything else,” using convincing and clever hypothetical examples of Spongebob, Dr. Phil, and Indiana Jones performing mundane, everyday tasks. The student further argues that not only is television a much-needed “method by which ordinary people escape the day-to-day routine,” it is also an opportunity for families to spend time together, supporting this argument with the appropriate and well-developed personal example of a family movie night. The example that follows—watching South Korean soap operas as a means of subverting the propaganda fed to “brainwashed” North Koreans—shows the student’s ability to draw from current events. However, while the North Korean example is an appropriate and convincing one, the student’s development of it could have been clearer. The student’s prose demonstrates a consistent facility with the English language, with sophisticated and original phrasing such as “a hiatus in the long slog of work and financial concerns.” The essay ends more weakly than it begins, but its argument is compelling, coherent, and effective throughout, which earned it a score of 8.

Sample: 3B

Score: 5

Attempting to qualify Barbara Ehrenreich’s claim about television watchers becoming “root vegetables,” this uneven essay argues for the educational value of television and supports the claim with some examples (“Fox News & Discovery Channel,” television commercials, and “Family Guy”). However, the argument is limited in its development because the evidence provided is uneven and limited in its support of the student’s assertions about the positive value of television (“TV prevents viewers from making mistakes or doing dangerous actions that many of the TV characters do”). This lack of sufficient evidence and explanation, in addition to occasional lapses in diction and syntax (“People consider TV to be unhealthy & that it rots the mind, but does anyone hear about a child suffering due to watching television, that would be a no”), prevented the essay from being considered adequate.

Sample: 3C

Score: 2

This essay meets with little success in developing an argument. While the student does mention Barbara Ehrenreich and attempts to present an argument in the second and third paragraphs, that argument is never clear or evenly supported. The essay presents two personal examples; the first—dealing with the lack of effect television has on the student—is unrelated to the writing task. The second—the student’s father sitting on the couch watching the football game—is relevant to Ehrenreich’s argument, but the essay does not develop it in any way as evidence for an argument. This failure to develop the examples used, along with the overall lack of organization the essay demonstrates, limited it to a score of 2.