

**AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION**  
**2009 SCORING GUIDELINES (Form B)**

**Question 2**

(Zora Neale Hurston's *Seraph on the Suwanee*)

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 essays offer a persuasive analysis of how Hurston uses literary techniques to draw the reader into her novel. They explore such literary elements as diction, tone, syntax, point of view, and selection of detail. They sustain their arguments through apt and specific references. Although these essays may not be error-free, their perceptive analysis is apparent in writing that is clear, precise, and effectively organized. Generally, essays scored a 9 reveal more sophisticated analysis and more effective control of language than do essays scored an 8.
- 7–6** These essays offer a competent analysis of how the author uses literary techniques to draw the reader into her novel. They demonstrate a sustained, reasonable reading of mood and setting, with attention to literary devices such as diction, syntax, point of view, and selection of detail. Although these essays may not be error-free and may be less perceptive or less convincing than essays scored in the 9–8 range, they present ideas with clarity and control and refer to the text for support. Generally, essays scored a 7 present better-developed analysis and more consistent command of elements of effective composition than do essays scored a 6.
- 5** These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible reading of the passage, but they tend to be superficial or undeveloped in their treatment of how the author draws the reader into her novel. While exhibiting some analysis of the passage, implicit or explicit, the discussion of how the author uses literary techniques may be slight, and support from the text may be thin or tend toward paraphrase. While these essays demonstrate adequate control of language, they may be marred by surface errors. Generally, essays scored a 5 lack the more effective organization and more sustained development characteristic of essays scored in the 7–6 range.
- 4–3** These essays offer a less than thorough understanding of the task and a less than adequate treatment of how the author uses literary techniques to draw the reader into her novel. Often relying on plot summary or paraphrase, the students may misread the passage or fail to articulate a convincing basis for understanding the author's intentions. These essays may be characterized by an unfocused or repetitive presentation of ideas, an absence of textual support, or an accumulation of errors. Generally, essays scored a 4 exhibit better control over the elements of composition than those scored a 3.
- 2–1** These essays compound the weaknesses of the essays scored in the 4–3 range. They may persistently misread the passage or be unacceptably brief. They may contain pervasive errors that interfere with understanding. Although some attempt has been made to respond to the prompt, ideas are presented with little clarity, organization, or support from the passage. Essays scored a 1 are especially incompetent or incoherent.
- 0** These essays do no more than make reference to the task.
- These essays are either blank or completely off topic.

2.

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

In her description of Sawley and its inhabitants, Zora Neale Hurston ~~uses detail~~ paints a picture with her words of a town very different to most that exist today. Hurston organizes her description of the town carefully, using descriptive adjectives to create vivid images, as well as repetition of sentence structure and the inclusion of colloquial phrasing to give the town and its inhabitants a voice.

Hurston organizes ~~her~~ the passage by ~~starting~~ beginning with a description of the geographic location of Sawley, the neighboring Suwanee River, and the surrounding fields and "primitive" forests. The fields are described as "scratchy plantings" (lines 11-12), and the people as reminiscent of the "scanty flowers" (line 17) they planted. The third paragraph contains a description of the time period, putting ~~the~~ the town into historical perspective and foreshadowing the changes that were to come with the mass availability of automobiles and the building of great roads on which to drive them. The final paragraph describes the bloody history of the land - and the apathy of the people towards the significance of their town's past.



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

2

2A  
2 of 3

The inhabitants of Sawley are described more through their attitudes toward their ~~home~~<sup>town</sup> than through their individual merits. Hurston employs repetition when she ends her third paragraph with a claim that "Few ever dreamed of venturing any farther east nor west." (lines 31-32), and beginning her next paragraph with, "Few were concerned with the past." (line 33). The repetition of "few" and the parallel sentence structure closes off one aspect of ~~the~~ Sawley and opens another, and yet emphasizes the characterization of the town's inhabitants as uncomplicated people concerned only with the here and the now. Hurston repeats the sentence structure again when she states that, "Few knew and nobody cared that the Hidalgos under De Sota had moved westward along this very route." (lines 40-42), taking the concept <sup>of the townspeople's apathy</sup> even further. She goes on to explain that, despite their disconcert for the rest of it, "They knew that there were plenty of black bass," (lines 46-47). From here she embarks on a detailed description of the foods that the inhabitants of Sawley eat and conveys their apparent enthusiasm for these dishes.



2.

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

This enthusiasm is accompanied by the use of colloquial phrasing and expressions, along with the informal use of "You" addressing the audience, giving a voice to ~~the~~ Sawley's inhabitants. Hurston describes that turtles make a "mighty nice" (line 49) dish with gravy and were a "mighty fine" (line 52) type of meat. She then goes on to state that "You could stew, boil and fry, and none of it cost you a cent. All you needed was a strip of white side-meat on ~~a~~ the hook, and you had you some turtle meat." (lines 55-58). This informal, colloquial use of incorrect grammar gives the ~~passage~~ speaker enthusiasm, and gives the people of Sawley a voice.

Hurston's colloquialism and repetitive sentences, along with descriptive word choice and careful ~~organization~~ organization, create for the reader a detailed image of the quiet town of Sawley and the people that live there.

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The opening of Zora Neale Hurston's novel "Seraph on the Suwanee" demonstrates the ~~contrast~~ contrast between the famous \* Suwanee River and the town of Sawley and the people who live there. Hurston's use of alliteration and diction make Sawley seem like a beautiful place to those who have never been there. The second paragraph, though, has harsher diction and imagery, which more accurately depicts what it is like working on the river, and thus characterizes the people working there.

The initial impression gained from the first paragraph is that the Suwanee River is a beautiful and majestic place surrounded by fertile cultivation and rich history. The use of euphony and alliteration contribute in creating this image in lines seven through nine, "the town is flanked by cultivated fields planted to corn, cane, potatoes, tobacco and small patches of cotton." The first line of the second paragraph immediately created a contradiction to that description, though, ~~demonstrating how~~ emphasizing how life on the river is so unlike how it might appear to lookers-on.

The change in diction in the second paragraph describes the town of Sawley in much different



fashion. The fields are described with harsh sounding words such as "scratchy" (line 11). The people of the town are first introduced in this paragraph as well. Their whole life was working in the sawmill. The images in lines 15-16 are correspondingly unpleasant, "... there was ignorance and poverty, and the ever-present hookworm." Hurston's use of simile ties together the "scanty" look of the land to the appearances of the people in the last sentence of the paragraph. The people are characterized by their poverty on account of the land on which they work.

The literary techniques used by Hurston to describe Sawley and the people who live there first create an image of beauty and richness, but then create an image of the poor reality of living there. The people do not even have time to care about the history of the land or what goes on around them; they live to work to survive. This characterization of them is ironic in that everyone who does not live there sees the Suwanee River as a wonderful place.

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

2

2C  
1 of 2

In "Seraph on the Swanee" by Zora Neale Hurston, Sawley, which is the town in west Florida, was described as a town of poverty and ignorance. A town where trees grew and there was a river where the people caught their food. Hurston uses literary techniques to describe Sawley and to characterize the people who live there, such as, similes, personification and onomatopoeia.

Zora Neale Hurston compares the town's trees and flowers to the people of the town. In paragraph two, lines 110 through 20 states that the farms and scratchy flowers looked like the people, stating that the people in the town were poor and dingy. Nora also states that the plants also look like the people they live with. Describing the people as lazy poor people who worked on the farms and maintained scratchy plants.

In the ~~first~~ second paragraph it states that "the life of Sawley streamed out" ~~of the~~ is it. Sawley being the town it self doing the action. That descriptive sentence describes Sawley as a large



2

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

2C  
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town where there were a lot of people stretched across.

The writer used sounds to describe the town in a way also in line 11 "for the most part they were scratchy plantings creating an image of rough plants in a poor manner. There are many descriptive words used in this passage, such as scanty, scratchy, poverty and intensively cultivated which gave a brief description of the town and the people that live there.

The author Zora Neal Hurston wrote a passage on a town called Sawley and the people who lived there. She used a lot of descriptive words and literary devices.

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**AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION  
2009 SCORING COMMENTARY (Form B)**

**Question 2**

**Sample: 2A**

**Score: 8**

This solid essay examines the organization of the passage while also discussing those specific moments that lend the passage its particular flavor. It observes how Hurston describes Sawley as a “geographic location,” with its “Suwanee River, . . . surrounding fields, and ‘primitive’ forests,” and notes her description of the “‘scratchy plantings’” and “‘scanty flowers’” planted by the residents themselves. This physical description, the essay suggests, is to be appreciated in connection with Hurston’s situation of the town in time, “putting the town into historical perspective.” The essay also presents a convincing analysis of repetition and parallel structure at the sentence level, and it suggests that the “colloquial phrasing” and “informal use of ‘You’ addressing the audience” at the end of the passage help give a voice to the people of Sawley. The essay pertinently observes that “[t]he inhabitants of Sawley are described more through their attitudes toward their town than through their individual merits.” This is an effective response to the prompt.

**Sample: 2B**

**Score: 5**

Plausible and workmanlike, this essay exemplifies the normal range of the essays that earned a score of 5. It is somewhat superficial, although generally germane. It points out that the excerpt “demonstrates the contrast between the famous Suwanee River and the town of Sawley and the people who live there.” To illustrate this contrast, it first notes, for instance, the “use of alliteration” to “make Sawley seem like a beautiful place to those who have never been there.” It then uses textual detail to substantiate the claim that the “use of euphony and alliteration” works to create an image of a beautiful town. And it goes on to note the “change in diction in the second paragraph,” which “describes the town of Sawley in much different fashion” at the same time as the people of Sawley are introduced to the reader. Although the writing is not always precise, the essay is perceptive in noticing how Hurston “ties together the ‘scanty’ look of the land to the appearances [*sic*] of the people,” and also how it is “ironic” that while outsiders see the place as beautiful, the people “live to work to survive.”

**Sample: 2C**

**Score: 3**

Although this essay does mention the literary devices of simile, personification, and onomatopoeia, no sustained analysis is provided, and little textual evidence is cited. The essay also relies too heavily on paraphrase. Less controlled than essays scored in the upper half of the score range, the essay employs a limited vocabulary, and its expression leaves much to be desired, as when it argues: “The writer used sounds to describe the town in a way also. In line 11 for the most part they were “scratchy” plantings creating an image of rough plants in a poor maner [*sic*].” This insubstantial essay does not rise above the lower half.