

**AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION  
2010 SCORING GUIDELINES (Form B)**

**Question 2**

(Maxine Clair's "Cherry Bomb")

The score reflects the quality of the essay as a whole — its content, style and 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 sustained, persuasive analysis of the adult narrator's memories of her fifth-grade world as Clair develops it through literary techniques. The students explore some complex elements of the environment and the narrator's responses to it. They consider the use of techniques such as thematic parallels, first-person point of view, symbolism, or figurative language, and they engage the text with apt and specific references. Although these essays may not be error-free, their perceptive analysis is apparent in writing that is clear, precise, strong and effectively organized. Essays scored a 9 exhibit more sophisticated analysis and more effective control of language than do essays scored an 8.
- 7–6** These essays offer a competent analysis of the adult narrator's memories of her fifth-grade world as Clair develops it through literary techniques. The students provide an able discussion of tone, point of view, and language and make some attempt to explore aspects of the environment and the narrator's responses to it. Although these essays may not be error-free and are less perceptive or convincing than 9–8 essays, the students present their ideas with clarity and control and refer to the text for support. Essays scored a 7 present better developed analysis and more consistent command of the 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 thinly developed in their treatment of the adult narrator's memories of her fifth-grade world and/or of Clair's use of literary techniques to develop it. Although containing some analysis of the passage, implicit or explicit, the discussion of the narrator's relation to her environment may be thin, the analysis of literary devices may be slight, and reference to the passage may be limited to summary or paraphrase. Although these students' control of language may be adequate, their essays may be marred by surface errors. These essays are not as well conceived, organized or developed as 7–6 essays.
- 4–3** These lower-half essays fail to offer an adequate analysis of the passage. The analysis may be partial, unconvincing or irrelevant; the writers may ignore or miss the complexity in the narrator's relationship to her environment or Clair's use of literary techniques in developing setting and character. These essays may be characterized by an unfocused or repetitive presentation of ideas, an absence of textual support or an accumulation of errors. Essays scored a 3 may contain significant misreading and demonstrate inept writing.
- 2–1** These essays compound the weaknesses of the papers 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, the student's ideas are presented with little clarity, organization or support from the passage. Essays that are especially inept or incoherent are scored a 1.
- 0** These essays do no more than make a reference to the task.
- These essays are either left blank or are completely off topic.

~~The Maxine Clair's~~

In the excerpt from Maxine Clair's "Cherry Bomb," the adult narrator recounts her memories of her fifth grade summer. Through the narrator's story of her private box and her cherry bomb, Clair captures the innocence and youthfulness of childhood summers.

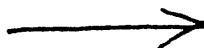
The beginning of the first paragraph emphasizes the immaturity and youth of the 5th grade narrator in her memories. The statement "Life was measured in summers" is the sort of generalization of a child who still had yet to experience the stress of school and the "real world." The "lofty statement" she tries to adopt also signifies her immaturity; she doesn't know what it means but she is willing to adopt it on the basis of the fact that it sounds important.

~~The Hairy Man of the~~

The description of the Harry Man creates the image of a fairytale-like monster who hides in dark shadows and ~~the~~ closets at night. Frightened by the ~~image of~~ apparently mentally afflicted man in the yellow house, the narrator turns him into the Hairy Man, a creature that is "woolly-headed and bearded," and finds solace in her Dad's assertion that he only comes out at night.

~~The Author's Purpose~~

The narrator's trust and belief in her father's words also



signify

~~her innocence~~. As a fifth grader, she still ~~takes~~ takes much of what her beloved parents say to heart. She often interjects her memories with the repeated words of what "~~the~~ father said" or "~~my~~ mother said". These added details ~~also~~ add to the feeling of youth in the story. Children are prone to rambling on and on about things, adding details that only they would consider important and related to the ~~story~~ situation at hand. ~~This~~ This is evident when the narrator describes the complicated process of finding her private box in her closet, a method involving closing your eyes, holding your hands up above your head, etc.

The language ~~in~~ in the story also shows the childish nature of the narrator. Phrases like "Daddy-said-so" and "our cave-dark closet" emphasize her ~~childlike mind~~ childlike mind. The phrase "God-is-whipping-you" used in place of a common ~~saying~~ more vulgar-sounding curse is also evidence of her naivete and innocence.

The subject matter of the narrator's memories is childish in itself: a private box ~~is~~ carefully hidden, a locked diary, a cherry bomb. All these are symbols of youth and childhood. But the ending paragraph, where the ~~narrator~~ says that she kept the cherry bomb as a "memento of good times" suggests the importance of embracing and treasuring those childhood moments and memories, when all that was dangerous and scary in the world was the Hairy Man and ~~when~~ when all your secrets could be safely tucked away in a cigar box.

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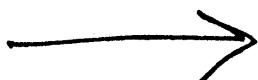
Maxine Clair has a fond view of her fifth grade summer. Throughout "Cherry Bomb" she uses many words with hyphens such as "over-one-hundred-degree days" (1-9) and "Daddy-said-so" (22). These hyphenated words give the effect of an elementary school child's speech.

Imagery is very vivid in "Cherry Bomb". Rather than saying she was in ~~the~~ fifth grade summer she says "It was two...to junior high" (1-3). The image provides us with what transportation was like. Another image was of how her mother bought a block of ice to put in the yard for them to sit on or lick. Also the locusts had a large <sup>intense</sup> image especially because of the allusion to the "Bible's plague of locusts" (13) which for those who know the story, know that the locusts ~~do~~ ate all of the plants in the area making it barren. Also the scene when the Hairy Man "holler[ed] things we dared not repeat until a nurse kind of woman in a bandanna came out ... ~~for~~ for somebody shell-shocked," (28-34) ~~This~~ has strong images because the Hairy Man is at first thought to be a



made up monster but as it progresses we discover this "monster" is not likely a "shell-shocked" man who is staying at an asylum. The description of the closet is important by the fact that it is in a dark place making it difficult to find emphasizing the secretness of her "box of private things" (49). Another important descriptive scene is that of Eddy, Bea and her playing with cherry bombs, how he got hurt, and he gave her a cherry bomb she kept in her box (because of its significance as "the first ~~th~~ Except of Christmas presents, it was the first thing anybody even gave to me" (65-66))

Another technique Marine Clair uses is switching subjects. ~~The~~ Her story jumps subject matter quite often but in the order that she brings them up, they connect. This constant shift in subject matter is probably because she is trying to portray the thought process of a fifth-grader. She does mention the cherry bombs and her ~~8~~ locked diary but goes on about the Hairy Man. Then to how to find her diary and then lastly on the cherry



2

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

2B  
3 of 3

bomb. This technique is important because it allows the reader to remember she is only in the fifth grade.

~~Another~~ Maxine Clair's fifth grade summer ranges from her mother buying a block of ice to her and Eddy playing with Cherry Bombs but the way she expresses it has these memories especially glow with fondness.

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Q. 2.

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

~~Maxine Clark~~

"The Passage in Cherry Bomb" by Maxine Clark is about a memory of a ~~young~~ 5th grader who is involved in her own world.

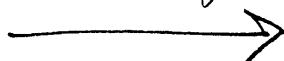
~~The passage starts off with~~

Maxine Clark uses imagery, diction and punctuation to describe the ~~her~~ is memories.

~~The memory starts off with~~ She starts off

by saying ~~she~~ "I am in this world, but not of it," which means she is living in her "own" world. She is characterized as naive, childish and immature. In line 4, she says "life was measured in summers," which shows that she is waiting for summer. Like every other 5<sup>th</sup> grader, she is waiting for her summer so she can spend more playing.

In lines 21, ~~she~~ she ~~tells~~ talks about "the Harry Man" which will come out at night, showing her childish fantasies and naivety. Also, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph she talks about the "private box" and ~~she~~ the complex process of finding the that "box". She has to go to the "cave-dark closet", "close her eyes", put her "hand over her head", "place her foot in front of the other", "fall on the floor" and feel the ground. This whole process shows her childish mind of hiding



things in the closet, showing her naivety, thinking no one was going to find the "private box" of her most precious objects.

Aside from Maxine Clair's use of poetic devices, ~~she~~ she also uses a "cherry bomb" to symbolize her childhood memories. In line 19, she ~~had~~ <sup>kept</sup> a cherry bomb in her closet as well as in line 31, she stores away Eddie's "last" cherry bomb, ~~as a memento~~ as a sort of "memento" of their "good times".

Maxine Clair successfully uses imagery, diction, punctuation and the symbol of cherry bomb to characterize her memories of her 5<sup>th</sup> grade summer world, and herself as someone who is in her own world, who is naive and childlike.

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**AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION  
2010 SCORING COMMENTARY (Form B)**

**Question 2**

**Sample: 2A**

**Score: 8**

This well-organized, astute essay begins economically with a precise focus on the theme of “the innocence and youthfulness of childhood summers.” In the second paragraph the discussion of the narrator is supported by detail from the passage, such as when it notes that “[t]he statement ‘Life was measured in summers’ is the sort of generalization a child who still had yet to experience the stress of school and the ‘real world’ would make.” The following paragraphs continue the impulse to read the passage closely and sensitively, although, in each case, further development is possible. Even though the essay does not discuss Eddy’s injury, it sustains an analysis of the speaker’s childhood experiences seen through an adult consciousness. A particularly strong insight concludes that the passage is about a time when “all that was dangerous and scary in the world was the Hairy Man and when all your secrets could be safely tucked away in a cigar box.” Thus the quality of the effort overall is a function of its level of analysis and degree of persuasiveness.

**Sample: 2B**

**Score: 5**

This response contains plausible ideas but is superficial and concrete in the way it approaches the passage. A lack of sophisticated diction and varied sentence structure is apparent from the outset, and as a consequence, analysis often gives way to paraphrase. Despite this, the essay gathers momentum in the middle of the paragraph on imagery, which begins unconvincingly with a reductive reference to an image that “provides us with what transportation was like.” Thereafter the student makes an effort to cite and develop the significance of “the ‘Bible’s plague of locusts,’” the Hairy Man and other specific references in the text. But the essay only partially engages the requirements of the prompt. There is evidence of good textual comprehension, but poor transitions and disjointed development are also present as the response skips from image to image and topic to topic instead of developing a coherent, logical argument. By its conclusion the response has referenced much of the passage and understands how “these memories … glow with fondness” without, however, having offered a well-developed main idea. The score of 5 reflects the virtues of an essay that does not misread the text, as well as the limitations of one that manifests weaknesses in interpretive reading.

**Sample: 2C**

**Score: 3**

This less successful response opens with a thesis that orients the reader: “The passage … is about a memory of a 5<sup>th</sup> grader who is involved in her own world.” Its second paragraph then engages the prompt and, as we discover later in the paragraph, makes the case for Clair’s portrayal of “childish fantacys [sic] and naivety [sic].” Knowledge of some literary techniques is apparent, but the paragraph lacks coherence. In each case, a brief reference is tied to a brief, schematic discussion: “In line 4, she says ‘life was measured in summers,’ which shows that she is waiting for summer.” The score of 3 that the response earned is not a function of incorrectness but of incompleteness. For example, the statement that “she also uses a ‘cherry bomb’ to symbolize her childhood memories” is a reasonable inference that could, with development, be part of a considerably more persuasive response.