

AP English Language and Composition

Persuasive Essay Scoring Guide

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; 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.

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

8 Effective

Essays earning a score of 8 **effectively** evaluate the speaker's rhetorical patterns and style and indicate why they believe he or she is the most persuasive and effective speaker. The evidence used is appropriate and convincing. 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 provide a more complete argument or demonstrate a more mature prose style.

6 Adequate

Essays earning a score of 6 **adequately** evaluate the speaker's rhetorical patterns and style and indicate why they believe he or she is the most persuasive and effective speaker. The evidence used is appropriate. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

- 5 Essays earning a score of 5 evaluate the speaker's rhetorical patterns and style and indicate why one candidate is the most persuasive. These essays may, however, provide uneven, inconsistent, or limited explanations or evidence. 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** evaluate the speaker's rhetorical patterns and style and indicate why they believe he or she is the most persuasive and effective speaker. The evidence used may be insufficient. The prose generally conveys the student's ideas but may suggest immature control of writing.

- 3 Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for a score of 4 but demonstrate less success in evaluating the speaker's rhetorical patterns and style or indicating why one writer is the most persuasive. The essays may show less control of writing.

2 Little Success

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in evaluating the speaker's rhetorical patterns and style or indicating why they believe he or she is the most persuasive and effective speaker. These essays may misunderstand the prompt or substitute a simpler task by responding to the prompt tangentially with unrelated, inaccurate, or inappropriate evidence. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing.

- 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.