
AP Seminar End-of-Course Exam

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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Part B

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AP Seminar Rubric 2017-18: End-of-Course Exam

Part B, Question 4

		Performance Levels			Points (Max)
Row	Content Area/ Proficiency	Low	Medium	High	
1	Establish Argument	The response misstates or overlooks a theme or issue that connects the sources. The response's perspective is unclear or unrelated to the sources.	The response identifies a theme or issue that connects the sources. The response derives its perspective from only one of the sources.	The response identifies a theme or issue connecting the provided sources and presents a perspective that is not represented in one of the sources OR brings a particularly insightful approach to one of the perspectives OR makes a strong thematic connection among perspectives.	6
		2	4	6	
2	Establish Argument	The response's line of reasoning is disorganized and/or illogical. The response lacks commentary or the commentary incorrectly or tangentially explains the links between evidence and claims.	The argument is mostly clear and organized, but the logic may be faulty OR the reasoning may be logical but not well organized. The commentary explains the links between evidence and claims.	The response's line of reasoning is logically organized and well-developed. The commentary explains evidence and connects it to claims to clearly and convincingly establish an argument.	6
		2	4	6	
3	Select and Use Evidence	The response repeats or misinterprets information from at least two of the provided sources, or the information lacks relevance thereby providing little support for an argument.	The response accurately uses relevant information from at least two of the provided sources to support an argument.	The response appropriately synthesizes relevant information drawn from at least two of the provided sources to develop and support a compelling argument.	6
		2	4	6	

AP Seminar Rubric 2017-18: End-of-Course Exam

Part B, Question 4 (continued)

Row	Content Area/ Proficiency	Performance Levels			Points (Max)
		Low	Medium	High	
4	Apply Conventions	The response contains many flaws in grammar and style that often interfere with communication to the reader OR the response incorrectly or ineffectively attributes knowledge and ideas from sources.	The response is generally clear but contains some flaws in grammar and style that occasionally interfere with communication to the reader. The response accurately attributes knowledge and ideas from sources.	The response communicates clearly to the reader (although may not be free of errors in grammar and style) AND the response effectively integrates material from sources into the argument (e.g. it is clearly introduced, integrated, or embedded into the text) and accurately attributes knowledge and ideas.	6
		2	4	6	

Additional Scores

In addition to the scores represented on the rubrics, readers can also assign scores of **0** (zero) and **NR** (No Response).

0 (Zero)

- A score of **0** is assigned to a single row of the rubric when the response displays a below-minimum level of quality as identified in that row of the rubric.
- Scores of **0** are assigned to all rows of the rubric when the response is off-topic; a repetition of a prompt; entirely crossed-out; a drawing or other markings; or a response in a language other than English.

NR (No Response)

A score of **NR** is assigned to responses that are blank.

Begin your response to PART B on this page.

As the world has industrialized and globalized, economic production has skyrocketed and the world has benefited from the advent of technology and improved standards of living. However, this emphasis on extreme productivity — money, numbers, values, output — has robbed the modern worker of true meaning and purpose in their life. Society has prioritized the quantitative over the qualitative in a move that has dampened our ability to pursue our more human passions and desires. While this capitalistic prioritization is not inherently problematic, those in the postindustrial workplace must understand the value of leisure time as essential in leading a well balanced and productive life as a whole.

First and foremost, it is important to understand the negative impacts of the postindustrial workplace and the way it robs modern workers of leisure time. Journalist Christopher Muther from source C found that many Americans forfeited the few vacation days they had and ~~even worked longer~~ have been increasingly working longer hours. In his article, Muther cites Project: Time off, which

Continue your response to PART B on this page.

explains why Americans work so much, citing fears of extra work ^{and} desires for mobility in their company amongst other concerns. This mentality is a perfect example of the prioritization of productivity, and becomes concerning when one considers the detriments of overworking. In addition, this extra work oftentimes does not come from a true passion for one's line of work, but rather from a desire to accumulate large amounts of wealth for pleasures the modern worker assures themselves will come in the future. In Source A, author Paula Conen explains how many people "plan to work hard at well-paying but unsatisfying jobs for a number of years to earn the money they need to retire early. Others say they won't mind working long, tedious hours if they get adequate vacation time." This statement exemplifies the way that modern workplaces promote the idea of unfaltering productivity with the incentive of eventual leisure, instead of emphasizing the importance of balance and integration of work and leisure. People in the workforce convince themselves that they are working hard to accumulate wealth and ^{eventually} have the ability to take time

Continue your response to PART B on this page.

off, but the reality is that ~~we~~ they end up forfeiting ~~their~~ ^{their} well-being by snubbing ~~their~~ ^{their} leisure time to the distant future in favor of working more at a job they may not even truly enjoy.

The forfeiture of leisure time is not only unreasonable, but ^{also an} unhealthy practice ~~that leads to decreased overall productivity.~~ ~~John Baidya, an MIT researcher~~

~~referenced in source C, explains that when people take on extra work and avoid downtime "fatigue sets in, and~~

Ellen Galinsky, the president of the Families and Work Institute referenced in source C, explains that "those who take longer vacations showed fewer signs of depression," and "more vacation results in better family relationships." When people overwork themselves, they become subject to fatigue and depression, which decreases an individual's production and creativity, ultimately harming their work. There is certainly an argument to be made that those who take more time off and experience the benefits of leisure will ultimately be more productive than those who push

Continue your response to PART B on this page.

themselves to the breaking point in order to exceed quotas.

The obvious solution to this issue is balance and integration in the lives of the modern worker, but this may not necessarily be easy to achieve. In source D, author Max Weber explains how "man is dominated by the making of money ... [it is] the ultimate purpose of his life." Weber astutely points out that society has become dominated by the acquisition of wealth to the point that we ascertain our value as humans from the number in our bank account. This point is furthered in source A, where author Paula Cohen explains that "leisure connects to money, because now we spend our time depends on how much money we need." Cohen makes the point that the way ~~we~~^{people} view money needs to change, saying that the most important thing about money is ~~is~~ understanding how it is important to us and how much of it is needed to lead the life we desire. Ultimately, ~~it~~ it is vital ~~to~~ to prioritize our overall life over a future only achievable

Continue your response to **PART B** on this page.

through decades of unsatisfactory work. We must learn to take pleasure in small acts of leisure rather than a distant vision of an often unachievable future.

Overall, it is vital that the modern worker learns to prioritize the qualitative over the quantitative. Leisure time is essential when it comes to living a healthy, productive and fulfilling life that one can look back upon in admiration rather than in exhaust.

Begin your response to PART B on this page.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

A Much Needed Culture Shift

The working environment in the United States is a largely unhealthy for the employee. As Max Weber states in "The Spirit of Capitalism", "It is an obligation which the individual is supposed to feel and does feel towards the content of his professional activity, no matter in what it consists," (Source D). Workers will often put the satisfaction of their employer above their own, and its often at their expense. One effect of this is that "they're not taking all of the [vacation] days they earn," (Source C). To combat this, the working conditions in the US must be changed by mandating vacation times with no extra work expectations for the employee.

When given optional vacation days, American employees will often not take them. ~~As vacations have gone~~
 "A Gallup Poll from 2014 found that Americans work an average of 47 hours a week. Even when they take vacation, 61 percent of Americans still work," (Source C). This can be attributed to a lack of focus on leisure time by employers and a focus on maximizing work. However, this approach hurts both the employee and employer. "Fatigue sets in, rigidity applies, and all creativity and innovation are lost — both of which need time away for other activities to increase the probability of new ideas," (Source C). Employees not take vacation not only takes away from their individual happiness, but it also takes productivity away from the employer. To reduce this harmful business practice, vacation times should

Continue your response to PART B on this page.

be mandated by employers.

Even on vacation, employees will not rest from their jobs and have leisure. This can be realized to be a product of many people's overall outlook on life. According to Paula Cohen, her "Students say that they plan to work very hard at well-paying but unsatisfying jobs for a number of years to earn money they need to retire early," (Source A). Even at a young age, people plan for their own unhappiness in their career. It is often looked at as a fact of life that working will be unsavory. However, even off of work, people will still do work and respond to calls, emails, etc., ending up not taking any leisure time after all.

One reason employees will still work on vacation is the pressure of most jobs. "Americans don't take vacation [because] they fear coming back to a Mount Fuji-size pile of work when they return to the office," (Source C). Employers and companies may not take vacation time seriously and expect the work to be done by that employee, even while they aren't at work. This is a major contributing factor to the caustic work environment in America. "It forces the individual, in so far as he is involved in the system of market relationships, to conform to capitalistic rules of action," (Source D). The requirement of money is often one of the few reasons people work, not often for the enjoyment of it. However, if work were to be enjoyable, or at least

Continue your response to PART B on this page.

not despicable, productivity, and happiness would likely go up.

Because Americans are harmfully driven by an obligation to work, a cultural shift must happen. More vacation days must be mandated, and vacation days must not be interrupted by the employer or the employee given working expectations. While in the short term more vacation times will seem like employers have less productivity, it is contrary. Productivity and innovation will increase, and a more positive outlook will befall America.

Begin your response to PART B on this page.

From reading the following 4 sources: A, B, C and D all sources have a connections between them: Ethical problems of Every day life. To support my claim all sources have different perspectives but connect to Ethical problems on a daily basis.

To begin, Source A "Money, Leisure, Death: what college students should Be Learning About" perspective provides all problems for everyday life and how we should be prepared at college for the following circumstances, Economic issues, Leisures, and Lastly Death. Which leads to Source B: Adam Bede by George Eliot. Source B explains the Leisures, and enjoying time and how we work hard to enjoy moments because life doesn't last forever. Continuing on gets us to source C "Why are Americans so Afraid of vacation" by Christopher Muther. The perspective of the following passage ~~is~~ goes further in depth with source B, but reasoning exactly why we don't take leisure time / vacations because we are focused on economic problems, such as not affording a vacation, or afraid of missing a promotion because of so much dedication. Which Lastly leads us to source D "The Spirit of Capitalism" by Max Weber. The passage gives the following problems we face of economic issues and not be prepared for what will be ~~is~~ to come.

Continue your response to PART B on this page.

So after reading the following sources I came up with Ethical issues of Everyday life and how we should be taught for the circumstances of becoming an adult. The sources that really conducted my interpretation was source A and also source C. Source A provides my theme within it example: "College is meant to be a preparation for life as they will live it, and so these subjects are crucial to a good education." This quote ~~exp~~ gives an explanation for the future and how we must be taught and prepared for adult-life. And source C explains how ethical problems depreviate what we want to do because we have certain objectives to fulfill. Example source C: "Because they fear no else can do their job, they can't afford a vacation, taking time off could get in the way of a promotion." This quote shows how much we show dedication to our job and don't have leisure times because life isn't forever.

Therefore source A and C ~~explain~~ further explain my thinking on the themes for a connections to all sources.

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2018 SCORING COMMENTARY

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Synthesizing and Creating Evidence-Based Argument

Overview

This prompt assessed students' ability to:

- Identify a theme or issue connecting two or more of the sources provided;
- Read the sources critically, understanding the perspective or voice contained in each source;
- Use the theme as an impetus for writing a logically organized, well-reasoned, and well-crafted argument presenting their perspective;
- Incorporate two or more of the sources to support the newly-developed argument;
- Cite the sources used in the response, identifying them either by author or by assigned letters, paraphrasing or identifying quotations; and
- Complete the task within a 90-minute time period.

Sample: A

1 Establish Argument Score: 6

2 Establish Argument Score: 6

3 Select and Use Evidence Score: 6

4 Apply Conventions Score: 6

HIGH SAMPLE RESPONSE

Row 1: Establish Argument (6)

The response earned 6 points in row 1 because it reflects a perceptive understanding of the sources and then takes an original perspective: “While this capitalistic prioritization (*from source D*) is not inherently [*sic*] problematic, those in the postindustrial workplace must understand the value of leisure time as essential in leading a well balanced (*from sources A and C*) and productive (*from source C*) life as a whole.” The response’s perspective is a nuanced and sophisticated argument.

Row 2: Establish Argument (6)

The response earned 6 points in row 2 because it moves through its complex argument in an intentional progression of ideas. Each claim builds upon the next: the response first clarifies the current context of leisure; then it discusses the implications of such a context by elaborating on negative health and workplace effects; finally, it analyzes possible solutions to address the problems created by humans’ skewed priorities.

Row 3: Select and Use Evidence (6)

The response earned 6 points in row 3 because it enters into an academic conversation with the sources. For example, the first body paragraph synthesizes arguments on productivity, upward mobility, and balance from sources A and C to establish concerns about imbalance in the lives of American workers. The response goes on to utilize two arguments — one focusing on mental health and one focusing on personal/social/familial health — from source C to support the second claim. Lastly, the response addresses the tension between the ideas in sources D (tenets of capitalism as a dominant force) and A (Muther’s argument that people need to reevaluate their views on money and leisure) in order to propose a feasible solution.

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Row 4: Apply Conventions (6)

The response earned 6 points in row 4 because it features clear and concise writing (“There is certainly an argument to be made that those who take time off and experience the benefits of leisure will ultimately be more productive ...”) that guides readers through the argument. Furthermore, the source material is contextualized (“Muther cites Project Time Off”; Galinsky is acknowledged as the President of Families Work Institute) and cited (using both quotation and paraphrase) correctly.

Sample: B

1 Establish Argument Score: 4

2 Establish Argument Score: 4

3 Select and Use Evidence Score: 4

4 Apply Conventions Score: 4

MEDIUM SAMPLE RESPONSE

Row 1: Establish Argument (4)

The response earned 4 points for this row because it presents an argument taken directly from one of the sources (Source C): “the working conditions in the US must be changed by mandating vacation times with no extra work expectations for the employee.”

Row 2: Establish Argument (4)

The response earned 4 points for this row because — though the response is organized well enough to discern the argument — it is not clear or convincing in its commentary. The initial sentences of paragraphs two, three, and four (“When given vacation days, American employees will not take them”; “Even on vacation, Americans will not rest from their jobs and have leisure”; and “One reason employees will still work on vacation is the pressure of most jobs”), respectively, all offer simple summaries of main ideas from Source C.

Row 3: Select and Use Evidence (4)

The response earned 4 points for this row because — though it features directly quoted evidence from the sources — it doesn't consistently utilize said evidence in an insightful way. For the most part, claims and evidence are well-matched (even synthesized at times), but most of the commentary provides a simple analysis of quotations (“Employees not take vacation because it takes away from their individual happiness, but it also”). In paragraph four, note the use of Source D: The source is dropped into the essay (“It forces the individual, in so far as he is involved in the system of market relationships to conform to the capitalistic rules of action”), failing to note that Weber's discussion is on capitalism as a system, making its relevance to claim a bit tenuous.

Row 4: Apply Conventions (4)

The response earned 4 points for this row because it generally communicates clearly, but it does feature some language flaws that occasionally interfere with communication: the opening sentence states, “The working environment in the United States is a largely unhealthy for the employee,” and awkward integration of quotations plagues paragraphs two and three.

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Sample: C

1 Establish Argument Score: 2

2 Establish Argument Score: 2

3 Select and Use Evidence Score: 2

4 Apply Conventions Score: 2

LOW SAMPLE RESPONSE

Row 1: Establish Argument (2)

The response earned 2 points in row 1 because it opens with an erroneous summary of the theme of the readings. Moreover, the response communicates an unclear and unrelated perspective: “To support my claim all sources have different perspectives but connect to ethical problems on a daily basis.”

Row 2: Establish Argument (2)

The response earned 2 points in row 2 because there is no student-driven argument, and the line of reasoning fails. The first body paragraph is a summary of sources: “To begin ... Source A ... , which leads to Source B ... , continuing on leads us to Source C ...” Then there is an attempt to connect back to Source B, but it is confusing. The summary concludes, “... lastly leads us to Source D.” The response’s second paragraph offers another overview of the sources. Additional commentary does little more than restate the sources’ ideas.

Row 3: Select and Use Evidence (2)

The response earned 2 points in row 3; though four sources are explicitly mentioned, the discussion of those sources functions as an attempt at conveying the writer’s own understanding of the sources rather than using them to support an argument.

Row 4: Apply Conventions (2)

The response earned 2 points in row 4 because it requires the reader to decipher meaning often, impeding communication. Grammar is flawed (“And source C explains how ethical problems depreviate [*sic*] what we want to do because we have certain objectives to fulfill”), and the style (“So after reading the following sources I came up with ethical issues of everyday life ...”) is not appropriate for an academic audience.