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AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE · FREE RESOURCE

AP English Language and Composition — Practice Exam 3: Answer Key, Explanations & Sample Essays

Part 1. Section I Answer Key

Skill codes follow the AP English Language and Composition Course and Exam Description (Categories 1, 3, 5, 7 are Reading skills; 2, 4, 6, 8 are Writing skills). Difficulty: E = easy, M = medium, H = hard.

Q#	ANSWER	SKILL	PASSAGE	DIFF.
1	B	1.A	1 (Du Bois)	E
2	D	1.A	1	M
3	A	7.A	1	M
4	C	3.A	1	E
5	C	7.A	1	H
6	A	5.B	1	E
7	D	3.C	1	H
8	B	7.B	1	M
9	C	5.C	1	M
10	B	3.B	1	E
11	A	1.B	1	H
12	D	5.A	1	M
13	C	1.A	2 (Wollstonecraft)	M
14	A	3.B	2	E
15	B	7.A	2	M

Q#	ANSWER	SKILL	PASSAGE	DIFF.
16	D	7.A	2	H
17	C	3.A	2	M
18	B	5.B	2	M
19	D	3.C	2	H
20	A	5.C	2	M
21	B	5.A	2	M
22	C	1.B	2	H
23	D	3.B	2	E
24	A	5.B	2	M
25	B	2.A	3 (cafeteria plastics)	E
26	D	4.C	3	M
27	A	6.A	3	M
28	C	4.A	3	E
29	B	6.B	3	M
30	D	8.A	3	E
31	A	8.B	3	M
32	C	2.B	3	M
33	A	4.B	4 (esports)	M
34	D	2.B	4	M
35	B	6.A	4	M
36	C	4.A	4	E
37	D	6.B	4	H
38	A	8.B	4	M
39	B	8.C	4	M
40	C	2.A	4	H
41	D	6.A	5 (local newspapers)	M
42	A	4.C	5	M
43	B	4.A	5	E
44	C	8.A	5	E

Q#	ANSWER	SKILL	PASSAGE	DIFF.
45	D	2.A	5	M

Letter distribution: A = 11, B = 11, C = 11, D = 12. No letter appears more than twice in a row.

Skill coverage: Category 1 = 5 questions; 2 = 5; 3 = 7; 4 = 6; 5 = 7; 6 = 5; 7 = 5; 8 = 5. Because the Reading sets total 24 questions and the Writing sets total 21, the categories are not perfectly equal. This is within the range of released forms.

Difficulty: E = 11, M = 25, H = 9 (roughly 25 / 55 / 20 percent, in line with a real form).

Part 2. How to Score Yourself

Step 1. MCQ raw score. Count the questions you answered correctly (0–45). There is no guessing penalty.

Step 2. Essay scores. Score each essay 0–6 using the rubrics in Part 4 (Row A + Row B + Row C). Be honest and conservative: readers are trained to award points only when the response clearly earns them. If possible, have a teacher or classmate score independently and average.

Step 3. Composite. Use the formula below. College Board does not publish the conversion, so this is a rough reconstruction.

$$\text{Composite (out of about 150)} \approx (\text{MCQ raw} \times 1.5) + (\text{total of three essay scores} \times 4.58)$$

COMPONENT	MAX RAW	MULTIPLIER	MAX WEIGHTED
MCQ	45	1.5	67.5
Essays (3 × 6)	18	4.58	82.5
Composite			150

Approximate bands (labeled approximate; cutoffs shift from year to year):

ESTIMATED AP SCORE	APPROX. COMPOSITE
5	105 and above
4	87 to 104
3	65 to 86
2	45 to 64
1	below 45

Example: 33 correct MCQ and essays scored 4, 4, and 3 gives $(33 \times 1.5) + (11 \times 4.58) = 49.5 + 50.4 =$ about 100, which falls in the high 4 range.

Step 4. Diagnose. Group your missed MCQ by skill code and passage. A cluster in Categories 3 and 5 suggests work on claims and line of reasoning; a cluster in 7 suggests work on diction, tone, and syntax; a cluster in the Writing sets (2, 4, 6, 8) suggests practicing the “goal-driven revision” habit of reading the stem’s stated goal first and testing every choice against it. For essays, the most common reason for being stuck at 3 or below is commentary that restates evidence instead of explaining it.

Part 3. Section I Explanations

Passage 1 (Du Bois), Questions 1–12

1. Answer: B. [Skill 1.A — identify the exigence.] The passage opens with “an unasked question” that hovers between the writer and “the other world,” and it names the question outright: “How does it feel to be a problem?” (lines 1–10). The essay as a whole is an answer to that persistent, unspoken question. (A) is true of the period but violence is mentioned only as one of the questioners’ awkward gestures (“Do not these Southern outrages make your blood boil?”), not as the occasion for the essay. (C) is wrong because the schoolhouse anecdote concerns a social slight, not the schools’ failure to prepare students. (D) is outside the passage; no theory of racial hierarchy is mentioned or argued against.

2. Answer: D. [Skill 1.A — purpose of a paragraph.] The paragraph shows people who “flutter round” the question, approaching “in a half-hesitant sort of way” and offering sideways substitutes, while the writer “seldom” answers. It establishes an uneasy, indirect relationship between speaker and audience. (A) overstates: the questioners are described as delicate or awkward, not hypocritical, and the writer’s response is a smile or interest, not condemnation. (B) is not addressed; the paragraph does not explain his decision to write. (C) is an absolute (“incapable of understanding”) the text does not support; he says some are held back by “delicacy,” others by “the difficulty of rightly framing” the question.

3. Answer: A. [Skill 7.A — tone and word choice.] “Reduce the boiling to a simmer” takes the questioner’s own clichéd metaphor (“make your blood boil”) and answers it in kind, handling indignation like a temperature to be adjusted “as the occasion may require.” The effect is wry, a controlled irony. (B) misreads: there is no suppressed rage in the sentence, which is composed and amused. (C) is the opposite: he is not sharing outrage but managing the questioner’s expectation of it. (D) names a device (reducing to a scientific observation) that is not present; the sentence is figurative and social, not scientific.

4. Answer: C. [Skill 3.A — what an example is evidence of.] The “revelation” arrives “all in a day” when a classmate “refused my card . . . with a glance.” The slight is tiny and silent, and yet it teaches him he is “shut out from their world by a vast veil.” (A) goes beyond the text, which says nothing about segregation in New England schools generally. (B) generalizes about children that the anecdote does not support. (D) is too narrow and misreads cause: his ambitions are said to arise from contempt and later from the realization that “opportunities” were “theirs, not mine,” not from reacting to the one girl.

5. Answer: C. [Skill 7.A — word in context.] “I held all beyond it in common contempt” means he regarded everyone on the other side of the veil with the same, general contempt, without distinguishing among them: undifferentiated. (A) “vulgar” is the pejorative modern sense, which fits neither the grammar nor the boy’s disdain, and it would make the contempt a vice of his own. (B) “ordinary” fits the phrase “common people” but

not “common contempt,” which describes the uniformity of the feeling, not its mundane quality. (D) “mutual” is a lure from the sense “held in common,” but nothing indicates the other side reciprocated; the contempt is the boy’s alone.

6. Answer: A. [Skill 5.B — organization and shift.] Before “Alas,” the boy lives “above” the veil in “fine contempt” and plans to beat his mates; after it, he acknowledges that “the words I longed for, and all their dazzling opportunities, were theirs, not mine.” The movement is from defiance to a recognition of exclusion. (B) is wrong because the paragraph stays narrative and makes no direct appeal for reform. (C) is wrong because the historical analysis arrives only in the next paragraphs. (D) reverses the shift: his contempt fades, but he does not come to admire white society.

7. Answer: D. [Skill 3.C — qualification of a claim.] “With other black boys the strife was not so fiercely sunny” concedes that the writer’s defiant, competitive response was not the common one: others turned to “tasteless sycophancy,” “silent hatred,” or “a bitter cry.” (A) introduces luck, which the passage never discusses. (B) goes too far: other boys are described as responding differently, not as lacking ambition. (C) is contradicted by the text; the writer says his own response was “fiercely sunny,” and he never says he succumbed to silent hatred.

8. Answer: B. [Skill 7.B — syntax and relationships among ideas.] The sentence strings three parallel “or” clauses (“plod darkly on in resignation, or beat unavailing palms against the stone, or . . . watch the streak of blue above”). The accumulation lists the only options available behind “walls strait and stubborn,” so the syntax itself enacts confinement. (A) is the opposite; every option is resigned, “unavailing,” or “half hopelessly.” (C) is wrong because the sentence pointedly says “us all” and describes “sons of night” collectively, not a contrast with the writer. (D) overreaches; the shift to the national scale happens at the next paragraph, not in this series.

9. Answer: C. [Skill 5.C — methods of development.] The paragraph defines the term (“a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others”) and then reinforces it with figures (“born with a veil,” “measuring one’s soul by the tape”) and balanced phrases (“two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals”). (A) is wrong because no narrative of slavery’s origins appears. (B) misreads the list of ancient peoples, which is a brief allusive foil, not a developed comparison. (D) is wrong because the paragraph contains no rhetorical questions.

10. Answer: B. [Skill 3.B — central claim.] The fourth paragraph says the American Negro wants “to merge his double self into a better and truer self,” losing neither the African nor the American, and “to be both a Negro and an American.” (A) is the opposite; the paragraph rejects a forced choice. (C) is a misreading of “America has too much to teach the world and Africa,” which explains why he would not Africanize America, not a ranking of the continents. (D) is partly true as an implication but is not the paragraph’s claim; the “doors of Opportunity” appear in a subordinate clause.

11. Answer: A. [Skill 1.B — audience’s beliefs.] The two “He would not” sentences deny both extremes: no “Africanizing” America and no “bleach[ing]” his soul in “a flood of white Americanism.” The writer anticipates readers who assume Black advancement must mean either separatism or complete assimilation. (B) is contradicted by the claim that “Negro blood has a message for the world.” (C) is not suggested; the writer’s whole aspiration is cooperation (“co-worker in the kingdom of culture”). (D) is not a concern of these lines.

12. Answer: D. [Skill 5.A — line of reasoning.] The passage moves from a personal encounter with exclusion (paragraphs 1–2) to a general diagnosis of divided identity (paragraph 3), to a statement of what the whole group strives for (paragraphs 4–5). (A) is wrong because there is no list of misconceptions refuted and no program of

reform. (B) reverses the order: the personal anecdote comes first, and it is the grounding, not the illustration, of the theory. (C) is not accurate; the comparison to other peoples is one brief allusion, and the aim is not racial unity.

Passage 2 (Wollstonecraft), Questions 13–24

13. Answer: C. [Skill 1.A — writer and persona.] “After considering . . . and viewing . . . with anxious solicitude . . . I have sighed when obliged to confess”: the writer presents conclusions as reluctant results of long study, a reflective observer compelled by evidence. (A) is wrong because the emotion (“melancholy,” “sorrowful indignation”) is explicit, not impartial. (B) is wrong because the grievance is general (“my fellow-creatures”), not personal injury. (D) is wrong because there is no mockery or exaggeration; the tone is earnest.

14. Answer: A. [Skill 3.B — thesis of a paragraph.] She concludes that “the neglected education of my fellow-creatures is the grand source of the misery I deplore” and that women’s weakness comes from “a false system of education.” (B) is the opposite of her claim. (C) states a detail (books written by men) but not the thesis. (D) is wrong because she blames the system, not women’s character.

15. Answer: B. [Skill 7.A — comparison.] Flowers in rich soil sacrifice “strength and usefulness” to “beauty” and “fade . . . long before the season when they ought to have arrived at maturity.” The analogy shows cultivation for display producing early decay. (A) takes the flower image at face value and misses that the soil is too rich, not that the flowers need protection. (C) is the view she is criticizing. (D) misreads “fastidious eye,” which is used with irony.

16. Answer: D. [Skill 7.A — archaic word in context.] To be “bubbled” by “specious homage” is to be tricked or deceived by flattery that only looks sound (“specious”). (A) “excited” is a modern-sounding lure. (B) “inflated” is attractive because of the bubble image but does not fit “so bubbled by this specious homage” followed by consequences of false belief. (C) “purified” is unrelated.

17. Answer: C. [Skill 3.A — claims and evidence.] She says “the books of instruction, written by men of genius, have had the same tendency as more frivolous productions”: serious books weaken women’s minds as the frivolous ones do. (A) contradicts the premise that the books have influence. (B) is not stated. (D) is not mentioned.

18. Answer: B. [Skill 5.B — function of a paragraph.] She says she does not wish to “agitate the contested question” of equality but must “stop a moment” to give her opinion so her reasoning will not suffer “misconstruction.” The paragraph disposes of a distracting question. (A) is wrong because no historical evidence is introduced. (C) is wrong because she concedes only physical strength. (D) overstates a subordinate remark about men’s conduct.

19. Answer: D. [Skill 3.C — concession.] She concedes physical superiority (“a noble prerogative”) and then turns: “But not content with this natural pre-eminence, men endeavour to sink us still lower.” The concession establishes her fairness before charging men with pushing an advantage too far. (A) misreads; she does not accept subordination in any other respect. (B) wrongly treats the concession as a weakness; it is a strategic one. (C) is wrong because the tone toward physical strength is not mocking.

20. Answer: A. [Skill 5.C — method of development.] Men’s flattery makes women “alluring objects”; women, “intoxicated by the adoration,” stop seeking lasting friendship: a causal chain. (B) is absent. (C) is absent; no anecdote appears. (D) is absent; no authority is cited.

21. Answer: B. [Skill 5.A — line of reasoning.] She separates two senses of “masculine”: hunting, shooting, and gaming (she will “join in the cry” against these) and the “manly virtues” and talents she wants women to share. (A) is wrong because she asks “where are they to be found?” only rhetorically about the first sense. (C) is not argued. (D) is wrong because she discusses the term in detail.

22. Answer: C. [Skill 1.B — audience’s values.] “A philosophic eye” flatters readers who see themselves as impartial reasoners, suggesting that anyone who reasons without prejudice will agree. (A) is the opposite; the phrase invokes abstract reasoning. (B) and (D) misread the appeal; the phrase concerns detached judgment.

23. Answer: D. [Skill 3.B — structure indicated by the thesis.] “I shall first consider women in the grand light of human creatures . . . and afterwards . . . their peculiar designation” announces that general humanity comes first, then particular roles. (A), (B), and (C) name organizing schemes that appear nowhere in the paragraph.

24. Answer: A. [Skill 5.B — relationship between paragraphs.] The third paragraph gives her opinion on equality and inferiority; the fourth begins “I am aware of an obvious inference” and answers the objection readers might draw. (B) is wrong because no remedy is proposed yet. (C) is wrong because the time frames are not as stated. (D) is wrong because no scientific authority appears in the fourth paragraph.

Passage 3 (School Cafeteria Plastics), Questions 25–32

25. Answer: B. [Skill 2.A — introduction that engages and introduces the topic.] The sentence contrasts a half-hour lunch with the long life of discarded plastic, previewing the argument with a concrete image and no preamble. (A) is accurate but a dry definition that does not engage or point toward the issue in schools. (C) asserts the conclusion as obvious, which would alienate a skeptical audience. (D) announces the essay (“This essay will argue”) instead of introducing the topic.

26. Answer: D. [Skill 4.C — qualify a claim while previewing structure.] The revision adds the modifier “phase out” and the condition “wherever compostable or reusable alternatives are available” while keeping the three reasons. (A) makes the claim more extreme (“must ban all plastics . . . immediately”) and drops the reasoning. (B) removes the position entirely. (C) keeps a vague claim (“the right thing to do”) and lists no reasons.

27. Answer: A. [Skill 6.A — commentary linking evidence to claim.] The added sentence explains that the forty percent figure matters because cafeteria waste is generated daily, so small reductions compound. That is commentary connecting sentence 6 to the “environmental case.” (B) adds a fact about who conducted the audit, not an explanation. (C) restates the number (“a very large number . . . serious”) without explaining why it supports the claim. (D) adds more evidence but no commentary.

28. Answer: C. [Skill 4.A — evidence supporting a claim.] A study of twelve districts showing per-meal costs falling below disposables by year two directly supports the claim that costs decline over time. (A) is a preference anecdote unrelated to cost. (B) is evidence for the environmental claim, not the cost claim. (D) is an unsupported appeal to unnamed experts.

29. Answer: B. [Skill 6.B — transition between ideas.] “Even setting the savings aside” acknowledges the cost paragraph and pivots to a new reason, signalling that the argument now moves to the school’s educational mission. (A) leaves the paragraph’s shift unmarked. (C) “For example” wrongly implies the teaching point is an example of the cost discussion. (D) “In contrast” implies opposition between the cost argument and the teaching argument, though both support the same thesis.

30. Answer: D. [Skill 8.A — maintain tone.] “Models the principles taught in its classrooms” keeps the passage’s formal, measured register. (A) “walks the walk,” (B) “does its part,” and (C) “gets with the program” are idiomatic or colloquial; (C) and (A) especially clash with the formal tone, and (B) is vague and loses the idea of demonstrating a principle.

31. Answer: A. [Skill 8.B — combining sentences.] The colon signals that the second clause illustrates the first (“straightforward: the audit found . . .”), so the evidence is clearly attached to the claim. (B) is a comma splice with “however” misused. (C) “although” suggests a contrast that does not exist. (D) reverses the logical order and uses “and,” which obscures that the audit supports the claim.

32. Answer: C. [Skill 2.B — audience’s needs.] “Administrators who must balance tight budgets reasonably worry . . .” respects the audience’s legitimate concern before the writer responds. (A) insults budget-minded readers (“care more about money than about the planet”). (B) dismisses the concern (“they are wrong”). (D) labels the concern a “misconception” before engaging it.

Passage 4 (Esports), Questions 33–40

33. Answer: A. [Skill 4.B — thesis that requires defense and previews structure.] The revision takes a position and previews the two supports the body develops (qualities that justify athletics; the definition of a sport). (B) is a prediction rather than an arguable claim tied to the essay’s reasoning. (C) takes no position. (D) rests on an unsupported comparison (“more popular than football”) that the draft never provides.

34. Answer: D. [Skill 2.B — fair representation of opposing view.] “Argue that an activity performed seated at a keyboard lacks the physical demands that have traditionally defined athletics” states the objection in the terms skeptical coaches would accept. (A) stereotypes opponents as “older people unfamiliar with gaming.” (B) mocks them. (C) introduces an unsupported claim that opponents want to ban video games.

35. Answer: B. [Skill 6.A — commentary.] “Those habits . . . are precisely the disciplines that a varsity program exists to instill” explains how the details in sentence 6 prove the claim in sentence 5. (A) adds a fact about game genres. (C) restates without explanation. (D) adds an irrelevant fact about prize money.

36. Answer: C. [Skill 4.A — specific supporting evidence.] A survey of 1,200 students reporting that 61 percent had never participated in another team directly supports the claim in sentence 7. (A) and (B) are general observations that do not address first-time participation. (D) is a claim about traditional sports that does not support the claim about esports.

37. Answer: D. [Skill 6.B — transition after a concession.] Sentence 8 concedes the physical point. “But physical exertion has never been the standard” turns from concession to rebuttal and prepares the examples. (A) provides no signal. (B) “Similarly” suggests that chess and bowling are like sprinting, which contradicts the concession. (C) “As a result” falsely claims causation.

38. Answer: A. [Skill 8.B — combining to emphasize contrast.] The semicolon plus “counter” sets the two positions against each other. (B) uses “and,” which treats the positions as additive. (C) is a fragment. (D) “Because” creates a false causal relation, as though supporters’ wishes caused opponents’ objections.

39. Answer: B. [Skill 8.C — dangling modifier.] In the original, “Having never joined a traditional team” illogically modifies “esports.” (B) places the modifying idea in a phrase that correctly attaches to students. (A) leaves the modifier dangling on “many students” while distorting the passive. (C) attaches the modifier to “Esports” (a logical error). (D) leaves “the first experience” as the subject of the modifier.

40. Answer: C. [Skill 2.A — conclusion that reinforces reasoning.] The concluding version ties back to the thesis, refers to the earlier points on skill, discipline, and school pride, and reframes esports as extending, not lowering, standards. (A) is formulaic and adds nothing. (B) is alarmist and unsupported. (D) is a dismissive overreach that undermines the measured tone.

Passage 5 (Local Newspapers), Questions 41–45

41. Answer: D. [Skill 6.A — commentary linking research to claim.] The sentence names the shared mechanism (reduced scrutiny and engagement) by which turnout, candidacy, and borrowing costs reflect the loss of local news. (A) describes the studies without explaining the connection. (B) introduces a competing explanation that undercuts the point. (C) explains why papers failed, not why their absence matters.

42. Answer: A. [Skill 4.C — acknowledging opposing view fairly.] Acknowledging that platforms do spread useful information quickly gives the other side its due before the rebuttal in sentence 7. (B) overstates (“most . . . is false”). (C) dismisses without acknowledging. (D) turns the concession into a non sequitur (“which is why they are so popular”).

43. Answer: B. [Skill 4.A — evidence.] The county example shows a reporter at a routine hearing uncovering something no neighborhood app had, supporting the claim that reporters provide something social media does not. (A) lists credentials, not what reporters provide. (C) is a vague generalization. (D) mentions difficulty of hearings but not the difference between reporting and rumor.

44. Answer: C. [Skill 8.A — measured tone.] “When no one covers the school board meeting, residents have no reliable way to learn what was decided” is formal, precise, and keeps the point. (A) is colloquial (“has a clue”). (B) is informal and exaggerated (“totally in the dark”). (D) is flippant (“well, good luck”).

45. Answer: D. [Skill 2.A — conclusion that reinforces the line of reasoning.] “A town that loses its newspaper does not lose its news; it loses its ability to know what the news means” echoes sentence 7’s distinction between rumor and explanation and returns to the thesis. (A) is a general historical remark. (B) is a bare command. (C) is a prediction unrelated to the argument.

Part 4. Section II Scoring Guides and Sample Essays

Each essay is scored 0–6: **Row A (Thesis) 0–1, Row B (Evidence and Commentary) 0–4, Row C (Sophistication) 0–1.** Score each row independently, then add. The scoring descriptions below are written in the style of the official rubric and decision rules; they are adapted for this practice exam and are not College Board materials. Remember that readers evaluate timed first drafts and reward what the writer does well; minor errors in grammar do not lower a score unless they interfere with communication.

Question 1 — Synthesis: Car-Free Downtown Zones

RUBRIC

ROW	POINTS	DESCRIPTION
A. Thesis	0	Does not respond to the prompt with a defensible position. Examples: restates the prompt; summarizes the debate without choosing a side ("There are pros and cons"); offers only a fact; or addresses a different topic.
	1	Responds with a defensible position on whether cities should create downtown car-free zones. The thesis may be one or more sentences, may appear anywhere, and may be qualified or conditional ("yes, but only if . . ."). It need not preview the argument.
B. Evidence and Commentary	0	Restates the thesis, repeats provided information, or references fewer than two sources.
	1	Evidence from or references to at least two sources, but evidence is mostly general or the commentary only summarizes.
	2	Evidence from at least three sources. Commentary explains how some evidence relates to the argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the reasoning is faulty (typically a source-by-source tour).
	3	Specific evidence from at least three sources supports all claims in a line of reasoning, and commentary explains how some of the evidence supports the line of reasoning.
	4	Specific evidence from at least three sources supports all claims, and commentary consistently explains how the evidence supports the line of reasoning. Mechanics must not interfere with communication.
C. Sophistication	0	Does not meet the criteria below.

ROW	POINTS	DESCRIPTION
	1	Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation by (1) crafting a nuanced argument by consistently identifying and exploring complexities or tensions across the sources; (2) articulating the implications or limitations of an argument (either the student's or one presented in a source) by situating it within a broader context; (3) making rhetorical choices that consistently strengthen the force and impact of the student's argument; or (4) employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.

What does NOT earn Row C: a single contextualizing sentence; sweeping generalizations ("throughout history, cities have always changed"); merely mentioning another viewpoint without exploring it; a token "Although some say . . ." that is never developed; ornate or inflated language that does not strengthen the argument.

SCORING NOTES FOR THIS PROMPT

- **A defensible thesis** takes a position on whether cities should create downtown car-free zones: yes, no, or a conditional position. "Yes, with safeguards for access and deliveries" is defensible and earns the point; "Car-free zones have both advantages and disadvantages" does not.
- **Source stances:** A (news report) is mixed; B (scholarly review) is strongly favorable on retail but notes business-type variation; C (op-ed) is opposed on behalf of a bulk-goods merchant; D (survey table) shows majority support that falls among drivers, distant residents, older respondents, and people with mobility disabilities, and rises where a zone has operated for at least a year; E (cartoon) criticizes displaced traffic and inaccessible parking; F (interview) is conditional, supporting zones designed with disabled users in mind.
- **Strong responses might argue:** (1) yes, because the evidence shows that merchants' fears are overstated (B) and that safety and foot traffic improve (A); (2) yes, but only with complementary investments, such as transit, loading zones, garages, accessible drop-off points, and a shuttle (B, F); (3) no, or not yet, because benefits are unevenly distributed and the burdens fall on errand businesses, disabled residents, and neighboring streets (A, C, E, F); (4) a pilot-first approach: support is higher after a year of operation (D), so cities should try temporary closures and evaluate; (5) the question is really "free for whom?" and "whose downtown?", so the answer depends on whom the city counts as its public (C, D, F); (6) use the sources against each other: B's data against C's anecdote, D's attitudes against B's sales, F's design critique against E's caricature.
- **Reading the table (Source D):** Strong responses translate the table into plain language (for example, "support is 71 percent among people living within a mile but 39 percent among those more than five miles away") and use the contrast, not a single number. Citing "54 percent support" alone is acceptable but usually general.

- **Reading the cartoon (Source E):** Strong responses interpret what the image argues (displaced pollution and inaccessible parking) and consider its exaggeration. Describing the cartoon without interpreting it is summary.
- **Common traps:** (a) writing a “Source A says . . . Source B says . . .” essay with no line of reasoning (Row B ceiling of 2); (b) treating B’s finding as universal and ignoring its caveat about business type; (c) citing only anecdotal sources (A, C, F) or only data; (d) using the sources as decoration for a pre-planned argument about “the environment”; (e) bundling (“as seen in Sources A, B, and F”) without specific evidence; (f) treating a 4-block cartoon as literal evidence; (g) ignoring the “downtown areas” scope of the prompt and discussing the car in general.

6-POINT SAMPLE (ABOUT 790 WORDS)

The strongest objection to car-free downtowns is not that they fail, but that they succeed for some people at the expense of others. The sources bear this out. Cities should create car-free zones in their downtowns, but only as designed systems that pay for their benefits in advance: by keeping deliveries, transit, and disabled access moving, and by treating displaced traffic as the city’s problem rather than the neighbors’. Where those conditions are met, the evidence for car-free zones is strong; where they are ignored, the critics’ complaints turn out to be accurate.

The case for the zones begins with the fact that the fear of commercial ruin is largely mistaken. Merchants like Ruth Bellamy, who sells sofas and notes that her customers “come in cars,” speak sincerely, but Lindqvist and Marsh’s review of forty districts found median retail sales rising 17 percent against 4 percent on control streets, with vacancies falling in thirty-one cases (Source B). The authors also explain why the fear persists: merchants guessed that 55 to 70 percent of their patrons drove, while counts showed 20 to 35 percent. Lakeport’s Harbor Street fits the pattern, with vacant storefronts down from eleven to four and foot traffic up 48 percent (Source A). Bellamy’s anxiety is therefore real but, as a general forecast, miscalibrated; it reflects what a merchant sees in the parking lot rather than who is actually walking through the door.

Yet Bellamy should not be dismissed, because the same research that undermines her fear also locates it. Source B reports that hardware stores, pharmacies, and dry cleaners showed flat or declining sales in about a third of cases, and Source A’s hardware-store owner, whose customers “can’t carry a sheet of plywood home on a bicycle,” is that third made flesh. A furniture seller belongs to the same category of errand-and-bulk business. The honest lesson, then, is not that car-free zones help merchants but that they help some merchants and strain others unless the city intervenes. Lindqvist and Marsh found that the successful districts paired closure with transit access, delivery loading zones, and nearby garages. Bellamy’s own customers come from townships with no bus, which names exactly the investment a responsible plan must supply.

A second cost is displaced traffic. Lakeport’s study found evening travel times on the parallel avenues rose by four to six minutes, and the Northside resident who says the city “moved the problem” is describing what Source E’s cartoonist exaggerates but does not invent: a café table in clean air, with a jammed, exhaust-choked side street directly behind it. The cartoon is a caricature, but its target is real, namely planners who count the benefits inside the zone and ignore the costs outside it. A city that creates a zone should therefore measure and manage its perimeter. The safety result on Harbor Street, no serious injury crashes against seven in the two years before the pilot, suggests the benefit is large enough to justify that work.

The hardest test is access for people with disabilities, and here the sources complicate one another most. Table D shows respondents reporting a mobility disability split almost evenly, 44 percent in favor and 46 percent opposed, far below the 78 percent support among people who already come downtown by transit, bicycle, or

foot. Carmen Reyes explains why: cities “move the accessible parking spaces to the edge of the zone,” and for someone who can walk half a block, a four-block zone “is a wall” (Source F). But Reyes does not oppose the zones. Fewer cars mean fewer pedestrians struck, she notes, and disabled pedestrians are struck at much higher rates; level sidewalks and quieter streets help wheelchair users and blind pedestrians; and accessible drop-off points in the middle of the zone, paratransit access, and a free shuttle cost far less than a garage. Her objection is to a design, not an idea. That distinction is echoed in Table D, where support is 61 percent in cities with a zone already running for a year but 48 percent in cities only considering one. Skepticism is greatest before people have seen a zone done well.

Taken together, the sources point to a conclusion more demanding than a simple yes. Car-free zones deliver commercial, safety, and public-health gains in most cases, but the gains fall unevenly: to cafés over hardware stores, to nearby residents over distant shoppers, to the young over the old. A city’s obligation is to treat that unevenness as a design problem rather than a reason to retreat to the status quo. Cities should create car-free downtown zones, and then spend what it takes, on shuttles, loading zones, accessible drop-offs, and traffic management, to make the benefits real for the people who now have the most reason to fear them.

Scoring commentary (6/6). *Row A: 1.* The opening sentences take a clear, conditional position (“Cities should create car-free zones . . . but only as designed systems”) that is defensible from the sources. *Row B: 4.* The essay draws specific evidence from six sources (A, B, C, D, E, F) in a line of reasoning that builds: fear of ruin is mistaken (B, A) → but the fear is accurate for some businesses (B, A, C) → displaced traffic is a real cost (A, E) → access for disabled residents is the hardest test (D, F) → so the zone must be designed (conclusion). Each paragraph explains how the evidence supports the next claim rather than reporting it; for example, the writer explains *why* the 55–70 versus 20–35 percent gap means Bellamy’s fear is “miscalibrated,” and uses the third of cases with flat sales to reinterpret her. Mechanics never interfere. *Row C: 1.* The essay earns sophistication by consistently exploring tensions across the sources (Bellamy against Lindqvist and Marsh, but also Bellamy partially vindicated by the same study; Reyes both critic and ally; Table D read as both a warning and evidence that skepticism fades), and by situating the dispute in a broader frame (an uneven distribution of benefits as a design problem). The nuance is part of the argument, not an add-on.

4-POINT SAMPLE (ABOUT 470 WORDS)

I believe that cities should create car-free zones in their downtowns, because they make the area safer, bring more people to local businesses, and are supported by many residents, though there are some problems that need to be solved.

One reason to create car-free zones is that they help businesses. According to Source B, a study of forty districts found that sales in pedestrian zones went up a median of 17 percent, compared to only 4 percent in streets that stayed open to cars. Also, vacancies went down in thirty-one of the forty cases. This shows that car-free zones can help the economy of a downtown. Source A also backs this up since in Lakeport the number of empty storefronts went down from eleven to four after the street closed. These facts show that the fear that businesses will lose customers is not always true.

Another reason is safety and the quality of life. In Source A, there were no serious injury crashes on the closed blocks, while there were seven before the pilot program. That is a big improvement. Also, the number of pedestrians went up by 48 percent. Car-free zones make downtown a place where people want to be, and people who spend time downtown are more likely to spend money there. This is why the cartoon in Source E shows people sitting at a café enjoying themselves, which shows that car-free zones are pleasant.

However, there are some problems. Source C is an op-ed by a furniture store owner who says her customers drive from far away and need to park near her store. She is right that some businesses, like furniture stores, might lose customers because people cannot carry big items. Source B also says that hardware stores and pharmacies did not do as well in a third of the cases. So cities need to be careful. Also, Source A says that traffic on the nearby streets got worse by four to six minutes. This is a problem that cities need to solve. Source F talks about how people with disabilities can be hurt by car-free zones if accessible parking is moved too far away. This shows that cities have to think about everyone, not just the people who bike to work. A zone that leaves some residents unable to reach downtown would not be fair, even if it is good for most people.

Finally, Source D shows that a majority of people, 54 percent, support a car-free zone. Support is higher for people who live close to downtown and younger people. This shows that most people want car-free zones.

In conclusion, car-free zones are good for businesses and safety, but cities should make sure to solve the problems with traffic and disabled people. If cities do this, car-free zones can be a success for everybody.

Scoring commentary (4/6). *Row A:* 1. The first sentence takes a position with a reasonable preview, and the concession at the end refines it; the point is earned. *Row B:* 3. Specific evidence from six sources supports the claims (17 versus 4 percent, eleven to four vacancies, seven crashes to none, four to six minutes, 54 percent). The commentary explains some evidence ("the fear that businesses will lose customers is not always true"). However, the essay is organized as a tour of the sources and the commentary often falls back on "This shows . . ." without saying what is shown for the argument ("This shows that most people want car-free zones" overstates 54 percent and ignores the groups who oppose). The "However" paragraph names Sources C, B, A, and F in sequence without connecting them to a developing claim, so the line of reasoning is present but thin and not consistently explained. That is a 3, not a 4. *Row C:* 0. The concession paragraph acknowledges problems but does not explore tensions among the sources (for example, why support differs by group, or how B complicates C). Closing "everybody" language is a generalization.

2-POINT SAMPLE (ABOUT 310 WORDS)

Cities should make car-free zones in downtown because it is better for everybody and for the planet. Cars cause a lot of pollution and there are too many cars in the cities. If cities have car-free zones then people can walk and ride bikes which is healthier. Also people will not get hurt by cars as much.

In Source A it says that Harbor Street closed to cars and more people walked there. It says pedestrians went up 48 percent. This shows that people like car-free streets. It also says that there were less empty stores. So it is good for the businesses and for the city. Many cities already have car-free streets and the people there seem to like them, so other cities should copy them.

Source B says that sales went up 17 percent in car free zones. So the businesses make more money when there are no cars. This proves that car-free zones are the best idea and that businesses should not worry about them.

Some people do not like car-free zones. Source C is a woman who sells furniture and she thinks that her customers will not be able to come. But I think that she is wrong because people can find a way to get there. They can take a bus or a taxi.

The cartoon in Source E shows a street with a lot of cars and people at a cafe. It shows that car-free zones are nice but there is still traffic on the other street.

I also think that car-free zones are better for people's health because there is less exhaust and more walking. Walking is good exercise and it makes people happy.

In conclusion, car-free zones are a good idea because they help the planet, the businesses, and the people. All cities should have them in their downtown areas.

Scoring commentary (2/6). *Row A:* 1. "Cities should make car-free zones in downtown" is a clear, if simple, position, so the thesis point is earned (the added "better for everybody and for the planet" is a claim, not a prompt restatement). *Row B:* 1. The essay references at least two sources (A, B, plus C and E), but the evidence is stated generally and the commentary is summary or assertion: "This shows that people like car-free streets" and "This proves . . . the best idea" do not explain anything, and "businesses should not worry" overreaches the data. Source C is dismissed without engaging its argument ("people can find a way," even though C says there is no bus), and Source E is described rather than interpreted. There is no line of reasoning, so the response does not reach 2. *Row C:* 0. No complexity or tension is explored; "better for everybody" is a sweeping generalization.

Question 2 — Rhetorical Analysis: Susan B. Anthony (1873)

RUBRIC

ROW	POINTS	DESCRIPTION
A. Thesis	0	Does not respond with a defensible thesis about the writer's rhetorical choices. Examples: restates the prompt ("Anthony uses rhetorical choices to argue that women's voting is a right"); only identifies the topic or summarizes; names devices ("ethos, pathos, and logos") with no claim about what the choices do; or responds to a different task.
	1	Responds with a thesis that makes a defensible claim about Anthony's rhetorical choices and how they serve her purpose. Choices may be identified by name or by plain description. The thesis may be one or more sentences and may appear anywhere in the response. Prompt-echoing alone earns 0; an analytic claim that goes beyond the prompt earns the point.
B. Evidence and Commentary	0	Restates the thesis, repeats provided information, or offers only general references.
	1	Evidence is mostly general. Commentary summarizes the passage (what Anthony says) rather than explaining how she says it.

ROW	POINTS	DESCRIPTION
	2	Evidence is mostly specific, and commentary explains how some of the evidence relates to the argument, but no line of reasoning is established or the line of reasoning is faulty. Typical: a list of devices, each with a quotation and a generic effect (“to emphasize her point”).
	3	Specific evidence supports all claims in a line of reasoning. Commentary explains how at least one rhetorical choice contributes to Anthony’s argument, purpose, or message.
	4	Specific evidence supports all claims in a line of reasoning. Commentary consistently explains how multiple rhetorical choices contribute to Anthony’s argument, purpose, or message. Repeated instances of the same choice earn the fourth point only if each is shown to advance the argument in a new way. Mechanics must not interfere with communication.
C. Sophistication	0	Does not meet the criteria below.
	1	Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation by (1) explaining the significance or relevance of Anthony’s rhetorical choices given the specific rhetorical situation (a defendant addressing potential jurors in 1873); (2) explaining the purpose or function of the passage’s complexities or tensions; or (3) employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.

What does NOT earn Row C: sweeping statements about “the struggle for women’s rights” or “history”; hinting at other interpretations without developing them; examining individual choices without relating them to one another; oversimplifying tensions in the passage; or ornate language that does not strengthen the analysis.

SCORING NOTES FOR THIS PROMPT

- **Rhetorical situation:** In 1873, Anthony is under indictment for voting in the 1872 election; she is speaking, before her trial, to residents of the county from which the jury will be drawn, mostly men who hold the vote

she is claiming. Her purpose is to persuade them that women's voting is a constitutional right, so the occasion is simultaneously a defense, a lesson, and a campaign. Strong responses keep audience and occasion in view; "readers" and "the author" for a speech signal weaker engagement with the situation.

- **A defensible thesis** identifies specific choices and a purpose: for example, "Anthony casts herself as an instructor and builds her case from the Constitution's own text, then raises the emotional stakes by locating tyranny in her listeners' own homes, so that her audience sees the denial of the vote as a contradiction of their own principles."
- **Choices strong responses might analyze:** (1) the opening reversal, in which the indicted woman becomes the teacher ("It shall be my work this evening to prove to you"); (2) the verbatim Preamble as shared authority; (3) the antithesis and repetition of "not we, the white male citizens . . . but we, the whole people"; (4) "downright mockery" and the pairing of "secure" with "give"; (5) the short declaratives ("It is not a democracy. It is not a republic.") followed by the accumulation of "odious aristocracy; a hateful oligarchy of sex"; (6) the catalog of oligarchies "that might be endured," which positions sex-based rule as the worst; (7) the list of male and female kin that brings the injustice into every household; (8) the single-sentence appeal to dictionary and legal authority (Webster, Worcester, Bouvier); (9) the rhetorical question "Are women persons?" with its self-answer and the dare of "hardihood"; (10) the final comparison to the rights of Black men, tying the claim to Reconstruction principles; (11) the legal diction ("bill of attainder," "ex post facto," "null and void") that shows the argument is law, not sentiment; (12) the organization, which proceeds from definition to principle to indictment to syllogism.
- **Sophistication routes:** analysis of how the same speech has to flatter and indict the same men (they are both her audience and the "oligarchs"); the tension between Anthony's calm legal reasoning and the intensity of the "oligarchy" paragraph; the relevance of the potential-jury audience to the way she frames the question as one of law; the limits of her appeal to the 1860s amendments and the way she uses an incomplete victory for Black men as leverage.
- **Common traps:** labeling ethos/pathos/logos as the choice instead of describing the concrete move; naming "anaphora," "parallelism," or "juxtaposition" without showing the passage contains it; treating the speech as a written essay for "readers"; summarizing the Constitution rather than analyzing the choice to quote it; mistaking the 1873 context (writing that Anthony was "arrested for voting for president" is accurate; writing that she was "arguing for the Nineteenth Amendment" is anachronistic since it was ratified in 1920); explaining each device with "to emphasize" or "to persuade."

6-POINT SAMPLE (ABOUT 760 WORDS)

Susan B. Anthony faces a problem few orators confront: she must persuade men who may soon sit on her jury without sounding like a defendant begging to be spared. Her solution is to turn the accusation inside out. In the opening of her speech she reframes her indictment as a lesson in constitutional law, builds her case from the Constitution's own words rather than from pity, escalates from calm reasoning to a stinging picture of tyranny inside the home, and closes with a question her listeners can hardly answer except in her favor.

Anthony's first choice is to change who is on trial. She begins "under indictment," but within a sentence she promises "to prove to you" that she "committed no crime." The verb "prove" and the phrase "my work" cast her as an instructor and her listeners as students, while "alleged" quietly demotes the charge to an accusation. She also names her act in the language of rights: she "simply exercised my citizen's rights," rights "guaranteed to me and all United States citizens . . . beyond the power of any State to deny." "Simply" makes a bold act sound dutiful, and "all United States citizens" invites every man present to see his own rights as tied to hers. By the end of the first paragraph, an audience that came to look at a lawbreaker has been asked to examine a law.

Having set the terms, Anthony argues not from her own experience but from a text her audience reveres. She quotes the Preamble in full, handing listeners the shared words of their civic faith before commenting on them. Then she works on it with precision: "It was we, the people; not we, the white male citizens; nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people." The repeated "we, the" echoes the Preamble's rhythm, while the negations ("not . . . nor yet . . . but") strike out the qualifiers her opponents silently add. Because she appears only to repeat the document and subtract what it does not say, the antithesis makes the exclusion of women sound like an alteration of the Constitution rather than an interpretation of it. "Mockery," the first harsh word in the speech, is aimed at that contradiction, not at her audience.

Only after the logic is established does her language heat up, and the escalation is controlled. She moves from short, flat declaratives, "To them this government is not a democracy. It is not a republic," which sound like a verdict in the very words by which the nation praised itself, to a heap of condemnations: "an odious aristocracy; a hateful oligarchy of sex." Then comes her most skillful maneuver. She lists oligarchies her listeners might tolerate, of wealth, learning, even race, which "might be endured," and declares sex worse because it "makes father, brothers, husband, sons, the oligarchs over the mother and sisters, the wife and daughters of every household." The catalog of male kin places the tyranny inside each listener's own home and puts the men in the hall on the side of the oppressor, while the matching list of women makes the victims the people they love. By claiming that this system "carries dissension, discord and rebellion into every home," she presents suffrage not as a threat to domestic peace but as its cure.

The opening ends with a quiet, legalistic move. After a single-sentence paragraph citing "Webster, Worcester and Bouvier," whose dictionaries define a citizen as "a person . . . entitled to vote and hold office," Anthony asks the question her argument has been building toward: "Are women persons?" She answers it herself with dry understatement, doubting that any opponent "will have the hardihood to say they are not." "Hardihood" turns denial into an act of nerve and dares the audience to show it. Once the syllogism is complete, her last sentence, "null and void, precisely as in every one against Negroes," ties her claim to the principle that had just been applied to Black men, forcing listeners to extend to women the principle they had endorsed.

Anthony's choices work because she lets argument precede anger. She spends her calm on the Constitution, her intensity on injustice, and her final words on a question no juror can answer "no" without contradicting himself. In doing so she converts the occasion of her trial into the proof of her claim: she is not a criminal but a citizen, and an audience that has followed her reasoning has already begun to render its own verdict.

Scoring commentary (6/6). *Row A: 1.* The opening paragraph makes an analytic claim, naming the choices (reframing the indictment as a lesson, building from the Constitution's text, escalating to domestic tyranny, closing with a question) and tying them to the goal of persuading potential jurors. *Row B: 4.* The response follows the speech chronologically and builds a line of reasoning: she changes who is on trial → argues from the audience's own text → escalates only after the logic is established → closes with a question that traps denial. Each paragraph quotes specific language and explains the function of multiple choices (the verb "prove"; the Preamble's rhythm; the negations; short declaratives versus heaped adjectives; the kin catalog; "hardihood"; the final comparison). The commentary says what each choice does to the listener and why that serves her purpose, and it shows the choices working on each other (reason first, anger second). *Row C: 1.* The essay consistently relates the choices to the specific rhetorical situation (a defendant speaking to likely jurors), and it explains a tension in the speech: Anthony must indict the very men she needs to persuade, so she delays the heat until she has argued from their own text and then places them on the side of the oppressed women's households. The sophistication is part of the analysis rather than a single sentence.

4-POINT SAMPLE (ABOUT 460 WORDS)

In her speech “Is It a Crime for a U.S. Citizen to Vote?”, Susan B. Anthony uses a number of rhetorical choices to convince her audience that women’s voting is a constitutional right and not a crime. She uses the Preamble to the Constitution, repetition, and strong language to show her listeners that women are citizens who should be allowed to vote.

Anthony begins by quoting the Preamble to the Constitution. She quotes it word for word, “We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union.” This is a good choice because it is a document that her audience respects. By beginning with something that they already agree with, she makes them more likely to listen to her argument. It also gives her credibility, because she is not making up a new idea but using the Constitution itself. This shows that her audience cannot disagree with her without disagreeing with their own founding document.

Next, Anthony uses repetition and contrast to make her point. She says “not we, the white male citizens; nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people.” The repetition of “we” emphasizes that the Constitution includes everyone, and the “not . . . but” structure shows the difference between what her opponents say and what the Constitution really says. This is effective because it makes the exclusion of women seem unfair. She also says that it is “a downright mockery” to talk to women of liberty when they cannot vote, which is strong language that appeals to the audience’s emotions.

Anthony also uses strong diction in the next paragraph. She calls the government “an odious aristocracy” and “a hateful oligarchy of sex.” These words are very negative and make the audience feel that denying women the vote is a serious injustice. She compares it to other oligarchies, such as an oligarchy of wealth or of learning, and says that an oligarchy of sex is worse because it makes men rule over their mothers, wives, and daughters. This makes the audience think about their own families, which appeals to pathos.

Finally, Anthony ends with logic. She cites the dictionaries of Webster, Worcester and Bouvier to show that a citizen is a person who can vote. Then she asks “Are women persons?” and says that nobody would dare to say they are not. This is a rhetorical question and it makes the audience agree with her. Since women are persons, they are citizens, and so they have the right to vote.

In conclusion, Anthony uses the Constitution, repetition, strong language, and logic to show that women have the right to vote. Her rhetorical choices make her speech persuasive to her audience and help her prove that she did not commit a crime.

Scoring commentary (4/6). *Row A: 1.* The second sentence goes beyond restating the prompt by naming specific choices (the Preamble, repetition, strong language) and a purpose, so the point is earned, although the claim is general. *Row B: 3.* Evidence is specific and relevant (the Preamble, “not we, the white male citizens . . . but we, the whole people,” “odious aristocracy,” Webster, Worcester and Bouvier, “Are women persons?”), and the body paragraphs are in speech order. Commentary does explain how at least one choice contributes: quoting the Preamble gives credibility and means “her audience cannot disagree with her without disagreeing with their own founding document.” That meets the 3-point standard. The essay does not reach 4 because much of the commentary is generic (“this is effective because it makes the exclusion of women seem unfair”; “appeals to pathos”; “strong language”), the paragraphs are parallel devices rather than a developing line of reasoning, and the last paragraph merely lists the devices again. The audience is treated as a general “audience,” not as potential jurors in 1873. *Row C: 0.* There is no exploration of complexity or of the situation’s significance. The conclusion is a summary.

2-POINT SAMPLE (ABOUT 310 WORDS)

Susan B. Anthony gives a speech where she makes rhetorical choices to argue that women's voting is a constitutional right and not a crime. She uses ethos, pathos, and logos to persuade her audience.

First, Anthony uses ethos. She says "Friends and fellow citizens" which makes the audience trust her because she is talking to them like friends. She also says she is "under indictment" which shows she is a person who is willing to be in trouble for her beliefs. This makes her credible.

Second, Anthony uses pathos. She says that the government is "an odious aristocracy" and "a hateful oligarchy of sex." These words are very emotional and make the audience feel bad for women. She also says "it is a downright mockery" to talk to women about liberty. This is pathos because it makes people feel sad about women not having rights.

Third, Anthony uses logos. She quotes the Preamble and she says that "women are persons" and "persons are citizens." This is logical because if women are persons they are citizens. She also uses Webster, Worcester and Bouvier to prove that a citizen is a person. This is logos because it uses facts.

Anthony also uses repetition when she says "we, the people" and "we, the whole people." This emphasizes that the Constitution is for everyone. It makes the audience remember the words, which is a good technique for a speaker. She also uses a rhetorical question, "Are women persons?", which makes the audience think about the answer.

In conclusion, Anthony uses ethos, pathos, and logos to argue that women should have the right to vote. Her speech was very persuasive because it used so many different techniques at once. Anthony was also very brave to give this speech while she was in trouble with the law, and her speech helped women get the right to vote.

Scoring commentary (2/6). Row A: 0. The first sentence restates the prompt ("makes rhetorical choices to argue that women's voting is a constitutional right"), and "uses ethos, pathos, and logos" names appeals without making a claim about what Anthony's particular choices do. Row B: 2. The response includes some specific quotations ("Friends and fellow citizens," "odious aristocracy," Webster, Worcester and Bouvier) and gives a brief explanation of how some relate to an appeal. However, the commentary is generic ("makes the audience trust her," "emotional," "uses facts"); the paragraphs are sorted by label rather than building a line of reasoning; "persons are citizens" is presented as a quotation although it paraphrases; and the claim in the final sentence is anachronistic and unsupported. This is a 2 because of the specific evidence and partial explanations, but it does not establish a line of reasoning. Row C: 0. No sophistication is demonstrated.

Question 3 — Argument: Connectivity and Solitude**RUBRIC**

ROW	POINTS	DESCRIPTION
A. Thesis	0	Does not respond with a defensible position on the extent to which the claim is valid. Examples: restates the prompt; says only that "there are many sides" or that connectivity "has pros and cons"; or states a fact ("Phones are widely used").

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ROW	POINTS	DESCRIPTION
	1	Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation by (1) crafting a nuanced argument by consistently identifying and exploring complexities or tensions; (2) articulating the implications or limitations of an argument by situating it within a broader context; (3) making rhetorical choices that consistently strengthen the force and impact of the argument; or (4) employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.

What does NOT earn Row C: broad generalizations offered as context (“Since the dawn of time, humans have needed connection”); a token counterargument paragraph that is dismissed in one sentence; hinting at complexity (for example, “Of course, technology has benefits too”) without exploring it; or ornate language that does not strengthen the argument.

SCORING NOTES FOR THIS PROMPT

- **A defensible thesis** takes a position on both parts of the claim or explains how the two parts relate. “Connectivity has made solitude rarer, and the loss matters because solitude is where independent thought forms” is defensible. “Technology is both good and bad” is not.
- **Define key terms.** The Chief Reader reports consistently reward writers who define the abstract term before arguing. Here, the key distinctions are solitude (chosen, productive aloneness) versus loneliness (unwanted isolation) and versus mere physical absence. A response that treats “alone” as “unconnected” or conflates solitude with loneliness will have shaky reasoning.
- **Strong responses might argue:** (1) the claim is fully valid: unstructured moments have been colonized by screens, and independent thinking needs them; (2) the claim is valid about “rarer” but overstated about “necessary,” because connectivity gives some people (isolated, disabled, marginalized) companionship and even new forms of reflection; (3) solitude has always been scarce for most people (large families, shared housing, labor), so connectivity changes its character rather than its rarity; (4) the claim is partly valid but misses that solitude is now also a matter of privilege, since those with time and quiet space can unplug and others cannot; (5) “necessary” is the stronger half: the real threat is the loss of the ability to be alone with one’s mind, which affects creativity, ethics, and citizenship; (6) a distinction between solitude as absence of others and solitude as absence of input, which reframes the claim; (7) a historical argument that every communication technology (printing, telegraph, radio, television) has prompted similar fears, with an analysis of what is actually different about a device that is always on and always with us.
- **Evidence types that work:** historical and literary cases analyzed closely (Thoreau, Pascal, Newton, Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own*, monastic traditions, the Romantic walkers), research (the 2014 study of people choosing shocks over quiet is often used; an unsupported “studies show” is general), contemporary observation (school phone policies, commuting, concerts), and personal experience with specific impact. Evidence earns Row B only when the writer explains how it bears on the abstract claim.

- **Common traps:** (a) listing phone anecdotes without explaining why they show solitude has become “necessary”; (b) treating loneliness epidemics as evidence about solitude; (c) a formulaic counterargument paragraph that concedes and dismisses; (d) anachronistic or invented facts (for example, claiming Thoreau lived wholly isolated, or citing a statistic without source or qualification); (e) moralizing about “kids today” without argument; (f) writing about whether technology is good or bad rather than the specific claim.

6-POINT SAMPLE (ABOUT 730 WORDS)

Henry David Thoreau did not actually live alone at Walden Pond. He walked into Concord often, dined with friends, and let visitors fill his cabin's three chairs. The detail matters, because it suggests that what Thoreau found “so companionable” was not isolation but control: a solitude he could enter and leave on his own terms. By that standard, the claim that constant connectivity has made solitude rarer and more necessary is largely valid, but with an important correction. Connectivity has not abolished aloneness; it has stolen the chosen, unoccupied kind of aloneness in which people think for themselves, and that is exactly why the loss matters.

Begin with “rarer,” which is the easiest half to defend. Solitude was never really threatened by empty space; it was protected by empty time: the wait for the bus, the walk home, the minutes before sleep. Those gaps are precisely what the smartphone is designed to fill. In a 2014 study published in *Science*, participants left alone with their thoughts for fifteen minutes found the experience so unpleasant that many preferred to give themselves mild electric shocks. That experiment is often cited as proof that people dislike solitude, but it is better read as evidence of how quickly the habit of avoiding it forms. When a screen is always available, no one has to learn to sit with an unfilled mind. What has become rare is not being alone, since a teenager scrolling in a bedroom is physically alone, but being alone without input.

The word “necessary” is harder, and it is where the claim requires a definition. Solitude is necessary, I would argue, because it is the condition in which a person's own judgment forms. Blaise Pascal wrote that all of humanity's troubles come from our inability to sit quietly in a room alone, and Isaac Newton's most productive years followed his withdrawal from Cambridge during the plague of 1665. Neither example proves that genius requires isolation, but both show the same mechanism: ideas need to be turned over without an audience, and opinions need to be tried out before they are shared. The constant-connectivity world interferes with exactly that process. When every thought can be posted, a thought can be shaped from the start by its expected reception, by what will draw likes or provoke correction. The danger is not that a connected mind has nothing to think about, but that it never finds out what it would think unobserved. A society of people who have never been alone with their opinions is a society whose opinions are especially easy to manufacture and to herd.

The strongest objection is that connectivity has also made solitude easier in some ways, and that “more necessary” could overlook those who are lonely rather than solitary. A rural teenager finds a community online that her town cannot offer; a person with a chronic illness can talk to the world from a bed; and a phone can be switched off. These points deserve weight, because they show that technology cannot simply be blamed. But they also sharpen my claim instead of refuting it. Loneliness, the pain of wanting company, is different from solitude, the freely chosen use of one's own company, and connectivity can ease the first while crowding out the second. The lonely person who connects online has found companionship; he has not, thereby, found his own thoughts. And the fact that a phone *can* be switched off is exactly the problem: a protection that depends on constant willpower against a device engineered to hold attention is a fragile protection. Thoreau needed two miles of woods; most of us carry the town in our pockets.

This is why the claim's second half is more important than its first. If solitude were only rarer, it could be treated as a minor loss of nostalgia, like handwriting. Because it is also necessary, its decline is a cost to the quality of thought and, in a democracy of people who must form their own opinions, to citizenship itself. The remedy is therefore not to abandon technology but to treat solitude the way Thoreau did, as something deliberately built into a life: a phone left in another room, a walk without headphones, a school day with unscheduled time. Constant connectivity has made solitude both rarer and more necessary, but only a connected person who chooses stillness can still find out how much it matters.

Scoring commentary (6/6). *Row A:* 1. The first paragraph states a qualified, defensible position: the claim is "largely valid, but with an important correction" (what is lost is chosen, unoccupied aloneness, and that is why the loss matters). *Row B:* 4. The line of reasoning builds: Thoreau's solitude was controlled → "rarer" is true because empty time is filled (the *Science* study is interpreted rather than just reported) → "necessary" because independent judgment forms in solitude (Pascal, Newton, the effect of an imagined audience) → objections (online community, ability to switch off) are answered by distinguishing loneliness from solitude → the stakes extend to citizenship and a practical remedy. Evidence is specific (Thoreau's three chairs and walks to town, the 2014 study, Pascal, 1665) and every example is tied to a claim about solitude, not just to phones. Commentary is consistent and often says something the evidence does not say on its own (for example, that the experiment shows how fast the avoidance habit forms). *Row C:* 1. The response explores real complexity (solitude versus loneliness; connectivity as both a relief and a theft; the fragile protection of willpower) as part of the argument, and it begins with a nuanced reading of the stimulus's own example. The final paragraph situates the claim in a broader context of citizenship.

4-POINT SAMPLE (ABOUT 470 WORDS)

I agree with the statement that constant connectivity has made solitude both rarer and more necessary. In today's world people are always on their phones, and it is hard to find time to be alone with your thoughts. This is a problem because solitude is important for creativity and mental health.

Solitude is rarer today because of smartphones and social media. In the past, people had moments when they were alone, such as waiting for a bus or walking to school, and they would just think. Now, people take out their phones whenever they have a free minute. For example, at my school, almost everybody has their phone out in the hallway between classes, instead of just walking and thinking. Even when people are alone in their rooms, they are texting or scrolling on social media, so they are not really alone. This shows that solitude is harder to find now than before.

Solitude is also more necessary now because we are surrounded by so much information. Henry David Thoreau went to live at Walden Pond for two years so that he could think about life without distractions. He wrote that he never found a companion as companionable as solitude. If Thoreau needed to get away from society in the 1800s, then we need it even more today because there is so much more noise. Solitude gives people time to think about who they are and what they believe. Without it, people just follow what everyone else says online. When I have a free afternoon without my phone, I notice that I come up with ideas for my own projects, but when I am scrolling I mostly react to what other people have posted. That suggests that being connected pushes out the kind of thinking that comes from inside a person.

Some people might say that connectivity is a good thing because it helps people stay in touch with their friends and family. This is true, especially during the pandemic, when people could not see each other. However, being connected all the time is still a problem because people never get a break. Research shows that teenagers who

spend more time on social media are more anxious and depressed, which proves that we need time away from our devices.

It is also true that solitude is not the same as being lonely. A person can be alone and happy, or surrounded by people and lonely, so the goal is not to cut people off from each other but to leave room for quiet. Schools could help by giving students short breaks without devices, which would be a small step toward this goal.

In conclusion, constant connectivity has made solitude rarer and more necessary. If people want to be creative and healthy, they should put down their phones and spend some time alone.

Scoring commentary (4/6). *Row A:* 1. The opening takes a clear position. It largely echoes the prompt, but the added reason (creativity and mental health) makes it a defensible claim. *Row B:* 3. Evidence is mostly specific (the hallway at school; Thoreau at Walden for two years; the quotation about solitude), and a line of reasoning is present (rarer, then more necessary, then a counterargument). Commentary explains how some evidence supports the claim: the hallway observation does illustrate lost “thinking” time, and the Thoreau example is extended to a reasoned inference (“if Thoreau needed to get away . . . we need it even more”). It stops short of 4 because the commentary is uneven: the “research shows” sentence is a vague, unsourced generalization that “proves” more than it can (and shifts from solitude to anxiety, a different issue); “so they are not really alone” confuses being alone with being unconnected without defining solitude; and the final claim that people “just follow what everyone else says online” is asserted, not explained. *Row C:* 0. The counterargument is a brief concession (“This is true . . . However”) that does not explore any tension, and the closing advice is a generalization.

2-POINT SAMPLE (ABOUT 320 WORDS)

Constant connectivity has made solitude rarer and more necessary, and I think this is very true. Nowadays everyone is on their phone all the time and nobody has time to be alone anymore. Phones and social media are always there and they make it hard to have quiet time.

One reason solitude is rarer is that people have phones. For example, a lot of people go on their phones when they are bored. They look at Instagram, TikTok, and other apps for hours and hours. This means that they never are alone with their thoughts. Also people text their friends all day which means they are never alone. My cousin sleeps with her phone next to her pillow and checks it every time it buzzes, even at night.

Another reason is that solitude is necessary for people. People need time to think about their lives. If you are always on your phone you cannot think about things. Many studies show that being alone is good for your mind. Thoreau also said that solitude is the best companion, so it must be important.

Some people might say that phones are good because you can talk to your friends. But I think phones are bad because they make people lonely. People who are on social media a lot feel lonely and sad. So connectivity is bad for solitude. Teachers should tell students to put their phones away more often so that they can have time to think. Many of my friends say they could not go a day without their phones, which shows how much people rely on them. Parents should also set rules about phones at home because it is important for kids to have quiet time.

In conclusion, connectivity has made solitude rarer and more necessary. People should spend less time on their phones and more time being alone. If everyone did this, the world would be a better place.

Scoring commentary (2/6). *Row A:* 1. The first sentence takes a clear position (“this is very true”), so it earns the thesis point even though it largely repeats the prompt. *Row B:* 1. Evidence is general (“a lot of people,” “hours and hours,” “many studies show”) and the single specific reference, Thoreau, is used as an authority (“so it must be important”) rather than analyzed. Commentary restates the claim (“This means that they never are alone with

their thoughts”) and does not explain how any example demonstrates that solitude is necessary. The counterargument conflates loneliness with a lack of solitude (“phones . . . make people lonely”), which undermines the reasoning. No line of reasoning is established. *Row C: 0.* Generalizations (“the world would be a better place”) and a token concession do not earn sophistication.

Part 5. Final Notes for Teachers and Tutors

- **Scoring consistency.** When you are unsure between two scores on Row B, ask two questions: (1) Does every claim have specific evidence? (2) Does the commentary say something about the evidence that the evidence does not already say? If only some commentary does, the response is a 3; if nearly all does, it is a 4.
- **Reading the writing questions.** The most effective habit on Section I Writing sets is to restate the stem’s goal in five words (“add commentary,” “formal tone,” “fair to opponent”) and test each choice against that goal only. Distractors are often well-written sentences that do something else.
- **Q5 and Q16 vocabulary.** Both items turn on archaic or specialized senses of familiar words (“common,” “bubbled”). Encourage students to test each choice by substituting it into the sentence and checking whether the surrounding logic survives.

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