Scoring Guide for 2003 AP English Language and Composition Exam, Question 3

General Directions: This scoring guide will be useful for most of the essays that you read. If it seems inappropriate for a specific essay, ask your Table Leader for assistance. Always show your Table Leader books that seem to have no response or that contain responses that seem unrelated to the question. Do not assign a score of 0 or without this consultation.

Your score should reflect your judgment of the essay’s quality as a whole. Remember that students had only 40 minutes to read and write; the essay is not a finished product and should not be judged by standards that are appropriate for out-of-class writing assignments. Evaluate the essay as a draft, making certain that you reward students for what they do well.

All essays, even those scored 8 and 9, may contain occasional flaws in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. Such lapses should enter into your holistic evaluation of an essay’s overall quality. In no case should you score an essay with many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics higher than a 2.

9 Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for 8 papers and, in addition, provide an especially full or perceptive comparison and contrast or demonstrate an impressive control of language.

8 Essays earning a score of 8 effectively compare and contrast how John James Audubon and Annie Dillard describe the birds and convey their effect on the authors. These essays refer to the texts, explicitly or implicitly, offering specific details to support their explanations of how the authors describe the birds and convey their effect. Their prose demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not flawless.

7 Essays earning a score of 7 fit the description of 6 essays but are distinguished by a more complete or more purposeful comparison and contrast or a more mature prose style.

6 Essays earning a score of 6 adequately compare and contrast how the authors describe the birds and convey their effect. These essays refer to the texts, explicitly or implicitly, but offer less detailed and/or less convincing explanations. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

5 Essays earning a score of 5 compare and contrast how the authors describe the birds and convey their effect, but these essays may provide uneven or inconsistent explanations. They may compare and contrast in a superficial way or demonstrate a limited understanding of how the authors describe the birds and convey their effect. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the writer’s ideas adequately.

4 Essays earning a score of 4 respond to the prompt inadequately. They may have difficulty comparing and contrasting or explaining how the authors describe the birds and convey their effect. The prose generally conveys the writers’ ideas but may suggest immature control of writing.

3 Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but demonstrate less success in comparing and contrasting or less control of writing.

2 Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate little success in comparing and contrasting how the authors describe the birds and convey their effect. These essays may offer vague generalizations, substitute simpler tasks such as summarizing, offer no explanation of how the authors describe the birds and convey their effect, or offer descriptions of their own observations of birds. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing.

1 Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but are especially simplistic in content or weak in their control of writing.

0 Indicates an on-topic response that receives no credit, such as one that merely repeats the prompt.

— Indicates a blank response or one that is completely off topic.