

# AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

## 2015 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Question 1

The essay's score should reflect the essay's quality as a whole. Remember that students had only 15 minutes to read the sources and 40 minutes to write; the essay, therefore, is not a finished product and should not be judged by standards appropriate for an out-of-class assignment. Evaluate the essay as a draft, making certain to reward students for what they do well.

All essays, even those scored 8 or 9, may contain occasional lapses in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. Such features should enter into your holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. In no case should you give a score higher than a 2 to a paper with errors in grammar and mechanics that persistently interfere with your understanding of meaning.

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**9** – Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for the score of 8 and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their argument, thorough in development, or impressive in their control of language.

#### **8 – Effective**

Essays earning a score of 8 **effectively** argue a position on whether a school should establish, maintain, reconsider, or eliminate an honor code or honor system. They develop their argument by effectively synthesizing\* at least three of the sources. The evidence and explanations used are appropriate and convincing. Their prose demonstrates a consistent ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not necessarily flawless.

**7** – Essays earning a score of 7 meet the criteria for the score of 6 but provide more complete explanation, more thorough development, or a more mature prose style.

#### **6 – Adequate**

Essays earning a score of 6 **adequately** argue a position on whether a school should establish, maintain, revise, or eliminate an honor code or honor system. They develop their argument by adequately synthesizing at least three of the sources. The evidence and explanations used are appropriate and sufficient. The language may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

**5** – Essays earning a score of 5 argue a position on whether a school should establish, maintain, revise, or eliminate an honor code or honor system. They develop their argument by synthesizing at least three sources, but how they use and explain sources may be uneven, inconsistent, or limited. The writer's argument is generally clear, and the sources generally develop the writer's position, but the links between the sources and the argument may be strained. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the writer's ideas.

# AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

## 2015 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Question 1 (continued)

#### 4 – Inadequate

Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately** argue a position on whether a school should establish, maintain, revise, or eliminate an honor code or honor system. They develop their argument by synthesizing at least two sources, but the evidence or explanations used may be inappropriate, insufficient, or unconvincing. The sources may dominate the student's attempts at development, the link between the argument and the sources may be weak, or the student may misunderstand, misrepresent, or oversimplify the sources. The prose generally conveys the writer's ideas but may be inconsistent in controlling the elements of effective writing.

**3** – Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but demonstrate less success in arguing a position on whether a school should establish, maintain, revise, or eliminate an honor code or honor system. They are less perceptive in their understanding of the sources, or their explanation or examples may be particularly limited or simplistic. The essays may show less maturity in their control of writing.

#### 2 – Little Success

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in arguing a position on whether a school should establish, maintain, revise, or eliminate an honor code or honor system. They may merely allude to knowledge gained from reading the sources rather than citing the sources themselves. The student may misread the sources, fail to develop a position, or substitute a simpler task by merely summarizing or categorizing the sources or by merely responding to the prompt tangentially with unrelated, inaccurate, or inappropriate explanation. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as grammatical problems, a lack of development or organization, or a lack of control.

**1** – Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but are undeveloped, especially simplistic in their explanation, weak in their control of writing, or do not allude to or cite even one source.

**0** – Indicates an off-topic response, one that merely repeats the prompt, an entirely crossed-out response, a drawing, or a response in a language other than English.

— Indicates an entirely blank response.

\* For the purposes of scoring, synthesis means using sources to develop a position and citing them accurately.

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

1 1A  
(1 of 3)

The conflict regarding the utilization of honor codes can be seen in any school system, from elementary schools to college. Some argue that honor codes are ineffective ~~in~~ in reducing cheating in schools, but statistically, this is not the case. ~~For many reasons~~ while some argue that honor codes should not be implemented for reasons such as ineffectiveness of the code and the creation of a "big brother"-esque environment, honor codes should in fact be implemented because they promote a healthy academic environment, they statistically lower the percentage of ~~the~~ academic dishonesty in schools, and they are adaptable to fit any school environment.

Firstly, one might think that honor codes will create a totalitarian sort of school environment. This idea can be seen in Aaron Bacall's comic, which satirically states that "a spycam can greatly improve the ~~an~~ honor code" (Bacall). While this is a reasonable assumption, it doesn't hold up when put to the test. For example, in an article by Donald McCabe and Gary Pavela, they point out that "many schools with honor codes allow students to take their exams without proctors present, relying on peer monitoring to control cheating" (McCabe and Pavela). They go on to say that "a peer culture develops on honor code campuses that just makes cheating socially unacceptable. This proves that an honor code system can be implemented without excessive monitoring of students."

secondly, some say that an honor code would do little



to actually reduce cheating. This idea can be seen in the responses of students at Lawrence Academy in Alyssa Vangelis's article, stating that they did "not see it as their responsibility" when asked to report cheating. (Vangelis) Another example is the Harvard students in Jennifer Dirmeyer and Alexander Cartwright's article on honor codes, who "are skeptical that signing a piece of paper will suddenly cause a cheater to change their ways" (Dirmeyer and Cartwright) while these are valid assumptions, it can be seen later in Dirmeyer and Cartwright's article that a strictly enforced honor code run by students reduces the likelihood of someone to cheat due to punishments ranging from suspension to expulsion in addition to the social disapproval attached to cheating in honor code schools. (Dirmeyer and Cartwright) Furthermore, to return to McCabe and Pavela's article, "the highest levels of cheating are usually found at colleges that have not engaged their students in active dialogue on the issue of academic dishonesty" (McCabe and Pavela) Due to these factors, the implementation of some form of the honor codes system is proven to reduce cheating.

Furthermore, one might say that a too strict or too lenient honor code would not be especially effective where they attend school. However, as can be seen in Vangelis's article, honor codes can be changed to accommodate the students. For example, the students at Lawrence Academy thought that the original pledge of honor system, being applied to every



piece of work was too excessive, so it was changed to ~~only~~  
so that students only had to sign a pledge of honesty once  
each term (Rangelli). This is further supported by Dirmeyer  
and Curtwright's experience with Hampden-Sydney College  
where there is an honor code punishment system, but the  
professors are able to be outside of the room during exams,  
because the peer-influenced system is in play. (Curtwright and  
Dirmeyer). These two examples show that the honor code  
system is flexible and can be effective in many different  
environments.

In conclusion, honor codes should be ~~implemented~~ implemented  
in all schools because they foster <sup>honest</sup> good academic environments,  
they are ~~statistically~~ proven to reduce levels of cheating when  
put into practice, and the codes are adaptable to fit any  
environment. ~~There~~ There are many who oppose the honor code  
system for various reasons, but when looked at in a  
larger scope, the honor code system is effective far more  
often than not.

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

# 1 1B  
(1 of 3)

As a student gets older, the question of honor within themselves is based on his or her's own integrity. The acknowledgment of receiving a high grade on a test using one's own knowledge is far more satisfying than knowing the answers are someone else's. Therefore, an honor system is almost mandatory, making sure that everyone's assignments came from their own knowledge. ~~While a honor system is established~~ The honor system at my school should be maintained because of its fairness to students while also punishing them for their actions simultaneously.

Students across the globe should feel secure when taking an exam in that no one around them is copying their responses. A code of honor aids such ~~for~~ security by making students aware of those around them. Some schools go to extreme lengths to inflict a code of honor on their students. For example, Alyssa Vangelli admits that her school of Lawrence Academy is over the top with the honor system when she states, "Another part of the code which received student criticism was a requirement for students to write a pledge of honor on every piece of work submitted, stating



#1

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

1B  
(2 of 3)

that it was the result of their own thinking and effort." While a code of honor is necessary in school systems, it is an onerous task to make the students write ~~an~~<sup>out</sup> an entire pledge of honor before completing each assignment. Likewise, my school has a solid system that punishes students for plagiarism and cheating, but does so in a way that the student is not ~~ruined~~<sup>ruined for life</sup>. Furthermore, the students get a zero ~~and~~ on an assignment and possible suspension which is fairly reasonable considering the offense.

In comparison to a code of honor within my school, I believe that a peer-enforced honor system should be added to schools across the nation. Not only does this system keep students from plagiarizing or cheating, but it furthermore allows the students to be honest human-beings which could undeniably help them when obtaining a job or career. As Jennifer Dirmeyer and Alexander Cartwright state in their article in the Chronicle of Higher Education, "With a peer-enforced honor code, the likelihood of being caught depends on other students' tolerance for cheating." I whole-heartedly agree with Dirmeyer and Cartwright's claims on peer-enforcing an honor code. Such a system could boost not ~~not~~



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

\* 1 1B  
(3 of 3)

only my school but schools and universities across the nation in lowering percentages of cheating and plagiarism rates.

Overall, people across the ~~whole~~ nation should care <sup>about</sup> ~~to~~ and be concerned with the honesty in schools. ~~Parents~~ Responsible parents hope to see their children as honest and respectable adults when they become older. To see such honesty, maintaining an honor code is critical as the children/students learn ~~to be~~ to be honest and to have integrity.

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

Question 1 1C  
(1 of 2)

Though the official "Honor Code" ideal has been enforced in schools for 17 years (Source B), its core principles are those that have been ideal for thousands of years. Honesty is a trait that has well lived out the existence of high schools itself. It's an idea of common decency and a portrayal of good character then it is "another rule to ~~obey~~" (B).

From a young age, we are taught not to lie, cheat, or steal, or else face consequence. This ~~can~~ <sup>fear</sup> can allivate our human instincts to do exactly ~~what~~ <sup>what</sup> we are told not to do. Even in Moses's Ten Commandments, we were taught a basic honor code. A common violation of an Honor code, particularly in college, (Source F) is plagiarism. This "habit" begins in high school where an honor code may not be strictly enforced. However, a student survey at a school with an official honor code states that 48% of students do not believe the code is fairly enforced, and only 8% would report a student for cheating (E). This may be a result of the honor code not being blatantly or actively effective.

~~While many students~~ While many students may claim that honor codes are ineffective, just as many would advocate in a honor code's favor. The fragility ~~of~~ of an honor code can be reinforced by



Question 1

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

1C  
(2 of 2)

by applicable teachings early in a child's schooling career. It's simply an issue of the morals learned in the early stages of life that can immensely benefit the presence of an honor code in schools.

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# AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

## 2015 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 1

#### Overview

As its label “Synthesis” suggests, Question 1 was intended to test students’ abilities to combine and coordinate several academic literacy skills in concert. These skills in reading, writing and thinking may be categorized as follows: 1) comprehension of the prompt; 2) comprehension and critique of individual verbal and visual texts; 3) synthetic or “holistic” comprehension of a multiperspectival inquiry — the “academic conversation” represented by the sources collectively; 4) academic argumentation, the student’s own entry into the conversation; 5) acknowledgement and explanation of other sources’ contributions to the students’ argument.

This year’s prompt directed students to apply their reading of the sources to their own lives, developing independent arguments on whether and/or how their own schools should “establish, maintain, reconsider, or eliminate” an honor code. The prompt defined honor codes as “sets of rules or principles that are intended to cultivate integrity” and that “often take the form of written positions on practices like cheating, stealing, and plagiarizing as well as on the consequences of violating the established codes.” The prompt also directed students to synthesize a minimum of three of the six sources and to clearly identify the sources they decided to use, offering two citation style options — author’s names or letters A-F. The prompt specified that citations are needed regardless of the form in which the sources’ contributions are presented — as quotations, paraphrases, or summaries. Students were cautioned not to confuse the argument task of this question with a demand for “mere summary,” i.e., mere comprehension of the sources without critical analysis of their arguments and critical consideration of their multiple perspectives. Instead, they were to “use” the sources in constructing their own independent arguments. By asking students to focus their responses on their own schools, this year’s synthesis prompt invited students to bring first-person experiences and observations into conversation with the sources.

#### Sample: 1A

##### Score: 7

This essay adequately argues that honor codes “should be implemented in all schools because they foster honest academic environments, they are proven to reduce levels of cheating when put into practice, and the codes are adaptable to fit any environment.” Recognizing that some might dispute the effectiveness of honor codes and “the creation of a ‘big brother’-esque environment,” the essay refutes the skeptics’ arguments by pointing out that schools with honor codes are able to rely on peer-monitoring of exams (Source F) and to reduce the likelihood of cheating through punishment and social disapproval (Source C). This line of argument is developed by synthesizing appropriate and sufficient evidence from the sources. However, at times, the essay makes a more general claim than the sources support, demonstrating an adequate but not effective argument. For example, the essay concludes by arguing that *all* schools should implement honor codes without considering the nuances of the issue. Nevertheless, the essay demonstrates a more thorough development and more mature prose style than an essay scored 6, so it earned a score of 7.

#### Sample: 1B

##### Score: 4

This essay inadequately argues that the honor system at the student’s school “should be maintained because of its fairness to students while also punishing them for their actions.” Using only two sources (Sources B and C), the essay exhibits an insufficient synthesis of the sources as well as inadequate support for the argument. For example, the essay inaccurately draws upon Source B to claim that Alyssa Vangelli “admits that her school of Lawrence Academy is over the top with the honor system”; what the source actually says is that students at Lawrence revised a draft of the honor code which would have required students to write an honor pledge on all assignments, not that this requirement was ever instituted. More importantly, this

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**2015 SCORING COMMENTARY**

**Question 1 (continued)**

source is not employed to support the argument for maintaining an honor code. The essay asserts that the student's school has a "solid" honor system but provides insufficient evidence for this claim. Midway through the essay, the student introduces a new idea, that "schools across the nation" should incorporate "a peer-enforced honor system." This argument is neither adequately explained nor supported. The prose generally conveys the student's ideas; however, this essay earned a score of 4 for the weak link between its argument and the sources, its unconvincing arguments, and its inadequate explanations.

**Sample: 1C**

**Score: 2**

This essay demonstrates little success in arguing whether a school should establish, maintain, revise, or eliminate an honor code. Instead, the essay largely substitutes the simpler task of arguing for the value of honesty and other values in honor codes that have existed "for thousands of years." Relying heavily on summary rather than synthesis, the essay consistently fails to develop an argument or go beyond repeating information from the sources; for example, the essay repeats Source F's observation that a "common violation of an Honor code ... is plagiarism" but shows little success in using the source to develop or support an argument. The essay confusingly concludes that the "frugality of an honor code can be reinforced by applicable teachings early in a child's schooling career." For its inappropriate explanations, lack of development, and failure to address the prompt, the essay earned a score of 2.