AP Literature Writing Rubric

9-8 (A+)

9 is the top score, but there is a very little difference between a 9 and 8, both being scores for excellent papers which combine adherence to the topic with excellent organization, content, and insight facile use of language, and mastery of mechanics. 9 essays demonstrate uncommon skill and sometimes put a cultural/historical frame around the subject. Descriptors that come to mind while reading include **mastery, sophisticated, complex, specific, consistent, and well supported. The paper is well organized**; it follows a logical sequence (general to specific, most to least important point, chronological order). It follows the prompt well. The introduction follows the guidelines provided. The thesis is clear, focused, narrow and direct.

7 (A)

7 is a thinner version of the excellent paper, still impressive, cogent, convincing, but less well handled in terms of organization, insight or vocabulary. Descriptors that come to mind while reading include **clear understanding, less precise, less well supported, and maturing, this writer has potential, but hasn't quite got to it all. The paper is well organized and logical.** It has adequate support, but needs specific detail to improve. The topic sentences touch on the basics of the essay topic with the novel but may be buried. Support is fair, but explanation (commentary) needs development; the paper lacks an appropriate conclusion. "7" papers tend to have two out of three points are well made and are in depth; one point is weak, too superficial, or incorrect.

6-5 (B/C)

6 is an above average paper, but it may be deficient in one of the essentials mentioned above. It may be less mature in thought or less well handled in terms of organization, syntax, or mechanics. Descriptors might include **less mature, some difficulties, but just above average.** The 5 paper is the thinner version of the 6. Readers prefer to separate essays into top half or bottom half. The five defies that process. Descriptors might include **superficial, meager, irrelevant, and insufficient.** The explanation (commentary) is inadequate or vague; the support is weak, too general, or fails to prove a point. The introduction is fair to weak, and fails to introduce the topic or fails to address the key ingredients of the topic and/or address the name of the author. Two or three points are weak or incorrect. More errors are careless. The thesis is weak and/or misdirected. There are some grammatical errors. "6" papers tend to have problems with development of the essay idea, but they are at least addressed.

4-3 (C/D)

4 is an average to below average paper which maintains the general idea of the writing assignment, shows some sense of organization, but is weak in content, maturity of thought, language facility, and/or mechanics. It may distort the topic or fail to deal adequately with the one important aspect of the topic. The 3 essay compounds the weaknesses of the 4. Some descriptors that come to mind include **incomplete, oversimplified, meager, irrelevant, and insufficient.** The explanation (commentary) and support are inadequate or missing. The thesis is weak, unclear, or missing. There may be careless use of first person. Two or three points are weak or incorrect. There is no connection to the prompt and/or the concrete detail is simply plot summary. Word choice is awkward or simplistic. A "3" paper will have numerous careless errors. A common problem here is the paper is too brief; ideas are presented, but not developed sufficiently.

2-1 (D/E)

2 is the score assigned to a paper that makes an attempt to deal with the topic but demonstrates serious weaknesses in content and coherence and/or syntax and mechanics. It is an unacceptable grade. Descriptors include **serious misreading, unacceptably brief,** and/or **poorly written.** 1 is the score given to any on-topic response that has very little redeeming quality. It may be brief or very long, but will scarcely coherent, usually full of mechanical errors or completely missed the focus of the prompt. Descriptors include **vacuous, inexact, and mechanically unsound.**