AP English Literature & Composition Essay Rubric [based on Advanced Placement grading]

9-8   9 is the top score, but there is 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.**

7   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, maturity, this writer has potential, but hasn't quite got to it all.**

6   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.**

5   The 5 paper is the thinner version of the 6. Readers prefer to separated essays into top half or bottom half. The five defies that process. Descriptors might include **superficial, meager, irrelevant, and insufficient.**

4-3   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.**

2   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   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.**

0   0 is given to a response with no more than a reference to the task.
-   Indicates a blank response or one with no reference to the task.

1-9 Descriptors

1 & 2
- Off topic
- Soap Box Lecture
- "I"
- Argues against writer's position
- Testimonials
- Teacher Lecture
- Defining of Terms
- Major grammatical problems
- Brevity
- 0 Analysis
- Inaccuracies

3 &4
- "Listers" "Labelers" (0 analysis)
- Pointless allusion
- Paraphrasing through over quoting (i.e., long passages)
- Limited task (i.e., diction
- Proving the obvious
- Poor analogies
- "Obviously"; 2nd person (you)
- Colloquial diction "even"
- Clichés ("makes you stop and wonder")

- Implied analysis, but inaccurate
- Funnel opening (truisms)
- Immature focus (get the reader's attention)
- 0 sense of completion (abrupt)

5 & 6
- Inconsistent but adequate
- Less difficult concepts (i.e. diction - rather than POV, symbolism, syntax)
- Linear in organization
- (step by step) Laborious
- Rigid organization
- Occasional insight
- Limit thesis - often 3 parts
- Summary conclusion
- Once over lightly

7
- More fluid in style
- Sections insightful
- Often one section well developed by student affected by time
- Clear or implied thesis
- Attempts more difficult tasks

- Sense of completion

8
- Strong sense of control - organization
- Insightful (often tied to human condition)
- Mature in style and vocabulary
- Tight link of support (text references) to author's intent

9
- Magical at times
- Attempts more challenging concepts (i.e., figurative lang., symbolism, extended metaphor, organization, pacing, narrative strategies
- Mature beginnings
- Takes risks - always under control