

## Question 2

(Suggested time — 40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

The following excerpt from Thomas Hardy's novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) describes Tess Durbeyfield, a young woman who leaves her parents' home to work on a dairy farm. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Hardy's narrator characterizes the relationship between Tess and her new environment.

Tess Durbeyfield, then, in good heart, and full of zest for life, descended the Egdon slopes lower and lower towards the dairy of her pilgrimage.

Line The marked difference, in the final particular,  
5 between the rival vales now showed itself. The secret of Blackmoor was best discovered from the heights around: to read aright the valley before her it was necessary to descend into its midst. When Tess had accomplished this feat she found herself to be  
10 standing on a carpeted level, which stretched to the east and west as far as the eye could reach.

The river had stolen from the higher tracts and brought in particles to the vale all this horizontal land; and now, exhausted, aged, and attenuated, lay  
15 serpentine along through the midst of its former spoils.

Not quite sure of her direction Tess stood still upon the hemmed expanse of verdant flatness, like a fly on a billiard-table of indefinite length, and of no more  
20 consequence to the surroundings than that fly. The sole effect of her presence upon the placid valley so far had been to excite the mind of a solitary heron, which, after descending to the ground not far from her path, stood with neck erect looking at her.

25 Suddenly there arose from all parts of the lowland a prolonged and repeated call: "Waow! waow! waow!" From the furthest east to the furthest west the cries spread as if by contagion, accompanied in some cases by the barking of a dog. It was not the

30 expression of the valley's consciousness that beautiful Tess had arrived, but the ordinary announcement of milking-time, half-past four o'clock, when the dairymen set about getting in the cows.

The red and white herd nearest at hand, which had  
35 been phlegmatically waiting for the call, now trooped towards the stading in the background, their great bags of milk swinging under them as they walked. Tess followed slowly in their rear, and entered the barton by the open gate through which they had  
40 entered before her. Long thatched sheds stretched round the enclosure, their slopes encrusted with vivid green moss, and their eaves supported by wooden posts rubbed to a glassy smoothness by the flanks of infinite cows and calves of bygone years, now passed  
45 to an oblivion almost inconceivable in its profundity. Between the posts were ranged the milchers,\* each exhibiting herself at the present moment to a whimsical eye in the rear as a circle on two stalks, down the centre of which a switch moved pendulum-  
50 wise; while the sun, lowering itself behind this patient row, threw their shadows accurately inwards upon the wall. Thus it threw shadows of these obscure and homely figures every evening with as much care over each contour as if it had been the profile of a court  
55 beauty on a palace wall; copied them as diligently as it had copied Olympian shapes on marble facades long ago; or the outline of Alexander, Caesar, and the Pharaohs.

\* milk cows

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# AP<sup>®</sup> English Literature and Composition

## Free-Response Scoring Guidelines

### Question 2

(Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*)

The score reflects the quality of the essay as a whole—its content, its style, its mechanics. Students are rewarded for what they do well. The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by 1 point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a 3.

- 9–8** These essays offer a persuasive analysis of how the author characterizes the relationship between Tess and her new environment. The students make a strong case for their interpretation of the passage. They explore the particulars of how the character and setting are presented, including such elements as structure, the selection of detail, particular images, diction, and tone. They demonstrate their engagement with the text through apt and specific references. Although these essays may not be error-free, their perceptive analysis is apparent in writing that is clear, precise, and effectively organized. Generally, essays scored a 9 reveal more sophisticated analysis and more effective control of language than do essays scored an 8.
- 7–6** These essays offer a reasonable analysis of how the author characterizes the relationship between Tess and her new environment. The students provide a sustained, competent reading of the passage, with attention to the particulars of how the character and setting are presented, including such elements as structure, the selection of detail, particular images, diction, and tone. They demonstrate engagement with the text through some apt and specific references. Although these essays may not be error-free and may be less perceptive or less convincing than 9–8 essays, the students present their ideas with clarity and control and refer to the text for support. Generally, essays scored a 7 present better-developed analysis and more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than do essays scored a 6.
- 5** These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible reading of the passage but tend to be superficial or undeveloped in their treatment of how the author characterizes the relationship between Tess and her new environment. While exhibiting some analysis of the passage, implicit or explicit, the discussion of how the character and setting are presented may be slight, and support from the passage may be thin or tend toward paraphrase. While these students demonstrate adequate control of language, their essays may be marred by surface errors. Generally, essays scored a 5 lack the more effective organization and the more sustained development characteristic of 7–6 papers.
- 4–3** These essays offer a less than thorough understanding of the task or a less than adequate treatment of how the author characterizes the relationship between Tess and her new environment. Often relying on plot summary or paraphrase, the students may fail to articulate a convincing basis for understanding how the character and setting are presented, or they may misread the passage. These papers may be characterized by an unfocused or repetitive presentation of ideas, an absence of textual support, or an accumulation of errors. Generally, essays scored a 4 exhibit better control over the elements of composition than those scored a 3.
- 2–1** These essays compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4–3 range. They may persistently misread the passage or be unacceptably brief. They may contain pervasive errors that interfere with understanding. Although some attempt has been made to respond to the prompt, the ideas are presented with little clarity, organization, or support from the passage. Essays that are especially inept or incoherent are scored a 1.
- 0** These essays make no more than a reference to the task.
- These essays are either left blank or are completely off topic.