

**2009 AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)**

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total time—2 hours

Question 1

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

Directions: The following prompt is based on the accompanying seven sources.

This question requires you to synthesize a variety of sources into a coherent, well-written essay. When you synthesize sources you refer to them to develop your position and cite them accurately. *Your argument should be central; the sources should support this argument. Avoid merely summarizing sources.*

Remember to attribute both direct and indirect references.

Introduction

Mass public schooling has traditionally proclaimed among its goals the following: (1) to help each student gain personal fulfillment and (2) to help create good citizens. These two goals—one aimed at the betterment of individuals and the other aimed at the betterment of society—might seem at odds with one another. At the very least, these two goals are a cause of much tension within schools at every level: schools want students to be allowed or encouraged to think for themselves and pursue their own interests, but schools also believe that it is right in some circumstances to encourage conformity in order to socialize students.

Assignment

Read the sources that follow (including the introductory information) carefully. Then choose an issue related to the tension in schools between individuality and conformity. You might choose an issue such as dress codes, mandatory classes, or the structure of the school day. You do not have to choose an issue that you have experienced personally. **Then, write an essay in which you use this issue to argue the extent to which schools should support individuality or conformity. Synthesize at least three of the sources for support.**

You may refer to the sources by their titles (Source A, Source B, etc.) or by the descriptions in the parentheses.

- Source A (Gatto)
- Source B (Bell schedule)
- Source C (Book cover)
- Source D (Postman)
- Source E (Holt)
- Source F (Photo)
- Source G (Expectations)

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FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)**

Source A

Gatto, John Taylor. "Against School: How Public Education Cripples Our Kids, and Why."
Harper's Magazine Sept. 2003.

The following is excerpted from an essay by a former high school teacher who advocates educational reform.

Do we really need school? I don't mean education, just forced schooling: six classes a day, five days a week, nine months a year, for twelve years. Is this deadly routine really necessary? And if so, for what? Don't hide behind reading, writing, and arithmetic as a rationale, because 2 million happy homeschoolers have surely put that banal justification to rest. Even if they hadn't, a considerable number of well-known Americans never went through the twelve-year wringer our kids currently go through, and they turned out all right. George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln? Someone taught them, to be sure, but they were not products of a school *system*, and not one of them was ever "graduated" from a secondary school. . . . We have been taught (that is, schooled) in this country to think of "success" as synonymous with, or at least dependent upon, "schooling," but historically that isn't true in either an intellectual or a financial sense. And plenty of people throughout the world today find a way to educate themselves without resorting to a system of compulsory secondary schools that all too often resemble prisons. Why, then, do Americans confuse education with just such a system?

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FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)**

Source B

High school bell schedule

The following is the daily schedule followed by students in a public high school.

**Your High School
DAILY BELL SCHEDULE**

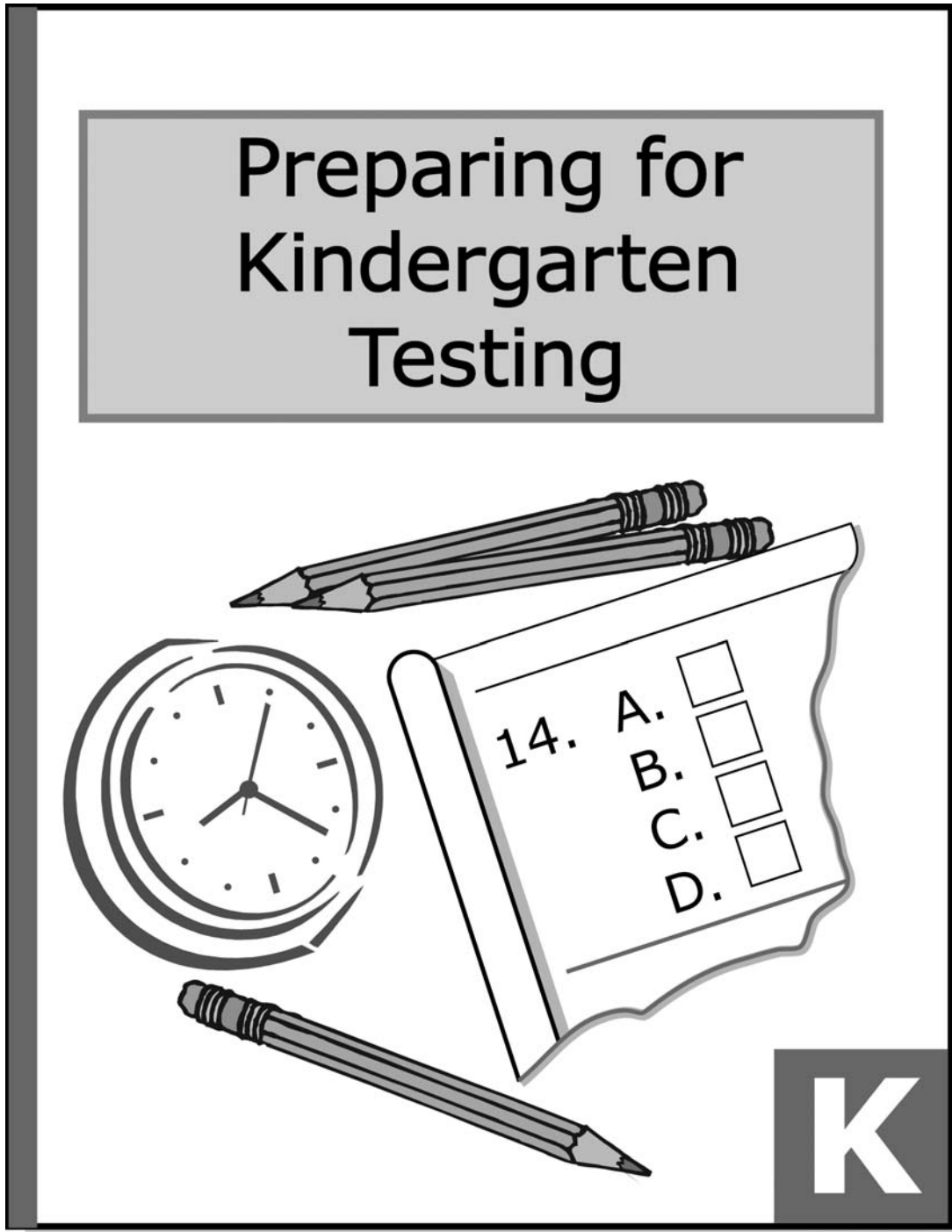
Period 1	(1 st Bell 8: 16 a.m.)	8: 20 - 9: 06
Period 2		9: 10 - 9: 56
Period 3		10: 00 - 10: 51
Period 4		10: 55 - 11: 41
Period 5		11: 45 - 12: 31
Period 6		12: 35 - 1: 21
Period 7		1: 25 - 2: 11
Period 8		2: 15 - 3: 01

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FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)

Source C

Book cover

The following is a possible cover design for a book about how to prepare kindergarten students for standardized tests.



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FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)**

Source D

Postman, Neil. The End of Education: Redefining the Value of School. New York: Knopf, 1995.

The following is excerpted from a book about education in the United States.

There is, for example, the traditional task of teaching children how to behave in groups. You cannot have a democratic—indeed, civilized—community life unless people have learned how to participate in a disciplined way as a part of a group. One might even say that schools have never been essentially about individualized learning. It is true, of course, that groups do not learn; individuals do. But the idea of a school is that individuals must learn in a setting in which individual needs are subordinated to group interests.

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FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)**

Source E

Holt, John. "School Is Bad for Children." Saturday Evening Post 8 Feb. 1969.

The following is excerpted from an essay written by an educational theorist.

And so, in this dull and ugly place, where nobody ever says anything very truthful, where everybody is playing a kind of role, as in a charade, where teachers are no more free to respond honestly to the students than the students are free to respond to the teachers or each other, where the air practically vibrates with suspicion and anxiety, the child learns to live in a daze, saving his energies for those small parts of his life that are too trivial for the adults to bother with, and thus remain his. It is a rare child who can come through his schooling with much left of his curiosity, his independence or his sense of his own dignity, competence and worth.

So much for criticism. What do we need to do? Many things. Some are easy—we can do them right away. Some are hard, and may take some time. Take a hard one first. We should abolish compulsory school attendance. At the very least we should modify it, perhaps by giving children every year a large number of authorized absences. Our compulsory school-attendance laws once served a humane and useful purpose. They protected children's right to some schooling, against those adults who would otherwise have denied it to them in order to exploit their labor, in farm, store, mine, or factory. Today the laws help nobody, not the schools, not the teachers, not the children. To keep kids in school who would rather not be there costs the schools an enormous amount of time and trouble—to say nothing of what it costs to repair the damage that these angry and resentful prisoners do every time they get a chance.

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FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)**

Source F

Photo of children singing in school

The following is a photo taken in a school.



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FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)**

Source G

Expectations of high school students published in the student handbook

The following expectations are published for students in a public high school.

**SCHOOL CLIMATE and
STUDENT EXPECTATIONS**

All Students are expected to:

- report to class on time and attend all classes regularly;
- accept responsibility for their learning -
 - complete homework assignments,
 - bring required materials to class each day,
 - be attentive in class, and listen, speak and discuss when appropriate;
- respect the teacher's position as leader in the classroom -
 - follow the teacher's directions,
 - adhere to individual classroom guidelines;
- be considerate to and respectful of others -
 - refrain from teasing, interrupting or criticizing others,
 - refrain from using vulgar or obscene language,
 - refrain from acting out anger and frustration through fighting or other inappropriate behaviors,
 - keep all food and drink in the cafeteria and patio areas except when authorized by a teacher;
- cooperate with the specific rules of the school -
 - dress in appropriate attire which does not distract or offend others (wearing shoes is required by law),
 - refrain from running in the halls and speaking loudly and banging lockers while classes are in progress;
- respect the rights of others to learn -
 - do not create excessive noise in the halls, library, commons, quadrangle or other outside areas (radios and personal listening devices are generally inappropriate for classroom use unless approved by the teacher for a specific educational purpose),
 - obey the laws of society, including prohibitions against assault, theft, vandalism, possession of illegal substances and possession of weapons.

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2009 SCORING GUIDELINES (Form B)

Question 1

The score should reflect a judgment of 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 the holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. In no case may an essay with many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics be scored higher than a 2.

- 9 Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for a 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 the extent to which schools should support individuality or conformity. They develop their position 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 a 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 the extent to which schools should support individuality or conformity. They develop their position 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 the extent to which schools should support individuality or conformity. They develop their position by synthesizing at least three sources, but how they use and explain sources is somewhat uneven, inconsistent, or limited. The argument is generally clear, and the sources generally develop the student'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 student's ideas adequately.

4 Inadequate

Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately** argue the extent to which schools should support individuality or conformity. They develop their position by synthesizing at least two sources, but the evidence or explanations used may be inappropriate, insufficient, or less convincing. 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 student's ideas but may be less consistent in controlling the elements of effective writing.

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

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2009 SCORING GUIDELINES (Form B)

Question 1 (continued)

- 3** Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for a score of 4 but demonstrate less success in arguing the extent to which schools should support individuality or conformity. 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 control of writing.

2 Little Success

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in arguing the extent to which schools should support individuality or conformity. They may merely allude to knowledge gained from reading the sources rather than citing the sources themselves. These essays 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 of these essays 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 a score of 2 but are undeveloped, especially simplistic in their explanation, weak in their control of writing, or do not cite even one source.
- 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.

I am now a junior at my high school. In order to graduate this particular high school, I must take a required course of 'Professional and technical studies.' This doesn't sound at all bad or make it seem like I am being suppressed to conformity, but it actually is.

My interests and goal as a major is to be in the communications area. I requested to take journalism as one of my classes to have experience in that field of study. It was to my dismay that I was no longer able to take that class for my senior year because of a required class I had to take. If schools traditionally have 2 goals, (1) To help each student gain personal fulfillment and (2) To help create good citizens, why are they forcing upon classes that you don't want to take? Why am I not able to take journalism when it is fulfilling my personal goals?

In source A, John Taylor Gatto makes the case that ~~education~~ schools aren't necessarily needed for education. He says, "And plenty of people throughout the world today find a way to educate themselves without resorting to a system of compulsory secondary schools that all too often resemble ~~a~~ prisons." He makes a very true point. Most kids today are living in a world where technology makes learning easy access. I believe I would've done very well at



1

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

learning microsoft tutorials online rather than having to ~~sacrifice~~ sacrifice a class that would've helped in college. Education is everywhere, and people learn to find ways to it without having to go to school and be imprisoned for almost 8 hours every day.

we supposedly live in a democratic nation but ~~if~~ it is so often that tyranny and communism is being practiced, especially in schools. The structure of the school day and the classes you must attend are all forced onto students. It is like a routine they must follow, or their futures will be 'destroyed.'

Source B shows a daily bell schedule of a public high school. Each passing time is 4 minutes long and the schedule doesn't even point out lunch. School schedules are so strict and confined, nothing must be out of place. If a student is a minute late they receive even more of a confinement — detention.

Schools should be there to support individuality and only conformity to a certain point. They are trying to ~~standardize~~ ~~is~~ standardized all kids to be the same in order to 'fit into society.' They must all take the required courses, the standardized tests, and sometimes even wear the same attire.

~~Source~~ Source C shows a cover design for a kindergarten class in preparing for standardized tests.



~~Q~~ @ Even at such a young age, are the schools trying to conform the minds from evolving into individuals. Conformity does not always mean it'll ensure socialization among students. Schools should help to ensure or ~~help~~ aid socialization but they should not go ~~so~~ deep as forcing them / students to be all alike. In source D, Neil Postman said, "But the idea of a school is that individuals must learn in a setting which individual needs are subordinated to group interests." In a way, schools should teach the students to get along and cooperate, but they don't need to go to an extreme as to suppress the individual's mind to conform to society. Isn't that what communism is?

Schools are there to teach students the ways to survive in a society and get along. The schools these days are getting stricter and stricter. ~~So~~ school hours are increasing, and students such as I, are being confined longer and longer. ~~It is to~~ school should be a place where students want to go to be educated and develop their own thoughts. Not a place we feel we have to go in order to fit in. The feeling of being watched, controlled, and conformed isn't a feeling of nationalism or a feeling we'd want to have when asked why we defend our country.



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

Source G shows the list of expectations a public high school has for their students. All the "expectations" are more like laws a citizen must abide to in a society. "Respect the teacher's position as leader in the classroom -" sounds like a statement of a tyrant. These "expectations" seem forced upon with no freedom. If schools want students to be successful citizens, they should allow students to take the courses they want, ^{let them} breathe.

As a student, I understand the school wanting to educate us on Microsoft word or Home economics, however forcing these courses on us and then threatening us that we won't be able to graduate if we don't, seems too controlling and unreasonable. Schools should support conformity to a certain level that will push us off into society where from then, our individualism determines our fate. They shouldn't suppress our natural character to what they think is acceptable to become a good citizen. After all, aren't the famous historical figures the ones who spoke out of conformity and embraced their individualistic thoughts? Like Martin Luther King, society and schools taught everyone to be quiet about race, but he didn't, and now look at the impact ~~was~~



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

1A (5 of 5)

he has left on the world. Individualism is good, and student should embrace it. Schools should recognize the individual ability everyone has, without questioning it, or putting their own twist on it.

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