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**SYNTHESIS QUESTION: REPARATIONS TO DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES IN THE
US**

English Language and Composition

Reading Time: 15 minutes

Writing Time: 40 minutes

Directions: The following prompt is based on the five articles about reparations that we read for class.

This question requires you to integrate information from at least three of the five sources into a coherent, well-written essay. Refer to the sources to support your position. Avoid mere paraphrase or summary. Your argument should be central; the sources should support your argument.

Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations.

Introduction

Since 1953 West Germany has paid \$35 billion in reparations to Israel and individual victims of the Nazis for the Holocaust.

In addition, in 1968 Japanese-Americans were compensated for property lost during their internment during WWII. Also, in 1988 Congress passed legislation awarding \$20,000 to each surviving internee.

Some people argue that based on these precedents, descendants of slaves in America should also be awarded reparations. Others argue that reparations should not be paid to descendants of slaves.

Assignment

Review the five sources carefully. **Then, in an essay that synthesizes at least three of the sources for support, take a position on America's responsibility to the descendants of its former slaves.**

Refer to the sources as Source A, Source B, etc.

Source A (Horowitz)

Source B (Robinson)

Source C (White)

Source D (Myers)

Source E (Steele)

The format of this Synthesis Essay is based on the sample question from The College Board and on input from Allison Finn.

Scoring Guide For Reparations Synthesis* Essay

9 Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for essays that are scored an 8 and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their argument and synthesis of cited sources or impressive in their control of language.

8 Effective

Essays earning a score of 8 effectively take a clear, sophisticated position on reparations. They effectively support their position by effectively synthesizing and citing at least three of the sources. The writer's argument is convincing, and the cited sources effectively support the writer's position. The prose demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not flawless.

7 Essays earning a score of 7 fit the description of the essays that are scored a 6 but are distinguished by more complete or more purposeful argumentation and synthesis of cited sources or a more mature prose style.

6 Adequate

Essays earning a score of 6 adequately take a clear, sophisticated position on reparations. They adequately synthesize and cite at least three of the sources. The writer's argument is generally convincing, and the cited sources generally support the writer's position. However, the argument is less developed or less cogent than the argument of essays earning higher scores. Generally, the prose is clear.

5 Essays earning a score of 5 take a clear position on reparations. The writer's position may not be as sophisticated as those in higher scoring responses. They support their position by synthesizing and citing at least three sources, but their argument and their use of cited sources are somewhat limited, inconsistent, or uneven. The writer's argument is generally clear, and the sources generally support the writer's position. However, 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 adequately.

4 Inadequate

Essays earning a score of 4 inadequately take a position on reparations. They attempt to present an argument and support their position by synthesizing and citing at least two sources but may misunderstand, misrepresent, or oversimplify either their own argument or the cited sources. The link between the argument and the cited sources is weak. The prose of these essays may suggest immature control of writing.

3 Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but demonstrate less understanding of the cited sources, less success in developing their own position, or less control of writing.

2 Little Success

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate little success in taking a position on reparations. They may merely allude to knowledge gained from the reading the sources rather than citing the sources themselves. These essays may misread the sources, fail to present an argument, or substitute a simpler task by merely responding to the question tangentially or by summarizing the sources. The prose of these essays often demonstrate consistent weaknesses in writing such as a lack of development or organization, grammatical problems, or a lack of control.

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

0 Essays earning a score of 0 are on-topic responses that receive no credit such as those that merely repeat the prompt.

— Essays earning a dash are blank responses or responses that are completely off topic.

*For the purposes of scoring, synthesis refers to combining the sources and the writer's position to form a cohesive, supported argument and accurately citing all sources.

The scoring guide is based on the AP[®] English Language and Composition Sample Scoring Guidelines for the Synthesis Essay from the College Board.