

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total time—2 hours and 15 minutes

Question 1

Suggested reading and writing time—55 minutes.

It is suggested that you spend 15 minutes reading the question, analyzing and evaluating the sources, and 40 minutes writing your response.

Note: You may begin writing your response before the reading period is over.

(This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

Eminent domain is the power governments have to acquire property from private owners for public use. The rationale behind eminent domain is that governments have greater legal authority over lands within their dominion than do private owners. Eminent domain has been instituted in one way or another throughout the world for hundreds of years.

Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Then synthesize material from at least three of the sources and incorporate it into a coherent, well-developed essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies the notion that eminent domain is productive and beneficial.

Your argument should be the focus of your essay. Use the sources to develop your argument and explain the reasoning for it. Avoid merely summarizing the sources. Indicate clearly which sources you are drawing from, whether through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. You may cite the sources as Source A, Source B, etc., or by using the descriptions in parentheses.

Source A (U.S. Department of Justice)

Source B (Carney)

Source C (Somin)

Source D (Porter)

Source E (cartoon)

Source F (Narciso)

Source A

United States Department of Justice, Environment and Natural Resources Division. "History of the Federal Use of Eminent Domain." *The United States Department of Justice*, 15 May 2015, www.justice.gov/enrd/history-federal-use-eminent-domain.

The following is excerpted from an overview of eminent domain published on a federal Web site.

The federal government's power of eminent domain has long been used in the United States to acquire property for public use. Eminent domain "appertains to every independent government. It requires no constitutional recognition; it is an attribute of sovereignty." *Boom Co. v. Patterson*, 98 U.S. 403, 406 (1879). However, the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution stipulates: "nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation." Thus, whenever the United States acquires a property through eminent domain, it has a constitutional responsibility to justly compensate the property owner for the fair market value of the property. . . .

The U.S. Supreme Court first examined federal eminent domain power in 1876 in *Kohl v. United States*. This case presented a landowner's challenge to the power of the United States to condemn land in Cincinnati, Ohio for use as a custom house and post office building. Justice William Strong called the authority of the federal government to appropriate property for public uses "essential to its independent existence and perpetuity." *Kohl v. United States*, 91 U.S. 367, 371 (1875).

The Supreme Court again acknowledged the existence of condemnation authority twenty years later in *United States v. Gettysburg Electric Railroad Company*. Congress wanted to acquire land to preserve the site of the Gettysburg Battlefield in Pennsylvania. The railroad company that owned some of the property in question contested this action. Ultimately, the Court opined that the federal government has the power to condemn property "whenever it is necessary or appropriate to use the land in the execution of any of the powers granted to it by the constitution." *United States v. Gettysburg Electric Ry.*, 160 U.S. 668, 679 (1896).

Eminent domain has been utilized traditionally to facilitate transportation, supply water, construct public buildings, and aid in defense readiness. Early federal cases condemned property for construction of public buildings . . . and aqueducts to provide cities with drinking water . . . for maintenance of navigable waters . . . and for the production of war materials. . . . The Land Acquisition Section and its earlier iterations represented the United States in these cases, thereby playing a central role in early United States infrastructure projects.

Condemnation cases like that against the Gettysburg Railroad Company exemplify another use for eminent domain: establishing parks and setting aside open space for future generations, preserving places of historic interest and remarkable natural beauty, and protecting environmentally sensitive areas. Some of the earliest federal government acquisitions for parkland were made at the end of the nineteenth century and remain among the most beloved and well-used of American parks. In Washington, D.C., Congress authorized the creation of a park along Rock Creek in 1890 for the enjoyment of the capitol city's residents and visitors. The Department of Justice became involved when a number of landowners from whom property was to be acquired disputed the constitutionality of the condemnation. In *Shoemaker v. United States*, 147 U.S. 282 (1893), the Supreme Court affirmed the actions of Congress.

Today, Rock Creek National Park, over a century old and more than twice the size of New York City's Central Park, remains a unique wilderness in the midst of an urban environment. This is merely one small example of the many federal parks, preserves, historic sites, and monuments to which the work of the Land Acquisition Section has contributed.

Source B

Carney, Timothy P. "Eminent Domain Often Leaves Broken Communities Behind." *Washington Examiner*, 29 March 2014, www.washingtonexaminer.com/eminent-domain-often-leaves-broken-communities-behind/article/2546500.

The following is an excerpt from an editorial published in a Washington, D.C., newspaper.

Weeds and rubble cover 90 acres along Long Island Sound. A room with cinder-block walls sits locked in an empty Brooklyn basement. And a gleaming industrial palace has failed to bring jobs to the banks of Ohio's Mahoning River.

These are monuments to failed central planning. Eminent domain, state and local subsidies, and federal-corporate partnerships have yielded these lifeless fruits, failing to deliver the rebirth, community benefits and jobs they promise—but succeeding in delivering profits to the companies that lobby for them.

The economic philosophy at work here isn't capitalism or socialism. It's *corporatism*: the belief that government and business should work together. You could describe corporatism as the view that profits provided by the market aren't sufficient motivation for business, so government must put some icing on top. From another perspective, corporatism is government's attempt to harness the profit motive for the goals of policymakers: let industry row the ship while politicians steer.

Often, the corporatist ship founders on the rocks of false promises.

Last decade, the New London Development Corporation—a quasi governmental body—crafted a plan for revitalizing the small Connecticut town. This plan involved a new Pfizer plant. The NLDC and local politicians sold the land to Pfizer for \$10, gave the company tax breaks and pledged \$26 million to clean up contamination and a local junkyard.

"Pfizer wants a nice place to operate," the *Hartford Courant* quoted executive David Burnett as saying in 2001. But Burnett wasn't just talking about the junkyard and the contamination. He was also talking about the area's middle-class homes. "We don't want to be surrounded by tenements."

So NLDC drove out the homeowners, using eminent domain. Homeowner Suzette Kelo sued, but in the end, the liberal majority on the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the developers and the politicians. The majority argued: "The city has carefully formulated a development plan that it believes will provide appreciable benefits to the community, including, but not limited to, new jobs and increased tax revenue."

The New York Times applauded the ruling: "New London's development plan may hurt a few small property owners, who will, in any case, be fully compensated. But many more residents are likely to benefit if the city can shore up its tax base and attract badly needed jobs."

In 2009, Pfizer, after its merger with Wyeth, abandoned its plant in New London. The condemned neighborhood is now, as Charlotte Allen put it in the *Weekly Standard*, a "vast, empty field—90 acres—that was entirely uninhabited and looked as though it had always been that way."

On the bright side, Pfizer got to sell the plant to General Dynamics for \$55 million.

Used by permission.

Source C

Somin, Ilya. "How Eminent Domain Abuse Harms the Poor." *Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity*, 26 May 2015, spotlightonpoverty.org/spotlight-exclusives/how-eminant-domain-abuse-harms-the-poor/.

The following is from a blog by a law professor, posted on the Web site of a nonpartisan initiative on economic hardship.

This June [June 2015] is the tenth anniversary of *Kelo v. City of New London*. The controversial Supreme Court decision held that it is permissible for the government to use eminent domain to take private property and transfer it to other private interests in order to promote "economic development." Not surprisingly, the ruling was opposed by libertarians and conservatives because it undermines property rights. But it has also met with strong criticism from many on the left, including Ralph Nader, the NAACP, and former president Bill Clinton.

This unusual cross-ideological coalition arose because takings that transfer property to private interests often tend to victimize the poor, racial minorities, and the politically weak. As Hilary Shelton of the NAACP put it in testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, "allowing municipalities to pursue eminent domain for private economic development [has] . . . a disparate impact on African Americans and other minorities."

His point is backed by much painful historical experience. Since the 1940s, "blight," urban renewal, and economic development takings have forcibly displaced several million people in the United States, most of them poor and racial minorities. . . .

Most of the people displaced were left even worse off than they were before. The condemned property was often transferred to politically influential developers and business interests. While such condemnations are less common in recent years, blight takings still disproportionately occur in poor and minority neighborhoods, and still inflict great harm both on their victims and on the surrounding communities.

Unlike in the 1940s and 50s, overt racism is rarely a factor in modern takings, though some scholars contend that unconscious bias plays a role. In most cases, the poor and minorities suffer not because officials are hostile to them as such, but because these groups often lack the resources and political influence to resist effectively, especially when faced with more powerful interest groups on the other side.

Defenders of blight and economic development takings argue that they are a necessary tool for promoting economic growth in poor areas. But in reality, such condemnations often destroy far more economic value than they create. Developers and local governments have strong incentives to overstate the benefits of condemnation-driven projects, and ignore costs. By the time their true effects become evident years later, public attention has usually moved on to other issues. Voters rarely punish officials who authorize dubious takings. In the *Kelo* case itself, the condemned property remains empty a decade after the Supreme Court decision.

Cities that make aggressive use of eminent domain to promote private development projects often end up undermining their economies rather than enhancing them. The bankrupt city of Detroit is a striking case in point. For many years, Detroit made extensive use of takings for the benefit of politically connected business interests. In the notorious 1981 *Poletown* case, it forcibly displaced some 4,000 people and numerous businesses in order to transfer the property to General Motors for the construction of a new factory. That taking failed to provide anything close to the promised 6,000 new jobs. The destruction of numerous homes, businesses, and schools, and churches predictably damaged the local economy. Ultimately, eminent domain abuse was a significant contributor to the city's economic decline.

Aggressive use of eminent domain also damages the social fabric of poor communities because the displacement of residents, businesses, and churches undermines social ties.

Source: Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity: The Source for News, Ideas and Action

Source D

Porter, Douglas R. *Eminent Domain: An Important Tool for Community Revitalization*. Urban Land Institute, 2007.

The following is a case study excerpted from a report by a nonprofit research and education organization specializing in land use and real estate development.

The Freetown neighborhood in Greenville was developed in the 1880s. . . . The neighborhood declined over the years: housing became little more than shacks, [and] cracked sidewalks and worn pavement were the norm. . . . Residents appealed to the Greenville County Redevelopment Authority for help.

Today, Freetown is a different place after undergoing a complete makeover that replaced decaying housing and junk-strewn lots with 80 affordable new homes and ten rehabilitated residences; neighborhood street, water, and sewer infrastructure also was upgraded. One of the most dramatic improvements is a new \$600,000 community center—equipped with a full-sized gymnasium, meeting rooms, and a kitchen—that replaced a small U.S. Army barracks building previously used as the neighborhood center.

The redevelopment authority accomplished all this beginning in 1998 by acquiring blighted properties in order to assemble buildable sites for new homes. Acquisitions included a 54-unit apartment complex that . . . was torn down and replaced by more than a dozen new single-family homes. Most new houses in Freetown have about 1,100 square feet of space and are valued at less than \$75,000.

The authority used the power of eminent domain to acquire only two holdout properties and to clear title to abandoned and tax-delinquent properties. Relocation grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$20,000 helped residents make downpayments on new homes. Having completed a carefully phased redevelopment program in 2006, the authority successfully returned more than one-third of the displaced households to the Freetown community, which now numbers about 200 families.

Urban Land Institute

Source E

Marciuliano, Francesco. "Bizarro." Cartoon.
King Features Syndicate, 1 Aug. 2008,
bizarro.com/comics/august-1-2008/.

The following cartoon was published in a nationally syndicated comic strip.



BIZARRO © 2008 DAN PIRARO DISTRIBUTED BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE, INC.

Source F

Narciso, Dean. "1 Mile Equals \$595,625, Jury Decides."
The Columbus Dispatch, 11 Oct. 2007,
www.dispatch.com/article/20070929/news/309299842.

The following article, about a situation in the town of Canal Winchester, Ohio, was published in a local newspaper.

When Canal Winchester offered Richard "Pete" Stebelton \$9,249 for a 1-mile strip of his property, Stebelton thought the payment was too low.

Boy, was it ever.

This month, a Franklin County Common Pleas jury decided the village should pay the farmer and used-car dealer \$595,625.

Canal Winchester wants the land to link a bike path between Rager Road and the village swimming pool. It used eminent domain to take a strip of Stebelton's 80-acre property and hired an appraiser who determined that the \$9,249 would be enough compensation.

"It wasn't fair at all," Stebelton, 75, remembers thinking.

Stebelton was the only one of eight property owners who didn't agree to sell his land to the village for the path. Instead, he went to court to challenge the village's valuation.

The jury decided Sept. 20 that the land the village wants, along the northern edge of his property, is worth \$37,000. But the jury also decided that by taking it, the village was closing off a back entrance to the property and damaging the value of the rest of Stebelton's land by \$558,625.

"I was thrilled. I would have to be," Stebelton said of the victory, adding that the trial "put me through one hell of a miserable week."

Stebelton lives in a home built in 1825. He grows hay and raises horses on the land he bought 21 years ago for \$300,000.

Canal Winchester's former mayor, Marshal Hall, offered Stebelton \$60,000 years ago. But Stebelton turned that down.

Hall was replaced by Mayor Jeff Miller four years ago. Stebelton was offered the \$9,249 as part of a deal in which the Ohio Department of Transportation [ODOT] agreed to finance 80 percent of construction costs for the \$1.57 million bike path project.

Now, the project might be on hold, Miller said.

"We're really at the mercy of ODOT," Miller said. "They're going to decide where we go with it."

ODOT spokesman Joel Hunt said the agency will work with the village to move the project forward, and seek alternative routes if necessary.

One option is to pay Stebelton the full jury award and move ahead. Another is to pay Stebelton the \$37,000 and work out an alternate path that doesn't diminish the value of Stebelton's land, said Gene Hollins, the village solicitor.

"I think the council and mayor are very well-meaning people trying to carry out what would be a very nice bike path, which we've invested a good deal of effort in," Hollins said.

The Columbus Dispatch

AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

2018 SCORING GUIDELINES — Version 1.0

Question 1

General Directions: This scoring guide is designed so that the same performance expectations are applied to all student responses. It will be useful for most of the essays you read, but if it seems inappropriate for a specific paper, ask your Table Leader for assistance. Always show your Table Leader booklets that seem to have no response or that contain responses that seem unrelated to the question. Do not assign a score of 0 or — without this consultation.

Your score should reflect an evaluation of the paper as a whole. Remember that students had only 15 minutes to read the sources and 40 minutes to write; the paper, therefore, is not a finished product and should not be judged according to standards appropriate for an out-of-class assignment. Evaluate the paper as a draft, making certain to reward students for what they do well. The evaluation should focus on the evidence and explanations that the student uses to support the response; students should not be penalized for taking a particular perspective.

All essays, even those scored 8 or 9, may contain occasional lapses in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. Such features should enter into your holistic evaluation of a paper's overall quality. In no case should you give a score higher than a 2 to a paper with errors in grammar and mechanics that persistently interfere with your understanding of meaning.

9 Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for the 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** defend, challenge, or qualify the notion that eminent domain is productive and beneficial. They develop their position by effectively synthesizing* at least three of the sources. The evidence and explanations appropriately and convincingly support the writer's position. The 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 the 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** defend, challenge, or qualify the notion that eminent domain is productive and beneficial. They develop their position by adequately synthesizing at least three of the sources. The evidence and explanations appropriately and sufficiently support the writer's position. The language may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

5 Essays earning a score of 5 defend, challenge, or qualify the notion that eminent domain is productive and beneficial. They develop their position by synthesizing at least three sources, but the evidence and explanations used to support that position may be uneven, inconsistent, or limited. The writer's argument is generally clear, and the sources generally develop the writer'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 writer's ideas.

4 Inadequate

Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately** defend, challenge, or qualify the notion that eminent domain is productive and beneficial. They develop their position by synthesizing at least two sources, but that position may be inappropriately, insufficiently, or unconvincingly supported by the evidence and explanations used. 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 writer's ideas but may be inconsistent in controlling the elements of effective writing.

AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

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3 Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but demonstrate less success in defending, challenging, or qualifying the notion that eminent domain is productive and beneficial. They are less perceptive in their understanding of the sources, or the evidence and explanations used 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 defending, challenging, or qualifying the notion that eminent domain is productive and beneficial. They may merely allude to knowledge gained from reading the sources rather than citing the sources themselves. The student 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 or inaccurate explanation. The prose 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 the score of 2 but are undeveloped, especially simplistic in their explanation, weak in their control of writing, or do not allude to or cite even one source.

0 Indicates an off-topic response, one that merely repeats the prompt, an entirely crossed-out response, a drawing, or a response in a language other than English.

— Indicates an entirely blank response.

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


On the outer limits of just ~~government~~ governance and the preservation of private liberty lies the issue of eminent domain.

Despite it repeatedly being upheld by the Supreme Court, many question whether or not a Democratic government should be able to seize private property without the consent of its rightful owner, especially if it ~~there~~ is improperly valued, given to a private company, or never put to constructive use. This ~~more~~ often has the most pronounced on the poor or minorities, as they lack the judicial power of financial security to protect their property or their way of life. However, these occasional failures are overshadowed by the resounding successes of many of their larger, ~~even~~ often nationwide attempts of the government to construct & much-needed infrastructure, and to tangibly alter the course of the nation in a way that cannot be done with just pen and paper. Although eminent domain can be misused to benefit private interests at the expense of citizens, it is a vital tool of any government that intends to have any influence on the land it governs beyond that of written law.

When misused, eminent domain can displace thousands of families at the expense



of economic rebirth, while delivering nothing but "weeds and rubble" in its place (Carney). ~~Struggling~~ Struggling, local governments will often use this power, originally intended for the creation of productive public lands, as a societal vacuum cleaner, to clean out ~~poor~~ impoverished areas in the hopes ~~that~~ of ~~they might be able to~~ seducing a business into moving in and revitalizing the town. A famous example of this is Detroit, the failing manufacturing hub that tried to regain its former glory in 1981 by displacing "some 4000 people and numerous businesses in order to transfer the property to General Motors for the construction of a new factory" (Somin). The societal impact of such a policy can be ~~devastating~~ devastating, as thousands of families no longer have homes in which to live, ~~and~~ and have to struggle to pull themselves out of homelessness, while a major corporation is ~~also~~ provided an expensive lot and low taxes to entice it to settle down. ~~then~~ As the new company enters the city, it can potentially underperform, like in Detroit, or it can never even come ~~to~~ to fruition. This was seen with the New London Development Corporation in Connecticut, where a suburban neighborhood was transformed into a "vast empty field - 90 acres - That was



entirely uninhabited" (Corney). When ~~the~~ governments use eminent domain as a mismanaged attempt to bring in jobs, as opposed to generating new systems ~~and~~ for ~~the~~ public betterment, the result will likely be just as mismanaged and evident of negligence. American history has shown that ~~the~~ eminent domain can sometimes ~~be~~ be the death knell of a fading town instead of a lambent sign of ~~the~~ progress.

However, characterizing eminent domain by its small-scale failures ignores ~~the~~ its larger, more ubiquitous implications. If not for eminent domain, governments would be able to do little other than draft legislation and arm officials to enforce that legislation. Instead, they have an additional opportunity to exact change, and do so in a way that is constructive to the community at-large. Many of America's most cherished infrastructure systems, ~~the~~ ~~these~~ ~~these~~ are the result of this unique power. Eminent domain is used to "facilitate transportation, supply water, construct public buildings, and aid in defense readiness" (U.S. Department of Justice). Eminent domain gives ~~the~~ governments the assurance that when it plans to ~~the~~ construct infrastructure or



I4 1

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

Other systems that improve the state of the country and promote policy, that it does not encounter any roadblocks. Otherwise, it would find itself much like the American ~~states~~ Articles of Confederation, where the governments had ~~the~~ no ability to assert power or sustain itself. When used as intended, eminent domain goes beyond small-scale revitalization and ventures into the realm of sweeping progress and development.

Eminent domain should not involve making of an ordinary home-owner suing ~~their~~ their city for wanting to build a road, but rather, a core principle of proactive government, and a federal instrument for change. Despite its potential for failure and misuse, eminent domain is a crucial power of any constructive government.

#

In the city of Baltimore, Maryland lies the district of Fells Point. This historically vibrant, lively corner of the sometimes-dull city is a refreshing retreat, yet during the late 20th century, this part of Baltimore was destined to become a freeway which would connect the city and reduce traffic. Through the efforts of the citizens of Fells Point, however, the area was saved, and Baltimore gained much more from this decision. This is not a stand-out example. Across the country, vibrant neighborhoods and private properties are threatened by the power of Eminent Domain. ~~Not only does Eminent Domain~~ While there are many who argue the Eminent Domain can be used to revitalize, this power often exploits lower-income areas ~~and~~, violates 5th amendment rights, and often fails at the intended goal.

It is no big secret that there are many places in our country that need refurbishment. Low-income areas particularly face bad foundations and a lack of basic amenities. Eminent Domain proposes to help these areas, but its plan often backfires. Many ~~times~~ the intentions to revitalize are backed by "corporatism: the belief that government and business should work together." ^(Source B) This belief often leads to the neglect of these areas which are targeted. The corporations focus on the profit they can get out of their new plan, rather than the interests of the people living or working there. Furthermore, the end product after the "revitalization" is often worse than before. In the end, the ones who



Question 1 E2

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profit are the corporations, not the community or the area.

Another disappointing consequence of Eminent Domain is the way that it preys on minority areas. While "overt racism is rarely a factor in modern takings," ^{"it is clear that"} ~~a ["]scholarly consensus~~ ["] ~~that~~ ["] ~~unconscious~~ bias plays a role." (Source E.) Why should we trust a system that preys on ~~these~~ ^{to the use of} ~~minorities~~ ^{Eminent Domain}? Oftentimes, the counterargument is that the people whose homes have been taken from them will have a new benefit to look forward to such as a highway, community center, or park, but when your home has been taken from you, the prospect of a ^{highway} ~~park~~ will not compensate that loss. Another counterargument may be that there is adequate payment for those who have lost their houses, yet this is false. In many cases, homeowners are compensated for hundreds of thousands of dollars less than they should be, and the individual financial loss is wildly high (Source F).

Fairness aside, Eminent Domain violates the right to private property. The 5th amendment to our constitution states that private property will not "be taken for public use, without just compensation." (Source A) How can we argue that Eminent Domain is 'by the book' if former owners are rarely compensated fairly? While there certainly are cases in which there is fair compensation and the end product is positive, sources show that this is often not the case.



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Question 1 E₃

Unfortunately, not every community threatened by eminent domain can have the same outcome as Fell's Point. It is sad to think about the neighborhoods which have been destroyed by Eminent Domain. This power is very often ~~and~~ an unjust one, and while it does have positive impacts, isn't it better to ~~preserve the communities of individuals that to attempt to change them?~~ ^{happy} keep a precedent of preserving communities rather than keep a precedent of destroying them?

##

Eminent domain, or the power of the government to take land from private owners in the name of the public good, ~~has~~ has been ~~the~~ a major source of controversy over the past few centuries. The most common defenses for eminent domain, while well-intentioned, are ultimately built on flawed concepts that go against the American value of individual freedom. Although eminent domain might benefit some people in certain cases, the ends do not justify the means. It is unethical and un-American to ~~sacrifice~~ sacrifice the rights of the poor, the needy, and the few ~~under~~ under the guise of "the greater good."

Eminent domain was originally intended to be used for public benefit, not for the gain of private corporations. Early in our nation's history, the federal government used this power to "facilitate transportation, supply water, construct public buildings, and aid in defense readiness" (Source A). Also, eminent domain was used to create "federal parks, preserves, historic sites, and monuments" (Source A). Perhaps this was necessary in our country's beginning. However, now that we already have land set aside for public use, is it really necessary to continue forcing people off their private land? There must

B2 1

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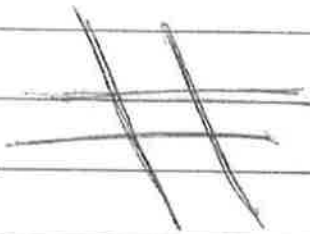
be a point when the public has enough, and we have likely reached that point. Almost every town has a public park, and most cities have several. Every state has monuments and historic sites for the public to tour. Also, we have public buildings, water supply, and transportation. How much more is truly necessary?

While eminent domain was originally intended ~~for public use only~~ to serve the needs of the public, it has now predictably become a way for the powerful to oppress the poor. In modern times, government officials often have stronger ties with wealthy corporations than with the voting public. As a result, ~~many~~ ~~are~~ communities are seized under eminent domain, and they are turned into factories and plants. This is done under the ~~pre~~ guise of helping people through "new jobs and increased tax revenue" (Source B). However, these plans often fail to deliver "the rebirthing community benefits and jobs they promise" (Source B), leaving behind polluted land and uprooted communities. This tends to "victimize the poor, racial minorities, and the politically weak" (Source C). Poor and minority neighborhoods are disproportionately targeted by ~~eminent domain~~ the



abuse of eminent domain. Besides having a negative effect on the economy, overuse of eminent domain ~~damages~~ "damages the social fabric of poor communities" when churches and neighborhoods are uprooted. Poor people tend to rely heavily on community support. When they no longer have that support system in place, it becomes even more difficult for them to make ends meet.

Overall, the use of eminent domain has led to more harm than good, especially over the past few decades when corporations have had a major hand in politics. Eminent domain as we know it is a civil rights violation that destroys ~~poor~~ poor and minority communities in favor of corporate profit. Any system that allows the powerful to oppress the disadvantaged is inherently flawed. Widespread, government-approved theft and discrimination cannot be tolerated in a free and equal society.



H

The issue of eminent domain has frequently ~~permeated~~^{entrenched} itself into American history. While the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution does not advocate directly for the practice, it does mention that private property can be taken for public use only when a just compensation is offered to those affected. Thus, eminent domain has been used as an effective tool to promote ~~positive public interest~~^{beneficial} government interests. However, while projects ~~in~~ requiring the use of eminent domain usually aim to help the public, the practice becomes unjustified when minorities are victimized, a "reasonable compensation" is not attained, and the government works with private companies in the ^{economic} philosophy of corporatism.

First and foremost, groups of lower income and diverse backgrounds are, at times, unequally ~~harmed~~ affected by projects involving eminent domain. Source C confirms this idea, stating that ~~these~~^{such} undertakings "tend to victimize the poor, racial minorities and the politically weak." Although these inequalities are usually unintentional, they arise ~~via~~ via a lack of resources, political influence, and opposition to powerful interest groups (Somin). Ultimately, families are displaced and the communal social fabric of poorer communities is broken.

Eminent domain is also abused when private companies benefit at the cost of other private entities or citizens. This



Question 1

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

H2

~~corruption~~ practice is known as corporatism, in which the government ~~now~~ works closely with private businesses to stimulate economic growth. Unethicality arises, however, when the public-private ties become corrupt, leaving some prosperous and others destitute. Often the case, promises are left unfulfilled so that, in the long run, more are harmed than helped. ~~A person~~ ~~Such~~ Such an outcome is exemplified in Source B, which details a failed plan by the New London ~~Communities~~ Development Corporation to "revitalize a small Connecticut town." The "quasi government body" worked in tandem with Pfizer, giving the company tax breaks and offering to help clean up pollution. While the plan intended to benefit many more residents, compared to the amount of homeowners displaced, the company soon abandoned the plant, leaving an empty ^{open} 90 acre field. In the end, nobody was helped in this private-public project, and many were left worse off than beforehand. The financial disaster of Detroit can also be attributed to failed undertakings of corporatism, and altogether, such projects ~~usually~~ fail: By the time the projects are completed, other, more urgent, more salient, public issues arise (Somin). Disapproval of corporatism is further demonstrated in Source E, where ~~the~~ the combining of public and private interests, using eminent domain, is described as the "greater Foe" (Cartoon).



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

Question 1

H3

~~But~~ Government ambitions involving eminent domain are not always harmful. In fact, when properly used, the government acquisition of land provides the public with a multitude of desirable provisions, including transportation, water systems, public buildings, defense aid, historical preservation sites, and natural parks (U.S. Department of Justice). The process, however, becomes unethical when governments work closely with private industries, causing social inequalities, unnecessary displacements, ^{corruption} ~~and an overall broken corruption~~, and unfulfilled promises.

##

Eminent Domain is productive and beneficial ~~for the government~~ because the government needs it to provide for ^{its} ~~their~~ citizens and the people. ~~people~~ receive full compensation for what is lost.

To begin the ~~your~~ authorities require the power of eminent domain as it allows them to provide the basic human rights to their people. ~~The~~ In fact, Justice William Strong believes that eminent domain ~~is~~ "essential to ~~the~~ independent existence and perpetuity" of the federal government (Source A). The opinion of Justice Strong emphasizes the government's necessity for eminent domain. This power allows it to provide such basic human needs as water, heat, gas, and electricity.

"Eminent Domain has been used traditionally to facilitate transportation, supply ~~the~~ water, construct public buildings and aid in defense readiness" - functions that every nation requires (Source A).

Eminent Domain only helps people. It provides what ~~the~~ the government otherwise couldn't, in places where the government can't reach. That power allows the authorities to help



Q 1 D2

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

people with the needs of otherwise could not.

Furthermore, while the government does take ~~public~~ private property, it compensates people for it, thus ensuring their well being. For example, in the Freetown neighborhood in ~~the~~ Greenville, poor ~~houses~~ half-ruined houses were destroyed and the owners were compensated with ~~the~~ the amounts ranging from \$10 000 to \$20 000 which helped the residents make down payments on new improved homes built by the government (source D). Compensation for their ruined property provided for the future of those people. It allowed them to sell the property that otherwise couldn't have been sold. An issue my family had to face today, as we cannot sell our apartment in ~~Boston~~ Russia for the appropriate money because the country is in crisis. The power of eminent Domain would help us. If the government would buy our home in Russia for appropriate ~~the~~ amount, it would allow us to buy a new house in ^{the} Basking Ridge, New Jersey. ^① ~~The~~ Eminent Domain compensates what is lost, thus only further helping the people.

Although, one issue rises with this



compensation. ~~Appropriate~~ Is the amount appropriate? Thankfully, the system of checks and balances ensures that it is. In October a Franklin County Common Pleas jury decided that a village that wanted to use farmers property had to pay \$595,625 in contrast to the originally offered amount of \$9249^(Source #3). Different branches of government make sure that the federal government does not abuse Eminent Domain. This system ~~also~~ provides the people with appropriate compensation for what is lost.

②

1. one of the more expensive regions of NJ.

2. The government is able to provide basic needs to its people and compensate them for everything they lose through Eminent Domain, thus securing its benefits and values in the government.

#

A1

Eminent Domain: Power the government holds to take land from private property owners, yet they still must pay compensation for the property's value. Although one may think this is completely fine many argue that it's extremely unfair. Both cases are right. Eminent domain is a two-sided coin; eminent domain is good and bad depending on what side you stand on and how it affects you or others.

First of all we must consider the damages of eminent domain. [Source F] gives a prime example of a damage due to eminent domain. If the government took his property there would be various causes of damage to his work. With this we see that not only must he be paid for the land but damages for his work environment. Eminent domain also leads to environmental damages not just to one's personal property but the community's property as well. [Source B], we read that through eminent domain the Long Island Sound received a heavy burden when the government took a person's property just to leave it worse off than it already was. Eminent domain can have a good side and a bad side. The [Sources B & F] demonstrated that the government's use of eminent domain may leave or has left damage behind in which most cases is left unfixed and




A2 Question 1

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

Permanently damaging.

We see this Permanent unfair damage in various forms such as property damage but one that most greatly affects people is home and job loss. Looking at [Source E] we may laugh at the sarcastic voice at first but then we come to realize that this is no joke a lot of people do lose their homes to the government. Although we may see a brightside seen as a new place to create jobs you just made a family lose their home for it. We can also see the damages when we read [Source C] we see that the people who receive the short end of the stick is small communities. The damage that eminent domain holds on people is great.

Through all the bad we also see some good in eminent domain as seen in [Source A] where the government took land to preserve a place with great historical significance. In cases like this we see that eminent domain isn't that bad because we are left with some great places such as parks, reefs, historical land marks, etc. We also see the good in [Source D] where we read that in the end sometimes the people cry out for help and through eminent



domain they received the help they needed to get
out of a horrible situation into a good one.
As we see that the use of emnet domain
can't be all bad in the end there will be good
that can come out.

Finally ~~when~~ when we look at emnet domain
we see that yes it has it costly damages
on properties and communities in the forms of
job and home loss but we can also see that
there is good when emnet domain takes place.
When emnet domain is first spoken we
must not just focus on the good or bad because
in the end we truly don't know which will
occur.

#

There are many people that argue whether eminent domain is a positive thing or not. Eminent domain is the act of the government taking away private property for public use. Eminent domain is productive ~~and~~ useful because it can open up opportunities for people, and it can benefit many people.

Eminent domain ~~is~~ is useful because it ~~can~~ can open opportunities for people. When the government takes a property, it can open up many job opportunities. In source B written by Timothy Carney, the editorial states that New London's development plan may hurt, but also help people ~~who need a job~~. especially those who need a job. While eminent domain may seem like a bad thing, it can be very beneficial. Opening up a private property can help many people with jobs. In source A written by the United States Department of Justice, the article says that eminent domain is used for things like transportation, supply water, and construct public buildings. Both sources A and B explain how eminent domain is used for good. All the things that it is used for also opens up jobs and opportunities for people.

Eminent domain is also useful because it benefits more people than it hurts. While the government does take property away, they do use it for good reason. This is shown in source D when the author states, "Today FreeTown is a different place



F₂

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

Question 1

after undergoing a complete makeover that replaced decaying housing and junk-strewn lots with 80 affordable new homes and ten rehabilitated residences" (source D 8).

Eminent Domain may seem like a bad thing to a lot of people. In the end, it does help benefit more than it hurts. ~~From~~ Due to eminent domain happening, the government was able to open new homes for a community. They were able to help fix up a whole town. Eminent Domain ended up helping many people instead of hurting them.

People will always argue on whether or not eminent domain is a good or bad thing. ~~The~~ People will argue that it helps people or it does not. Eminent domain is useful because it opens up opportunities for others, and it benefits people more than it hurts them.

#

There is no way all the people who reside in the US will ever agree on a topic. No not possible. Hopeful as many may be it just isn't in the cards for this free country. Therefore why should the topic of eminent domain be any different. The times the US is at right now are trying no doubt, especially with the whole FBI watching and the theory that the government is slowly trying to take over our freedom, many people are reluctant to agree that eminent domain is beneficial. Don't get me wrong it definitely has its "beloved" perks in "protecting environmentally sensitive areas" (U.S. Department of Justice). This power the government has "played" a central role in ... infrastructure and given us many beautiful ways to escape the havoc it's created also (U.S. Department of Justice). Without this power it's safe to say these preserved sites would not necessarily be where they are today. But with every great thing there is also a down side. Someone always suffers. The ones suffering are "African Americans and other minorities" (Skellton). Communities of minorities usually are the victims of the abuse of eminent domain. "These groups... lack... resources... to resist" therefore



62

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

Causing more and more problems (Somin). So
yes there are down sides but in cases like
Free town, the benefits just seem to outweigh.
Beautiful places of nature are preserved for
~~an~~ an abundance of people to visit and towns
are "completely made over" (Porter). It's just
a matter of preception.

///

The Government pretty much controls everything throughout the United States. If the government wanted to take your land for necessary need, they can do that. But it's all mainly for a good cause in the area people are in. Many people would agree that taking someone's property is bad. But I would disagree because when the government takes someone's land, they do it for a good cause. The Eminent Domain should be used for a better future ahead.

beneficial.

When people the government utilizing Eminent Domain can be so helpful in many ways like considering better facilities for transportation, better buildings, and other ways of supplying water. But many people would argue that the Eminent Domain is wrong for what they're doing by taking over so much land and the land is owned by a private owner. The Eminent Domain has brought plenty of criticism for residents by bringing American parks.

#

AP[®] SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES AND SCORING NOTES

2018 AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

Question 1

Sample Identifier: I

Score: 9

- The essay contains an especially thoroughly developed argument in which the writer acknowledges that “eminent domain can be misused to benefit private interests at the expense of citizens” while maintaining that “it is a vital tool of any government.”
- The writer’s position is convincingly supported through sources: the writer draws on Carney and Somin to highlight the pitfalls of eminent domain and uses the U.S. Department of Justice source to argue for the importance of eminent domain in developing the nation’s “most cherished infrastructure systems.”
- The control of language in this essay is particularly impressive—note how the writer uses the phrase “weeds and rubble” from Source B to encapsulate the empty promises of eminent domain. Other examples of the writer’s facility with language include the figuring of eminent domain as “a societal vacuum cleaner to clean out impoverished areas in the hopes of seducing a business into moving in” and the evocative remark that “eminent domain can sometimes be the death knell of a fading town instead of a lambent sign of progress.”
- The essay’s prose proves consistently clear and organized, as in the last two paragraphs. The overall argument is clearly summed up (“When used as intended, eminent domain goes beyond small-scale revitalization and ventures into the realm of sweeping progress and development”), and the writer makes a final, economical reference to Narciso (“images of an ornery home-owner suing their city”) to strengthen their position.

Sample Identifier: E

Score: 8

- The essay leads with effective personal example (Fells Point as an example of the successful application of eminent domain) that frames the argument.
- The writer convincingly establishes a position that is supported in body paragraphs; the idea that eminent domain “fails at the intended good” is a theme that unites the parts.
- The writer’s prose is clear, concise, and controlled.
- The essay consistently demonstrates effective argumentation and synthesis of sources, especially sources C and F.
- The response contains thoughtful consideration of counterarguments in the third paragraph, e.g., “in many cases, homeowners are compensated for hundreds of thousands of dollars less than they should be”

Sample Identifier: B

Score: 7

- The essay contains an adequately qualified argument that is especially well-reasoned.
- The response is a bit deceptive, as it appears successful in the beginning but ultimately does not rise to an 8-level response (e.g., the writer’s insistence that eminent domain has outlived its usefulness in paragraph two and elsewhere is not entirely convincing).
- The writer demonstrates a mature prose style: e.g., “While eminent domain was originally intended to serve the needs of the public, it has now predictably become a way for the powerful to oppress the poor.”
- The sources sufficiently support the student’s position with more complete explanations (e.g., “Early in our nation’s history, the federal government used this power . . .”).

AP[®] SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES AND SCORING NOTES

2018 AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

- The response's skillful incorporation of sources also reflects the writer's more mature prose style.
- The essay offers a more unified argument (good, logical conclusion based on body paragraphs).

Sample Identifier: H

Score: 6

- The essay contains concise, adequately developed paragraphs as seen in "corporatism" paragraph developed with multiple sources and examples.
- The essay uses sources adequately and has a clearly established argument.
- The three-pronged thesis adequately develops two ideas, addressing the effect of eminent domain on vulnerable groups and the problems of corporatism ("reasonable compensation" is only alluded to briefly).
- The writer's position is sufficiently supported through the sources (e.g., "such an outcome is exemplified in source B, which details a failed plan by the New London Development Corporation to revitalize a small Connecticut town").

Sample Identifier: D

Score: 5

- The essay contains mostly clear prose (*despite* the handwriting).
- The writer establishes a clear position, arguing that eminent domain is good.
- The response uses sources as examples to provide limited support to the argument.
- The uneven explanation becomes better as the writer progresses through the argument but is overgeneralized (i.e., the weak evidence in the last paragraph referring to "the system of checks and balances" that "ensures" an appropriate amount of money is problematic because it isn't really an example of checks and balances; only one property owner's successful challenge to eminent domain is highlighted).
- The link between the argument and sources prove strained and uneven (i.e., the personal example of "the apartment in Russia" is not very convincingly handled).

Sample Identifier: A

Score: 4

- The essay uses four sources but skims the surface, resulting in an inadequately supported argument.
- The writer attempts to qualify the argument but is not successful.
- The response provides a claim that eminent domain is good/bad depending on perspective; however, the support proves inadequate and repetitious.
- The sources dominate this essay.
- The connection between the sources and the argument is weak (i.e., the essay merely references sources without contextualizing them).
- The inadequately developed argument moves from point to point too quickly before completing a thought (e.g., "Source F gives a prime example" and "Source B gives . . .").
- There is a good attempt at using Source A in the penultimate paragraph, but overall the essay remains inadequate.

AP[®] SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES AND SCORING NOTES

2018 AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

Sample Identifier: F

Score: 3

- The essay takes a position, but it is less successful because it is one-sided and simplistic.
- The quotations used are too long and not integrated well with argument (i.e., the use of source D is inept).
- The syntax makes it difficult to parse some of the sentences.
- The writer demonstrates a less perceptive understanding of the sources (e.g., “Both A and B explain how eminent domain is used for good”).
- The response repeats ideas in the opening without adding new content (i.e., it repeats the idea that eminent domain may “hurt, but also help people.”)

Sample Identifier: G

Score: 2

- The essay begins with a throw-away “everything is relative” paragraph.
- The response fails to develop a position on eminent domain, (e.g., “the FBI watching, and the theory that the government is slowly trying to take over our freedom. Many people are reluctant to agree that eminent domain is beneficial.”)
- The essay uses four sources, but none are connected to an argument, demonstrating little success in incorporating sources.
- The conclusion demonstrates little success in controlling language at a sentence/meaning level.
- The response exhibits some misreading of sources as well.

Sample Identifier: C

Score: 1

- The essay contains no development of ideas.
- The argument presented is particularly simplistic: “Many people would agree that taking someone’s property is bad. But I would disagree because when the government takes someones [sic] land, they do it for a good cause.”
- The response alludes to one or two sources.
- The response demonstrates an especially weak control of writing (e.g., “The Eminent Domain has brough [sic] plenty of enjoment [sic] for residents by bringing American parks.”)
- The essay’s formulation of eminent domain is consistently simplistic.

AP English Language and Composition
Question 1: Synthesis (2018)
Sample Student Responses

Sample I

[1] On the outer limits of just governance and the preservation of private liberty lies the issue of eminent domain. Despite it repeatedly being upheld by the Supreme Court, many question whether or not a Democratic government should be able to seize private property without the consent of its rightful owner, especially if it is improperly valued, given to a private company, or never put to constructive use. This often has the most pronounced on the poor or minorities, as they lack the judicial power of financial security to protect their property or their way of life. However, these occasional failures are overshadowed by the resounding successes of many of these larger, often nationwide attempts of the government to construct much-needed infrastructure, and to tangibly alter the course of the nation in a way that cannot be done with just pen and paper. Although eminent domain can be misused to benefit private interests at the expense of citizens, it is a vital tool of any government that intends to have any influence on the land it governs beyond that of written law.

[2] When misused, eminent domain can displace thousands of families at the expense of economic rebirth, while delivering nothing but “weeds and rubble” in its place (Camey). Struggling, local governments will often use this power, originally intended for the creation of productive public lands, as a societal vacuum cleaner to clean out impoverished areas in the hopes of seducing a business into moving in and revitalizing the town. A famous example of this is Detroit, the failing manufacturing hub that tried to regain its former glory in 1981 by displacing “Some 4000 people and numerous businesses in order to transfer the property to General Motors for the construction of a new factory,” (Sornin). The societal impact of such a policy can be devastating, as thousands of families no longer have homes in which to live, and have to struggle to pull themselves out of homelessness, while a major corporation is provided on expensive lot and low taxes to entice it to settle down. As the new company enters the city, it can potentially underperform, like in Detroit, or it can never even come to fruition. This was seen with the New London Development Corporation in Connecticut, where a suburban neighborhood was transformed into a “vast, empty field – 90 acres – that was entirely uninhabited,” (Carney). When governments use eminent domain as a mismanaged attempt to bring in jobs, as opposed to generating new systems for public betterment, the result will likely be just as mismanaged and evident of negligence. American history has shown that eminent domain can sometimes be the death knell of a fading town instead of a lanbent sign of progress.

[3] However, characterizing eminent domain by its small-scale failures ignores its larger, more ubiquitous implications. If not for eminent domain, governments would be able to do little other than draft legislation and aim officials to enforce that legislation. Instead, they have an additional opportunity to exact change, and do so in a way that is constructive for the community at-large. Many of America’s most cherished infrastructure systems are the result of this unique power. Eminent domain is used to “facilitate transportation, supply water,

AP English Language and Composition

Question 1: Synthesis (2018)

Sample Student Responses

construct public buildings, and aid in defense readiness” (US Department of Justice). Eminent domain gives government the assurance that when it plans to construct infrastructure off other systems that improve the state of the country and promote policy, that it does not encounter any roadblocks. Otherwise, it would find itself much like the American Articles of Confederation, where the government had no ability to assert power or sustain itself. When used as intended, eminent domain goes beyond small-scale revitalization and rendering into the realm of sweeping progress and development.

[4] Eminent domain should not involve images of an ornery home-owner suing their city for wanting to build a road, not rother, a core principle or proactive government, and a literal instrument for change. Despite its potential for failure and misuse, eminent domain is a crucial power of any constructive government.

AP English Language and Composition
Question 1: Synthesis (2018)
Sample Student Responses

Sample E

[1] In the city of Baltimore, Maryland lie the district of Fells Point. This historically vibrant, lively corner of the sometimes-dull city is a refreshing retreat, yet during the late 20th century, this part of Baltimore was destined to become a freeway which would connect the city and reduce traffic. Through the efforts of the citizens of Fells Point, however, the area was saved, and Baltimore gained much more from this decision. This is not a stand-out example. Across the country, vibrant neighborhoods and private properties are threatened by the power of Eminent Domain. While there are many who argue the Eminent Domain can be used to revitalize, the power often exploits lower-income areas, violates 5th ammendment rights, and often fails at the intended good.

[2] It is no big secret that there are many places in our country that need refurbishment. Low-income areas particularly face bad foundations and a lack of basic amenities. Eminent Domain proposes to help these areas, but its plan often back fires. Many times, the intentions to revitalize are backed by “corporatism: the belief that government and business should work together” (Source B). This belief often leads to the neglect of these areas which are targeted. The corporations focus on the profit they can get out of their new plan, rather than the interests of the people living or working there. Furthermore, the end product after the “revitalization” is often worse than before. In the end, the ones who profit are the corporations, not the community or the area.

[3] Another disappointing consequence of Eminent Domain is the way that it preys on minority areas. While “overt racism is rarely a factor in modern takings” it is clear that “unconscious bias plays a role” (Source C). Why should we trust a system that preys on minorities? Oftentimes, the counter argument to the use of Eminent Domain is that the people whose homes have been taken from them will have a new benefit to look forward to such as a high way, community center, or park, but when your home has been taken from you. Another counterargument may be that there is adequate payment for those who have lost their house, yet this is false. In many cases, homeowners are compensated for hundreds of thousands of dollars less than they should be, and the individual financial loss is wildly high (Source F).

[4] Fairness aside, Eminent Domain violates the right to private property. The 5th ammendment to our constitution states that private property will not “be taken for public use, without just compensation” (Source A). How can we argue that Eminent Domain is “by the bank” if former owners are rarely compensated fairly? While there certainly are cases in which there is fair compensation and the end product is positive, sources show that this is often not the case.

[5] Unfortunately, not every community threatened by eminent domain can have the same outcome as Fells Point. It is sad to think about the neighborhoods which have been destroyed by Eminent Domain. This power is very often an unjust one, and it does have

AP English Language and Composition

Question 1: Synthesis (2018)

Sample Student Responses

positive impacts, isn't it better to keep a precedent of preserving communities rather than keep a precedent of destroying them?

AP English Language and Composition
Question 1: Synthesis (2018)
Sample Student Responses

Sample B

[1] Eminent domain, or the power of the government to take land from private owners in the name of the public good, has been a major source of controversy over the past few centuries. The most common defenses for eminent domain, while well-intentioned, are ultimately built on flawed concepts that go against the American value of individual freedom. Although eminent domain might benefit some people in certain cases, the ends do not justify the means. It is unethical and un-American to sacrifice the rights of the poor, the needy, and the few under the guise of “the greater good.”

[2] Eminent domain was originally intended to be used for public benefit, not for the gain of private corporations. Early in our nation’s history, the federal government used this power to “facilitate transportation, supply water, construct public buildings, and aid in defense readiness” (Source A). Also, eminent domain was used to create “federal parks, preserves, historic sites and monuments” (Source A). Perhaps this was necessary in our country’s beginning. However, now that we already have land set aside for public use, is it really necessary to continue forcing people off their private land? There must be a point when the public has enough, and we have likely reached that point. Almost every town has a public park, and most cities have several. Every state has monuments and historic sites for the public to tour. Also, we have public buildings, water supply, and transportation. How much more is truly necessary?

[3] While eminent domain was originally intended to serve the needs of the public, it has now predictably become a way for the powerful to oppress the poor. In modern times, government officials often have stronger ties with wealthy corporations than with the voting public. As a result, communities are seized under eminent domain, and they are turned into factories and plants. This is done under the guise of helping people through “new jobs and increased tax revenue” (Source B). However, these plans often fail to deliver “the rebirth, community benefits and jobs they promise” (Source B), leaving behind polluted land and uprooted communities. This tends to “victimize the poor, racial minorities, and the politically weak” (Source C). Poor and minority neighborhoods are disproportionately targeted by the abuse of eminent domain. Besides having a negative effect on the economy, overuse of eminent domain “damages the social fabric of poor communities” when churches and neighborhoods are uprooted. Poor people tend to rely heavily on community support. When they no longer have that support system in place, it becomes even more difficult for them to make ends meet.

[4] Overall, the use of eminent domain has led to more harm than good, especially over the past few decades when corporations have had a major hand in politics. Eminent domain as we know it is a civil rights violation that destroys poor and minority communities in favor of corporate profit. Any system that allowed the powerful to oppress the disadvantaged is

AP English Language and Composition

Question 1: Synthesis (2018)

Sample Student Responses

inherently flawed. Widespread, government-approved theft and discrimination cannot be tolerated in a free and equal society.

AP English Language and Composition
Question 1: Synthesis (2018)
Sample Student Responses

Sample D

[1] Eminent Domain is productive and beneficial because the government needs it to provide for its citizens and the people receive full compensation, for what is lost.

[2] To begin the authorities require the power of eminent domain as it allows them to provide the basic rights to their people. In fact, Justice William Strong believed that eminent domain is “essential to [...] independent existence and perpetuity” of the federal government (Source A). The opinion of Justice Strong emphasizes the governments necessity for eminent domain. This power allows it to provide such basic human needs is water, heat, gas and electricity. “Eminent Domain has been used traditionally to facilitate transportation, supply water, construct public buildings, and aid in defense readiness” – functions that every nation requires (Source A). Eminent Domain only helps people. It provides what the government otherwise could not, in places where government can not reach. This power allows the authorities to help people with the needs of otherwise could not.

[3] Furthermore, while the government does take private property, it compensates people for it, thus ensuring their well being. For example, in the Freetown neighborhood in Greenville, poor half-ruined houses were destroyed and the owners were compensated with the amounts ranging from \$10,000 to \$20,000 which helped the residents make down payments on new improved homes built by the government (Source D). Compensation for their ruined property provided for the future of those people. It allowed them to sell the property that otherwise couldn't have been sold. An issue my family has to face today, as we cannot sell our apartment in Russia for the appropriate money because the country is in crisis. The power of eminent domain would help us. If the government would buy our home in Russia for appropriate amount, it would allow us to buy a new house in “Basking Ridge, New Jersey [sub1].” Eminent Domain compensates what is lost, thus only further helping the people.

[5] Although, one issue rises with this compensation. Is the amount appropriate? Thankfully, the system of checks and balances ensures that it is; in October a Franklin County Common Pleas jury decided that a village that wanted to use farmers property had to pay \$545,625 in contrast to the originally offered amount of \$9,249 (Source F). different branches of government make sure that the federal government does not abuse Eminent Domain. This system provides the people with appropriate compensation for what is lost [sub2].

[sub1]: one of more expensive regions of NJ.

[sub2]: The government is able to provide basic needs to its people and compensate them for everything they lose through Eminent Domain, thus securing the benefits and [ILLEGIBLE] in the government.

AP English Language and Composition
Question 1: Synthesis (2018)
Sample Student Responses

Sample H

[1] The issue of eminent domain has frequently entrenched itself into American history. While the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution does not advocate directly for the practice, it does mention that private property can be taken for public use only when a just compensation is offered to those affected. Thus, eminent domain has been used as an effective tool to promote beneficial government interests. However, while projects requiring the use of eminent domain usually aim to help the public, the practice becomes unjustified when minorities are victimized, a “reasonable compensation” is not attained, and the government works with private companies in the economic philosophy of corporatism.

[2] First and foremost, groups of lower income and diverse backgrounds are, at times, unequally affected by projects involving eminent domain. Source C confirms this idea, stating that such undertakings “tend to victimize the poor, racial minorities and the politically weak.” Although these inequalities are usually unintentional, they arise via a lack of resources, political influence, and opposition to powerful interest groups (Somin). Ultimately, families are displaced and the communal social fabric of poorer communities is broken.

[3] Eminent domain is also abused when private companies benefit at the cost of other private entities or citizens. This practice is known as corporatism, in which the government works closely with private businesses to stimulate economic growth. Unethicity arises, however, when the public-private ties become corrupt, leaving some prosperous and other destitute. Often the case, promises are left unfulfilled so that, in the long run, more than harmed than helped. Such an outcome is exemplified in Source B, which details a failed plan by the New London Development Corporation to “revitalize a small Connecticut town.” The “quasi government body” worked in tandem with Pfizer, giving the company tax breaks and offering to help clean up pollution. While the plan intended to benefit many more residents, compared to the amount of homeowners displaced, the company soon abandoned the plant, leaving an empty open 90 acre field. In the end, nobody was helped in this private-public project, and many were left worse off than beforehand. The financial disaster of Detroit can also be attributed to failed undertakings of corporatism, and altogether, such projects fail: By the time the projects are completed, other, more urgent, more salient public issues arise (Somin). Disapproval of corporatism is further demonstrated in Source E, where the combining of public and private interests, using eminent domain, is described as the “greater Foe” (Cartoon).

[4] Government ambitions involving eminent domain are not always harmful. In fact, when properly used, the government acquisition of land provides the public with a multitude of desirable provisions, including transportation, water systems, public buildings, defense aid, historical preservation sites, and natural parks (U.S. Department of Justice). The process, however, becomes unethical when governments work closely with private industries, causing social inequalities, unnecessary displacements, corruption, and unfulfilled promises.

Sample F

[1] There are many people that argue whether eminent Domain is a positive thing or not. Eminent Domain is the act of the government taking away private property for public use. Eminent Domain is productive useful because it can open up opportunities for people, and it can benefit many people.

[2] Eminent domain is useful because it can open opportunities for people. When the government takes a property, it can open up many job opportunities. In source B written by Timothy Carney, the editorial states that New London's development plan may hurt, but also help people especially those who need a job. While eminent domain may seem like a bad thing, it can be very beneficial. Opening up a private property can help many people with jobs. In source A written by the United States Department of Justice, the article says that eminent domain is used for things like transportation, supply water, and construct public buildings. Both sources A and B explain how eminent domain is used for good. All the things that it is used for also open up jobs and opportunities for people.

[3] Eminent Domain is also useful because it benefits more people than it hurts. While the government does take property away, they do use it for good reason. This is shown in source D when the author states, "Today Freetown is a different place after undergoing a complete makeover that replaced decaying housing and long-strewn jobs with 80 affordable new homes and ten rehabilitated residences" (source D 8). Eminent Domain may seem like a bad thing to a lot of people. In the end, it does help benefit more than it hurts. Due to eminent domain happening, the government was able to open new homes for a community. They were able to help fix up a whole town. Eminent Domain ended up helping many people instead of hurting them.

[4] People will always argue on whether or not eminent domain is a good or bad thing. People will argue that it helps people or it does not. Eminent domain is useful because it opens up opportunities for others, and it benefits people more than it hurts them.

AP English Language and Composition
Question 1: Synthesis (2018)
Sample Student Responses

Sample A

[1] Eminent Domain: Power the government holds to take land from private property owners, yet they still must pay compensation for the properties value. Although one may think this is completely fine many argue that its extreamly unfair. Both cases are right eminent domain is a two sided coin; eminent domain is good and bad depending on what side you stand on and how it effects you or others.

[2] First of all we must consider the damages of eminent domain. Source F gives a primes example of a damage due to eminent domain. If the government took his property their would be various causes of damage to his work. With this we see that not only must he be paid for the land but damages for his work environment. Eminent domain also leads to environmental damages not just to ones personal property but the communities property as well. Source B, we head that through eminent domain the Long Island South received a heavy burden when the government took a persons property just to leave it worse off then it already was. Eminent domain can have a good side and a bad side the Sources B & F demonstrated that the governments US of eminent domain may leave or has left damage behind in which most cases is left unfixed and permantly damaging.

[3] We see this permante unfair damage in various forms such as property damage but one that most greatly effects people is home and hob loss. Looking at Source E we may laugh at the satirecal piece at first but then we come to relize that this is no joke a lot of people lose their homes to the government. Although we may see a brightside such as a new place to create jobs you just made a family lose their home for it. We can also see the damages when we read Source C we see that the people who receive the short end of the stick is small communities. The damage that eminent domain holds on people is great.

[4] Through all the bad we also see some good in eminent domain as seen in Source A where the government took land to preserve a place with great historical significance. In cases like this we see that eminent domain isn't that bad because we are left with some great places such as parks, recs, historical land marks, ect. We also see the good in Source D where we read that in the end sometimes the people cry out for help and thorough emenet domain they recived the help they needed to get out of a horrible situation into a good one. As we see that the use of emenate domain can't be all bad in the end their will be good that can come out.

[5] Finally when we look at emenet domain we see that yes it has it costly damages on properties and comunitis in the forms of job and home loss but we can also see that there is good when emenet domain takes place. When emenet domain is first spoken we must not just focus on the good or bad because in the end we truly don't know which will occur.

AP English Language and Composition

Question 1: Synthesis (2018)

Sample Student Responses

Sample C

[1] The government pretty much controls everything throught out the United States. If the government wanted to take your land for necessary need, they can do that. But it's all maily for a good cause in the area people are in. Many people would agree that taking someone's property is bad. But I would disagree because when the government take's someones land, they do it for a good cause. Eminent Domain should be used for a better future ahead an benefical. The government untilzing Eminent Domain can be so helpful in many ways like considering better facilitates for transportation, better buildings, and better ways of supplying water. But many people would argue that the Eminent Domain is wrong for what there doing by taking over so much land and the land is owned by a private owner. The Eminent Domain has brough plenty of environment for residents by bringing American parks.

Sample G

[1] There is no way all the people who reside in the US will ever agree on a topic. No not possible. Hopeful as many may be it just isn't in the cards for this free country. Therefore why should the topic of eminent domain be any different. The times the US is at right now are trying no doubt, especially with the whole FBI watching and the theory that the government is slowly trying to take over our freedom, many people are reluctant to agree that eminent domain is beneficial. Don't get me wrong it definitely has its "beloved" perks in "protecting environmentally sensitive areas" (U.S. Department of Justice). This power the government has "play[ed] a central role...infrastructure" and given us many beautiful ways to escape the havoc it's created also (U.S. Department of Justice). Without this power it's safe to say these preserved sites would not necessarily be where they are today. But with every great thing there is also a down side. Someone always suffers. The one suffering are "African Americans and other minorities" (Shelton). Communities of minorities usually are the victims of the abuse of eminent domain. "These groups...lack...resources...to resist" therefore causing more and more problems (Somin). So yes there are down sides but in cases like Freetown, the benefits just seem to outweigh. Beautiful places of nature are preserved for an abundance of people to visit and towns are "complete[ly] made over" (Porter). It's just a matter of perception.

AP English Language

2020 Free-Response Scoring Guidelines (applied to 2018 questions)

Question 1: Synthesis Essay 6 points

Eminent domain is the power governments have to acquire property from private land owners for public use. The rationale behind eminent domain is that governments have greater legal authority over lands within their dominion than do private owners. Eminent domain has been instituted in one way or another throughout the world for hundreds of years.

Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the sources and develops your position on the notion that eminent domain is productive and beneficial.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row A Thesis (0-1 points)</p> <p>4.B</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>For any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no defensible thesis. The intended thesis only restates the prompt. The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt. 	<p>1 point</p> <p>Responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis that may establish a line of reasoning.</p>
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The intended thesis only restates the prompt. The intended thesis is vague, must be inferred, does not take a position, equivocates or summarizes other's arguments but not the student's (e.g., some people say it's good, some people say it's bad). The intended thesis simply states an obvious fact rather than a making a claim that requires a defense. <p>Examples that do not earn this point:</p> <p>Restates the prompt, does not make a claim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "For hundreds of years, eminent domain has been used in one way or another around the world." <p>Addresses the topic of the prompt, but takes no position.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Eminent domain is good and bad depending on what side you stand on and how it effects [sic] you or others." [Sample A] "...many people are reluctant to agree that eminent domain is beneficial." [Sample G] <p>Addresses the topic of the prompt, but is not defensible – it is a fact stated as a claim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Eminent domain gives government power." 	<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The thesis responds to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt <u>and</u> the thesis clearly takes a position rather than just stating there are pros/cons (it develops a position on the value, if any, of eminent domain). <p>Examples that earn this point:</p> <p>Provides a defensible thesis, without establishing a line of reasoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Although eminent domain might benefit some people in certain cases, the ends do not justify the means." [Minimally acceptable thesis] "Eminent Domain is productive and beneficial because the government needs it to provide for its citizens and the people receive full compensation for what is lost." [Sample D] "Eminent domain is productive [and] useful because it can open up opportunities for people, and it can benefit many people." [Sample F] <p>Provides a defensible thesis that establishes a line of reasoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Although eminent domain can be abused to benefit private interests at the expense of citizens, it is a vital tool of government that intends to have any influence on the land it governs beyond that of written law." [Sample I] "While there are many who argue the [sic] eminent domain can be used to revitalize, this power often exploits lower-income areas, violates 5th amendment rights, and often fails at the intended good." [Sample E] "The most common defenses for eminent domain, while well-intentioned, are ultimately built on flawed concepts that go against the American value of individual freedom." [Sample B]
	<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The thesis may appear anywhere within the essay. A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning. 	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
Row B Evidence AND Commentary 0-4 points 2.A 4.A 6.A 6.B 6.C	0 points Simply restates thesis (if present). OR Fewer than 2 of the provided sources are referenced. OR Provides examples that are generally irrelevant and/or incoherent.	1 point Provides evidence from or references at least two of the provided sources. Evidence provided must be relevant to the <u>subject of the prompt</u> . AND Provides little or no commentary.	2 points Provides evidence from or references at least three of the provided sources. Evidence provided must be relevant to the <u>subject of the prompt</u> . AND Provides commentary; however, it repeats, oversimplifies, or misinterprets the cited information or evidence.	3 points Provides evidence from or references at least three of the provided sources. Evidence provided must be relevant to the <u>thesis</u> . AND Provides commentary that explains the relationship between evidence and the thesis; however, commentary is uneven, limited, or incomplete.	4 points Provides evidence from or references at least three of the provided sources. Evidence provided must be relevant to the <u>thesis</u> . AND Provides well-developed commentary that consistently and explicitly explains the relationship between the evidence and the thesis.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes				
	Typical responses that earn 0 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are incoherent and do not address the prompt. May offer just opinion or repeat the ideas from a single source. Do not reference information from any of the provided sources. <i>[Sample C]</i> 	Typical responses that earn 1 point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only use 2 of the provided sources. <i>[Sample G]</i> 	Typical responses that earn 2 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide commentary that frequently misunderstands, misrepresents, or overgeneralizes complex ideas (is reductive). <i>[Sample F]</i> Summarize conflicting positions from the sources but fails to compare, contrast, or reach a conclusion. <i>[Sample A]</i> 	Typical responses that earn 3 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide commentary that is well-developed in places but with occasional lapses into description or summary (rather than explanation). <i>[Sample H]</i> Provide commentary that is clear but there are times when the link between the evidence and the thesis may be strained. <i>[Sample D]</i> 	Typical responses that earn 4 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide commentary that engages specific details from the sources to draw conclusions. Integrate evidence from sources throughout to support the student's reasoning. <i>[Sample I and Sample E]</i>
	Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row. 				

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row C Sophistication (0-1 points) <div> <div>2.A</div> <div>4.C</div> <div>6.B</div> <div>8.A</div> <div>8.B</div> <div>8.C</div> </div>	0 points Does not meet the criteria for 1 point.	1 point Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempt to contextualize their argument, but such attempts consist of predominantly sweeping generalizations (“<i>In a world where...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time...</i>”). Only hint or suggest other arguments (“<i>While some may argue that...</i>” OR “<i>Some people say...</i>”). Use complicated or complex sentences or language that are ineffective in that they do not enhance the argument. [Sample H] 	Responses that earn this point may demonstrate sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation by doing any of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Situating the argument within a broader context, recognizing the implications of the argument. [Sample I] Engaging concession, rebuttal, and/or refutation of other arguments relating to the thesis. [Sample I and Sample E] Making effective rhetorical choices that strengthen the force and impact of the student’s argument. [Sample E and Sample B] Utilizing a prose style that is especially vivid, persuasive, convincing, or appropriate to the student’s argument. [Sample I and Sample B]
	Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This point should be awarded only if the demonstration of sophistication or complex understanding is part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference. 	

AP English Language and Composition
Question 1: Synthesis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)

Sample I

6/6 Points (A1 - B4 - C1)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point for row A because it presents a thoughtful, multi-sentence thesis that indicates a clear position and establishes a line of reasoning. In paragraph 1, the response provides relevant context to set up its insightful thesis: “Although eminent domain can be abused to benefit private interests at the expense of citizens, it is a vital tool of government that intends to have any influence on the land it governs beyond that of written law.” This qualified position sets up the line of reasoning for the rest of the essay.

Row B: 4/4

The response earned 4 points for row B because the evidence provided clearly relates to the thesis and the commentary engages specific details from the sources to draw conclusions relative to the thesis – making it especially well-developed. For example, in paragraph 2, the response introduces the concept from the Camey source that eminent domain might be misused, delivering no positive effects. In doing so, the response specifically uses a small detail from that source – “weeds and rubble” – to establish an image that will be developed using evidence from two additional sources: the Detroit example from the Sornin source and the New London example from the Carney source. The commentary on these sources is used to develop the concept that local governments “will often use [eminent domain], originally intended for the creation of productive public lands, as a societal vacuum cleaner to clean out impoverished areas in the hopes of seducing a business into moving in and revitalizing the town.” Having examined the concerns surrounding eminent domain, the response then shifts to develop its most important idea: “However, characterizing eminent domain by its small-scale failures ignores its larger, more ubiquitous implications” (paragraph 3). Now focusing on the thesis of the essay, the response continues to integrate source information throughout as it also provides well-developed commentary that effectively explains the relationship between the evidence and the thesis: “Many of America’s most cherished infrastructure systems are the result of [eminent domain].”

Row C: 1/1

The response earned the point for Row C because there are several instances where it situates the argument in a broader context. For example, in paragraph 1 the response acknowledges “occasional failures” of eminent domain and asserts they are “overshadowed by the resounding successes of many of the larger, often nationwide attempts of the government to construct much-needed infrastructure...” In paragraph 3, the response recognizes the implications of the argument: “Used as intended, eminent domain goes beyond small-scale revitalization and ventures into the realm of sweeping progress and development. Also, the vocabulary and style enhance the argument by developing vivid, persuasive, and convincing metaphors for understanding (e.g., “...as a societal vacuum cleaner” or “...the death knell of a fading town”).

AP English Language and Composition
Question 1: Synthesis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)

Sample E

6/6 Points (A1 - B4 - C1)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point for row A because it provides a thesis with a clearly defensible position against eminent domain: “While there are many who argue the [sic] eminent domain can be used to revitalize, this power often exploits lower-income areas, violates 5th amendment rights, and often fails at the intended good.”

Row B: 4/4

The response earned 4 points for row B because the evidence provided clearly relates to the thesis and the interspersed commentary explains those connections consistently. The opening anecdote in paragraph 1 about the “district of Fells Point” provides initial evidence for the reasoning behind the position against eminent domain. Related to the Fells Point anecdote, paragraph 2 again addresses how “eminent domain proposes to help these areas,” but then shifts to the quote from source B defining “corporatism” followed by commentary connecting the exploits of corporatism to abuse of eminent domain. Having established the possible abuses of eminent domain, the response then looks to the dangers of those abuses as they may disproportionately affect certain groups based on the idea from source C that “overt racism is rarely a factor in modern takings” making it clear that “unconscious bias plays a role.” Making connection between bias and unfair compensation, the commentary then transitions from paragraph 3 to paragraph 4 by extending the discussion of problems of unfair compensation and effectively synthesizing information from sources F and A.

Row C: 1/1

The response earned the point for Row C because there are several instances where it situates the argument in a broader context. For example, in paragraph 1 the response presents a relevant personal example that provides a more sophisticated understanding of the issue. The response also presents counterargument and refutation. For example, in paragraph 3: “Oftentimes, the counter argument to the use of eminent domain is that the people whose homes have been taken from them will have a new benefit to look forward to such as a highway, community center, or park, but when your home has been taken from you, the prospect of a highway will not compensate that loss.”

AP English Language and Composition
Question 1: Synthesis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)

Sample B

5/6 Points (A1 - B3 - C1)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point for row A because it presents a clear thesis, explaining that “the ends do not justify the means [of eminent domain].” The thesis then establishes a line of reasoning that eminent domain “is unethical and un-American to sacrifice the rights of the poor, the needy, and the few under the guise of ‘the greater good’.”

Row B: 3/4

The response earned 3 points for row B because the evidence provided clearly relates to the thesis, though the commentary that explains those connections is incomplete and uneven. The response establishes a pattern of addressing the intentions of eminent domain and then addressing the shortcomings. Paragraph 2 follows this pattern, then shifts to the definition and intention of eminent domain as at one time “necessary” but then asks, “now that we already have land set aside for public use, is it really necessary to continue forcing people off their private land?”. However, the commentary then becomes very uneven, making blanket comments about parks, monuments, and public buildings that may extend from the original argument, but the commentary neither explains how that matters – leaving the reader to make the connections – nor linking it to the evidence from which it seems to derive. Paragraph 3 concedes the point that eminent domain was originally intended to serve the needs of the public. Using source B, the response provides specific detail about the supposed benefits of eminent domain. Having established these supposed benefits, the response then returns to the thesis shifting to evidence from source C about how eminent domain ultimately harms “the poor, racial minorities and politically weak”. After providing this evidence, the response develops commentary explaining the ways in which eminent domain proves harmful to those communities; however, this commentary is limited as it predominantly restates information from the sources.

Row C: 1/1

The response earned the point for Row C because there are instances where it situates the argument in a broader context. For example, in paragraph 1 the response provides a sophisticated concession: “The most common defenses for eminent domain while well-intended, are ultimately built of flawed concepts that go against the American value of individual freedom.” In paragraph 4, the response recognizes the implications of the argument: “... especially over the past few decades when corporations have had a major hand in politics. Eminent domain as we know it is a civil rights violation that destroys poor and minority communities in favor of corporate profit.”

AP English Language and Composition
Question 1: Synthesis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)

Sample D

4/6 Points (A1 - B3 - C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point for row A because it provides a defensible thesis in paragraph 1 that “Eminent Domain is productive and beneficial because the government needs it to provide for its citizens and the people receive full compensation for what is lost.” While it does not provide a line of reasoning, the position on eminent domain is both clear and defensible.

Row B: 3/4

The response earned 3 points for row B because the evidence provided relates to the thesis, but the commentary that explains those connections is limited and incomplete. In particular, the commentary provides links between the evidence and the thesis that are sometimes strained. In paragraph 2, the response provides an incomplete and vague explanation of Source A: “[Eminent domain] provides what the government otherwise could not, in places where government can not [sic] reach. This power allows the authorities to help people with the needs of [sic] otherwise could not.” This commentary is used to support the simplistic assertion that “Eminent Domain only helps people.” In paragraph 3, the response provides uneven explanation of Source D: “Compensation for their ruined property provided for the future of those people. It allowed them to sell the property that otherwise couldn’t have been sold.” Both examples demonstrate commentary that only provides a limited explanation of the relationship between the source evidence the thesis that doesn’t really engage with the details of the sources. The conclusions drawn in the commentary are limited and tend towards the simplistic (“Eminent Domain compensates what is lost, thus only further helping people”) and as such, don’t meet the descriptors “explicit explanation” or “well-developed” required for 4 points.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point for Row C because its explanations are somewhat repetitive and do not reflect a complex understanding of the issue. The personal example provided in paragraph 4 attempts to contextualize the argument but appears only vaguely related to the topic and does not provide significant insight or sophistication of thought.

AP English Language and Composition
Question 1: Synthesis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)

Sample H

4/6 Points (A1 - B3 - C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point for row A because it does provide a clear and defensible thesis that “the practice [of eminent domain] becomes unjustified” in certain circumstances. It then goes on to provide those circumstances, which mostly reflect the reasoning of the argument that eminent domain is wrong “when minorities are victimize[d], a ‘reasonable compensation’ is not attained, and the government works with private companies in the economic philosophy of corporatism.”

Row B: 3/4

The response earned 3 points for row B because the evidence provided relates to the thesis, but the commentary that explains those connections often lapses into summary (rather than explanation). In paragraph 2, the response begins by making a comment related to “victimized minorities” and then provides evidence from source C, but it only restates the information from that source and provides an incomplete explanation of how the source information relates to the thesis: “Ultimately, families are displaced and the communal social fabric of poorer communities is broken.” Paragraph 3 provides more incomplete explanation, this time related to the role of corporatism in eminent domain as addressed in Source B. Taking the position that “promises are left unfulfilled so that, in the long run, more are harmed than helped,” but then going on to only explain that “Such an outcome is exemplified in Source B” and then summarizing the argument of the source. It does emerge from that summary with an effective comment on the “disapproval of corporatism” as it connects also to source E.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point for Row C. While it does attempt to contextualize the argument in different places – “eminent domain has frequently entrenched itself into American history” (paragraph 1) – it neither maintains this context throughout the response nor refers back to it by the end.

AP English Language and Composition
Question 1: Synthesis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)

Sample F

3/6 Points (A1 - B2 - C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point for row A because it does provide a defensible thesis, taking the clear position that “Eminent domain is productive [and] useful...” but it does not establish a line of reasoning, only creating an redundant extension of the already stated thesis in explaining that it “can open up opportunities for people, and it can benefit many people.”

Row B: 2/4

The response earned 2 points for row B because, while it does use information from three sources as evidence directly related to the thesis, the commentary that explains the evidence merely repeats and oversimplifies source information. In paragraph 2, the cited evidence from Sources A and B is essentially repeated in the commentary about creating “jobs and opportunities for people.” In paragraph 3, the response then barely moves from the idea established in the thesis and focused on in paragraph 2, that eminent domain “can open up opportunities for people” and on to the repetitive idea that “it can benefit many people.” Again, the response includes information from a source (D) – this time, a quote – and then provides no explanation of how that quote relates directly to the thesis.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point for Row C because there is no evidence of complex understanding of the topic or of the rhetorical situation.

AP English Language and Composition
Question 1: Synthesis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)

Sample A

2/6 Points (A0 - B2 - C0)

Row A: 0/1

The response did not earn the point for row A because its intended thesis in paragraph 1 does not take a position, it merely presents a somewhat obvious binary choice – “eminent domain is good and bad depending on what side you stand on...” The prompt requires the student to take a position, but this response never goes beyond equivocation.

Row B: 2/4

The response earned 2 points for row B because, while the evidence provided relates to the subject of the prompt, the commentary that explains those connections oversimplifies and misinterprets the evidence. In paragraph 1, the response attempts to explain Source F – “If the government took his property their [sic] would be various causes of damage to his work.” – but oversimplifies that evidence and its presentation. The remainder of the response then proceeds to overgeneralize sources and state that those sources relate to the subject, but fail to draw on specific information from the sources or explain how those sources relate to the subject. It is important to note how this response is hampered by its lack of a thesis, meaning that any evidence introduced cannot be introduced in support of a thesis – a necessary trait to earn 3 or 4 points in Row B.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point for Row C because it does not demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the topic or of the rhetorical situation. Because the response misinterprets or oversimplifies its explanations, there are no examples of a complex understanding or a more sophisticated prose style.

AP English Language and Composition
Question 1: Synthesis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)

Sample C

1/6 Points (A1 - B0 - C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned the point for row A because it provides a defensible thesis in paragraph 1: “The government utilizing Eminent Domain can be so helpful in many ways like considering better facilitates for transportation, better buildings, and better ways of supplying water.”

Row B: 0/4

The response did not earn any points for row B because, while it does appear to vaguely refer to some source material, those references may only be topical similarities and without any citations or attributions, it is too difficult to say. Also, it does not provide relevant explanation for these vague references and does not connect them to the thesis in any substantive way.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point for Row C because there is no evidence of complex understanding of the topic or of the rhetorical situation. The ideas and language do not reflect an understanding of context.

AP English Language and Composition
Question 1: Synthesis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)

Sample G

1/6 Points (A0 - B1 - C0)

Row A: 0/1

The response did not earn the point for row A because the statement that approaches a thesis: "...many people are reluctant to agree that eminent domain is beneficial." is simply a summary of the issue and repeats the language of the prompt. It is never clearly stated what the student's position is, as can be seen with the concluding statement of the response "It's just a matter of preception [sic]."

Row B: 1/4

The response earned 1 point for row B because, although it does use three sources, it does not provide enough commentary to link it to the subject of the prompt. There are only a few brief phrases that refer to the quoted evidence such as "...in cases like Freetown, the benefits just seem to outway [sic]" therefore this example meets the criteria "provides little commentary".

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn the point for Row C because there is no evidence of complex understanding of the topic or of the rhetorical situation.

AP English Language and Composition
Question 1: Synthesis
2020 Scoring Commentaries
(Applied to 2018 Student Responses)

Index of Scores for Samples: Question 1

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H	1	3	0
D	1	3	0
F	1	2	0
A	0	2	0
C	1	0	0
G	0	1	0