

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Question 1

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

Introduction

The realm of hip-hop has long been punctuated by rivalries, serving as a crucible for creative tension and competitive spirit. Among the most notable contemporary feuds is the enmity between Kendrick Lamar and Drake, both widely considered as amongst the greatest contemporary rappers for their impact on music and fans. Rooted in lyrical jabs, perceived slights, and industry politics, their feud has recently escalated to include direct addresses to family members, allegations of lawbreaking, and various other demeaning accusations.

Assignment

Carefully read the following seven 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 whether Drake or Kendrick Lamar is currently the greatest rapper in the music industry.

Directions:

Make sure that your argument is central; use the sources to illustrate and support your reasoning. 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 (“Not Like Us”)
- Source B (“Push Ups”)
- Source C (“Euphoria”)
- Source D (“Family Matters”)
- Source E (“Meet the Grahams”)
- Source F (Wikipedia)
- Source G (“Black History Month”)

¹ Modified from an original version produced by Meghan Hobbs Chandler

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QUESTIONS Developed by Joshua Nebrida

Source A

“Not Like Us.” *YouTube*, uploaded by Kendrick Lamar, 6
May 2024, www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBlpjSEtELs.

The following is an album cover for Kendrick Lamar’s single “Not Like Us” that depicts the exterior of Drake’s mansion with suggestive markers.



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Source B

“Push Ups.” *YouTube*, uploaded by Drake, 19 April
2024,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKH9p19PRLA>.

[The following is excerpted from Drake’s song “Push Ups” written in response to being called out by Kendrick Lamar for condescending innuendos in the song “Like That” by Future and Metro Boomin. Lyrics were edited to remove explicit language.]

Your last one bricked, you really not on it
They make excuses for you 'cause they hate to see me lit
Pull your contract 'cause we gotta see the split
The way you doing splits, your pants might rip
You better do that show inside the bity
Maroon 5 need a verse, you better make it witty
Then we need a verse for the Swifties
Top say drop, you better drop and give 'em fifty
Pipsqueak, pipe down
You ain't in no big three, SZA got you wiped down
Travis got you wiped down, Savage got you wiped down
Like your label, boy, you in a scope right now
And you gone feel the aftermath of what I write down
I'm at the top of the mountain, so you tight now
Just to have this talk with you, I had to hike down
Big difference 'tween Mike then and Mike now
What the freak is this, a twenty-v-one?
What's a prince to a king? He a son,
Get more love in the city that you from

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Source C

“Euphoria.” *YouTube*, uploaded by Kendrick Lamar, 30
April 2024,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPqDIwWMtxg>.

[The following is excerpted from the first and second verse of Kendrick Lamar’s song “Euphoria”. Lyrics were edited to remove explicit language.]

Verse 1

This ain't been about critics, not about gimmicks, not about who the greatest
It's always been about love and hate, now let me say I'm the biggest hatero
I hate the way that you walk, the way that you talk, I hate the way that you dress
I hate the way that you sneak diss, if I catch flight, it's gone be direct

Verse 2

Let's speak on percentage, show me your splits,
I'll make sure I double back with you
(...)
Try cease and desist on the "Like That" record?
What? You ain't like that record?
"Back To Back, " I like that record
I'ma get back to that, for the record
Why would I call around tryna get dirt on? Y'all think all my life is rap?
I got a son to raise, but I can see you don't know nothing 'bout that
Waking him up, know nothing 'bout that
And tell him to pray, know nothing 'bout that
And giving him tools to walk through life like day-by-day, know nothing 'bout that
Teaching him morals, integrity, discipline, listen, man, you don't know nothing 'bout that
Speaking the truth and consider what God's considering, you don't know nothing 'bout that
Ain't twenty-v-one, it's one-v-twenty if I gotta smack that that write with you
Yeah, bring 'em out too, I'll clean 'em out too

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Source D

“Family Matters.” *YouTube*, uploaded by Drake, 3 May
2024,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZkXG3ZrXlbc>.

[The following is excerpted from the first and third verse of Drake’s song “Family Matters.” Lyrics were edited to remove explicit language.]

Verse 1

Out here begging for attention, say please
Always rapping like you 'bout to get the slaves freed
You just acting like an activist, it's make-believe
Don't even go back to your hood and plant no money trees
Say you hate the girls I'm with, but what you really mean?
I been with Black and white and everything that's in between
You the Black messiah wifing up a mixed queen
And hit vanilla cream to help out with your self-esteem
On some Bobby stuff, I wanna know what Whitney need
All that puppy love was over in y'all late teens
Why you never hold your son and tell him, "Say cheese?"
We could've left the kids out of this, don't blame me
You a dog and you know it, you just play sweet
Your baby mama captions always screaming, "Save me"
You did her dirty all her life, you tryna make peace
I heard that one of them little kids might be Dave Free
Don't make it Dave Free's

Verse 2

The blacker the berry, the sweeter the juice
We get that you like to put gin in your juice
We get that you think that you Bishop in Juice
When you put your hands on your girl, is it self-defense 'cause she bigger than you?
Your back is up against the curb, you digging for dirt, should be digging for proof
Why did you move to New York? Is it 'cause you living that bachelor life?
Proposed in 2015, but don't wanna make her your actual wife
I'm guessing this wedding ain't happening, right?
'Cause we know the girls that you actually like
Your darkest secrets are coming to light
It's all on your face like what happened to Mike
Oh, it's making sense
Maybe I'm Prince and you actually Mike

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Source E

“Meet the Grahams.” *YouTube*, uploaded by Kendrick
Lamar, 3 May 2024,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QiFl9Dc7D0>.

*[The following is excerpted from the first, third, and fourth verse of Kendrick Lamar’s song “Meet the Grahams”
Lyrics were edited to remove explicit language.]*

Verse 1

Dear Adonis,
I'm sorry that that man is your father, let me be honest
It takes a man to be a man, your dad is not responsive
I look at him and wish your grandpa woulda wore a condom
I'm sorry that you gotta grow up and then stand behind him
Life is hard, I know, the challenge is always gone beat us home
Sometimes our parents make mistakes that affect us until we grown
And you're a good kid that need good leadership
Let me be your mentor since your daddy don't teach you

Verse 3

Dear baby girl,
I'm sorry that your father not active inside your world
He don't commit to much but his music, yeah, that's for sure
He a narcissist, misogynist, living inside his songs
Try destroy families rather than taking care of his own
Should be teaching you time tables or watching Frozen with you
Or at your eleventh birthday, singing poems with you

Verse 4

Take that mask off, I wanna see what's under them achievements
Why believe you? You never gave us nothing to believe in
'Cause you lied about religious views, you lied about your surgery
You lied about your accent and your past tense, all is perjury
You lied about your ghostwriters, you lied about your crew members
You lied on 'em, I know they all got you in 'em
You lied about your son, you lied about your daughter, huh
You lied about them other kids that's out there hoping that you come
You lied about the only artist that can offer you some help
F a rap battle, this a long life battle with yourself

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Source F

Wikipedia contributors. "List of awards and nominations received by Kendrick Lamar." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 7 May. 2024. Web. 8 May. 2024.

[The following is excerpted from an online encyclopedia written and edited by anonymous individuals.]

Throughout his career, American rapper and songwriter Kendrick Lamar has received several awards, nominations, and cultural honors. He signed to Top Dawg Entertainment (TDE) in 2005 and released his debut studio album, *Section.80*, in 2011. At the 2011 BET Hip Hop Awards, the album received a nomination for Best Mixtape. Lamar's second album, *Good Kid, M.A.A.D City* (2012), earned him seven nominations at the 56th Annual Grammy Awards, including for Album of the Year, Best New Artist and Best Rap Album. His third studio album, *To Pimp a Butterfly* (2015), was preceded by the Grammy Award for Best Rap Song and Best Rap Performance-winning single "i". For his work on the album and additional collaborations from that year, Lamar received the most Grammy Award nominations by a rapper in a single night.

At the 58th Annual Grammy Awards, *To Pimp a Butterfly* was awarded Best Rap Album, while tracks from the album won Best Rap Song, Best Rap Performance, and Best Rap/Sung Collaboration. Lamar was declared a generational icon by the California State Senate for his music and philanthropic contributions, and was given the key to his hometown of Compton. His fourth studio album, *Damn* (2017), went on to win five awards at the 60th Annual Grammy Awards, including Best Rap Album. The album became the first musical composition outside of the classical and jazz genres to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Music. For his work on the soundtrack album for the superhero film *Black Panther* (2018), which he curated and executive produced, Lamar won the Grammy Award for Best Rap Performance and was nominated for the Golden Globe and Academy Award for Best Original Song. He won another Grammy Award for Best Rap Performance in 2022 for the single "Family Ties" with Baby Keem, and won three Grammy Awards in 2023 for his fifth studio album *Mr. Morale & the Big Steppers* (2022).

Lamar is the most awarded artist in BET Hip Hop Awards history, with 29 wins. He has won eleven MTV Video Music Awards, including Video of the Year for "Bad Blood" with Taylor Swift and "Humble". With the latter video, he became the first artist to win Video of the Year for a music video he co-directed. As a headliner of the Pepsi Super Bowl LVI Halftime Show, Lamar won the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Variety Special (Live).

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Source G

"Black History Month Canadian Music Heroes." *Sistema Toronto*, 2022 <https://www.sistema-toronto.ca/black-history-month-canadian-music-heroes-drake>

[The following is an excerpt from a webpage created by a Canadian-based social development program for children living in underserved communities.]

Aubrey Drake Graham (born October 24, 1986) is a Canadian rapper, singer, songwriter, actor, and entrepreneur. A prominent figure in popular music, Drake is credited for popularizing the Toronto sound.

Drake released his debut studio album *Thank Me Later* in 2010, which debuted at number one on the US Billboard 200. He achieved major critical success with *Take Care* (2011), and commercial success with *Nothing Was the Same* (2013) and his first commercial mixtape *If You're Reading This It's Too Late* (2015); the latter two were certified multi-platinum in the US. Drake's fourth album *Views* (2016) sat atop the Billboard 200 for 13 nonconsecutive weeks, becoming the first album by a male solo artist to do so in over a decade. Marketed as a playlist, Drake's second solo commercial mixtape *More Life* (2017) set multiple streaming records. In 2018, he released the double album *Scorpion*, which produced three number-one singles on the Billboard Hot 100. Drake's third commercial mixtape *Dark Lane Demo Tapes* (2020) featured the Hot 100 number-one lead single "Tootsie Slide".

As an entrepreneur, Drake founded the OVO Sound record label with longtime collaborator 40 in 2012. In 2013, Drake was announced as the new "global ambassador" of the Toronto Raptors, thereby joining the executive committee of the NBA franchise. In 2016, Drake announced his development with American entrepreneur Brent Hocking of the bourbon whiskey Virginia Black; it eventually broke sale records in Canada. He has also designed fashion, the most notable including a sub-label collaboration with Nike, alongside other business ventures. In 2018, Drake was reportedly responsible for 5% (CAD\$440 million) of Toronto's CAD\$8.8 billion total annual tourism income.

Among the world's best-selling music artists, with over 170 million records sold, Drake is ranked as the highest-certified digital singles artist in the United States by the RIAA. He has won four Grammy Awards, six American Music Awards, a record 27 Billboard Music Awards, two Brit Awards and three Juno Awards. Drake also holds several Billboard chart records; he has the most top 10 hits on the Billboard Hot 100, the most charted songs (209) of any artists ever on the Billboard Hot 100, the most simultaneously charted Hot 100 songs in a single week (27), the most continuous time on the Hot 100 (431 weeks), and the most Hot 100 debuts in a week (22). He also has the most number-one singles on the R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay, Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs, Hot Rap Songs, and Rhythmic Airplay.