

AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE
2006 SCORING GUIDELINES (Form B)

Question 2

(Collins's *The Moonstone*)

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

- 9–8** These well-written essays may not recognize the pervasive irony of the passage—that the narrator's critique of gentlefolk is itself critiqued—but they realize that his hyperbolic scorn for the idle rich is humorous and has a satiric purpose. These students identify with clarity and precision the stylistic elements (such as diction, tone, imagery, and point of view) that convey the speaker's attitudes. These essays need not be flawless. Still, they provide an insightful understanding of the speaker's attitudes, in a form that is skillfully controlled and phrased.
- 7–6** In these competent essays the students identify plausible attitudes and appropriate stylistic traits of the narrator. Their assertions about the narrator's critique of gentlefolk may be less convincing or based on fewer examples from the passage. These essays express ideas clearly but lack the maturity, development, and control of the very best essays.
- 5** These essays convey a general understanding of the narrator's attitudes and the style he uses, but the discussion is more superficial and less convincing than that of the upper-half essays. Though not inaccurate, discussion tends to be inadequately supported by references to the text. The students may rely on some paraphrase that contains implicit analysis. The writing is adequate to convey ideas and not marred by distracting errors, but it is not as well conceived, organized, or developed as upper-half essays.
- 4–3** These lower-half essays offer incomplete or oversimplified understanding of the text. Their assertions about the narrator's attitudes may be implausible or irrelevant. They may paraphrase rather than analyze. Often wordy and repetitious, the writing is lacking in control and often marred by stylistic errors. Essays that contain significant misreading and/or unusually inept writing should be scored a 3.
- 2–1** These essays compound the weaknesses of those in the 4–3 range. Often they are unacceptably brief. Some attempt may be made to answer the questions but the arguments have little clarity, organization, or supporting detail. They may be poorly written on several counts and contain distracting errors in grammar and mechanics. Essays with little coherence or discussion of the text should be scored a 1.
- 0** These essays make no more than a reference to the task.
- These essays are either left blank or are completely off topic.

This prose passage clearly reveals the narrator's negative attitude towards "gentlefolks". The use of irony, satire, and pointed examples helps to underline the ~~the~~ great disparity between the thoughts of the narrator and those of the people he is discussing. The overall ill that plagues this upper class of people, according to the narrator, is idleness which subsequently results in their variety of odd habits.

The ~~except~~ use of a metaphor~~e~~ in the first sentence that compares idleness to an obstacle, such as a rock, underlines the narrator's opinion of just how catastrophic such a lack of activity is.

Although this "rock" is said to lay "ahead in life" for the gentlefolk, we see also in lines 28-29 that the narrator is under the impression that this sort of people is prone to wasting their time away on useless endeavors from childhood. The narrator is extremely bewildered by the ~~seem~~ seemingly cruel and unusual activities of the gentlefolk that involve~~d~~ dissecting insects and small animals and cutting up

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2A2

flowers to reveal their anatomy. The narrator also seems to view these people as relatively cold and unemotional seeing as he is surprised that they carry out these experiments on living things "without a pang of remorse." Through the use of a hyperbole in lines 25-26, the narrator emphasizes that by destroying a flower to better understand what it is made of, one gains no appreciation for its simple, natural color and scent. Continuing from this point, the narrator ventures ~~to take~~ to take on a ^{pseudo-sympathetic} ~~sympathetic~~ tone for these "poor souls" who "must get through the time". These actually disgusted views of the narrator are presented through the use of sarcasm to reveal just how ignorant and pitiful these gentlefolk are.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the narrator's style in this passage is his clever and entertaining use of irony. In line 6 the narrator explains how "it is curious to see" these gentlefolk in action seeing as they truly believe they are engaging in something of an

"intellectual sort" and "improving their minds". Although a modern reader most probably understands the significance of insect and flower dissection to the comprehension of natural science, the fact that the narrator sees it as torture and thus ridiculous to the advancement of one's intellect can be appreciated as ironic, ^{considering} ~~the~~ the historical gap of understanding between the upper and working classes. Also, in lines 42-46 we see the ironic situation of the hardworking servants being subject to the horrific aftermath of the gentlefolks' endeavors that result from their idleness. Although one feels sympathy for the frustrated narrator, it is nevertheless amusing that the pathetic attempts of the gentlefolk to suppress their idleness end up annoying those who actually recognize the banality of the former's hobbies.

The narrator in this passage makes good use of sarcasm, irony, and overstatement to underline his opinions about the gentlefolk. It is clear from the beginning

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2A4

that according to the narrator the gentlefolk are empty-headed people ~~and~~ ~~and~~ ~~to~~ ~~even~~ that completely oppose his own ideas of intelligence and diligence. Not even the ladies (line 11) are excused, showing that in the thoughts of the narrator no social barriers exist to his criticism, he simply judges all people as equal individuals. The final sentence of the passage sums up the narrator's strong commitment to his work and his purpose, despite his position as a servant. He is of the opinion that a seemingly "comfortable" existence or lifestyle merely results in the dilution of basic morals and ethics and that by working hard one can retain his sensibility and rationale.

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SOCIETY'S "HIGH CLASS" INDIVIDUALS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF RIDICULE OR CRITICISM BY THE MIDDLE AND LOWER CLASS. THE NARRATOR DESCRIBES THEM AS SEVERELY BORED PEOPLE THAT "TAKE TO TORTURING SOMETHING, OR SPOILING SOMETHING - AND THEY FIRMLY BELIEVE THEY ARE IMPROVING THEIR MINDS." BY CONSTANT USE OF THE PHRASE "IN THE HOUSE," HE ACCUSES THE SO-CALLED "GENTLE FOLK" OF MAKING A MESS OF THINGS OF WHAT IS SUPPOSED TO BE A CLEAN, WELL-KEPT, AND RESPECTABLE PLACE. THROUGH THESE OBSERVATIONS THE NARRATOR ~~REITERATES~~ ATTEMPTS TO PROVE THAT THE "HIGH-CLASS" STEREOTYPE OF BEING GENERALLY GOOD FOR NOTHING AND IGNORANT IS NOT TOO FAR OFF FROM BEING TOTALLY ACCURATE.

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE PASSAGE, THE AUTHOR OPENS UP STATING THAT "GENTLEFOLKS IN GENERAL HAVE A VERY AWKWARD ROCK AHEAD IN LIFE," REFERRING TO THEIR IDLENESS. ~~THEY ARE~~ ALREADY THE READER CAN AFFIRM THAT HE IS NOT ~~INTERESTED~~ PARTICULARLY FOND OF THESE PEOPLE. AS HE DESCRIBE THESE PEOPLE'S "INTELLECTUAL" ACTIVITIES, HE ACCUSES THEM OF "CRUEL NASTINESS." IN AN ATTEMPT TO DISCOVER NATURE'S SECRETS, MAN DESTROYS NATURE ITSELF IN A HEARTLESS MANNER. THE NARRATOR IS OBVIOUSLY APPALLED WHEN HE ASKS, "IS ITS COLOUR ANY PRETTIER, OR ITS SCENT ANY SWEETER, WHEN YOU DO KNOW?"

THE NARRATOR ALSO EMPHASIZES THE "GENTLEFOLKS" DESTRUCTIVE NATURE WHEN HE REPEATS "IN THE HOUSE." HE REPEATEDLY USES THIS PHRASE AS HE ACCUSES THE PEOPLE OF MAKING MESSSES

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WITH THEIR "INTELLECTUAL" PURSUITS ~~HE APPEALS TO~~ HE APPEALS TO
THE WORKING CLASS BY COMPARING THOSE WHO MUST ACTUALLY
WORK FOR THEIR LIVING WITH "THE IDLENESS THAT SPLITS
FLOWERS AND POKES ITS WAY INTO EPIDERS' STOMACHS." THROUGH THESE
OBSERVATIONS THE NARRATOR PROVES THAT THE "HIGH CLASS" DOES IN
FACT CAUSE PROBLEMS WITH THEIR BOREDOM AND PRODUCE LITTLE
MORE THAN A MESS IN THE HOUSE.

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Question 2.

As the Nobles, in the late nineteenth-century Paris looked down upon the peasants. The author has similar feelings of superiority. ~~The author's attitudes towards his subjects~~ How the Author sees the lower class subjects are as follows: ^{5:} immoral, pointless, shallow, without heart, and Blind.

(line 7) The attitude of ~~pointless~~ ^{Pointless} comes through in the sentence, "Nine times out of ten they take to torturing something, or to spoiling something - and they firmly believe they are improving their minds, when the plain truth is, they are only making a mess of the house."

vastly The author's views ~~on~~ ~~the~~ ~~people~~ ~~are~~ ~~driven~~ ~~by~~ ~~a~~ ~~personal~~ ~~experience~~ ~~in~~ ~~which~~ ~~the~~ ~~author~~ ~~himself~~ ~~was~~ ~~once~~ ~~one~~ ~~of~~ ~~these~~ ~~pointless~~ ~~people~~. The subjects' actions are incomprehensible to the author, because ^{vastly} how they live is ~~very~~ ^{vastly} different from his own; He is rich, whereas the subjects are ~~poor~~ poor. He is ~~convinced~~ convinced that they are savages, "killing something" ^{The people} ~~there~~ ~~is~~ ~~must~~ torture something to survive! To eat!

The immorality attitude reveals itself in the sentence "Go out, day after day, for example, with empty pill-boxes, and catch newts, and beetles, and spiders, and frogs, and come home and stick pins through the miserable wretches, (line 12)" Why is the study of biology immoral? The Author sees this as once again savagery, but

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every year in biology class, something gets dissected! But this ~~is~~ is not for mere pleasure! It is for further comprehension of a world still in the shadows of many mysteries.

"But compare the hardest day's work you ever did with the idleness that splits flowers and pokes its way into spiders stomachs, and thank your stars that your head has got something it must think of," is the supreme example for the Author's view of the subject as heartless and pointless. The ideals that the Author believes is ^{just and} right, is writing a passage pointing out "how much better he is than the subjects," He says that their means of committed, loyal, and knowledgeable work is pointless/heartless because they are making emotional strides for greatness; far beyond that of the Authors.

This Author's final ~~to~~ view of the subjects are, they are blind! He believes that they do not see the true face of life; that they only see the mask/Allosteria. But they are the ones that see the real world, "See only the people in despair shall see my foretelling" (Bible quote) "You see them occupied for hours together in spoiling a pretty flower with pointed instruments out of a stupid curiosity to know what the flower is made of (line 23).

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This higher class nineteenth-century Victorian novelists' Attitudes/Views cannot be trusted. For we are only seeing ~~the~~^{these} people through his eyes, which are: Immoral, pointless, shallow, without heart, and Blind. ~~How~~ how can we (the reader) truly understand the subject, if ~~our~~ our only resources is an upper class Victorian ~~man~~, who is ~~in touch with his~~ ~~image~~ truly in the dark of how a person should actually be!

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AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
2006 SCORING COMMENTARY (Form B)

Question 2

Sample: 2A

Score: 8

The student focuses immediately on the “great disparity” between the narrator’s views and those we can infer that “gentlefolks” have. In short, the speaker is speaking hyperbolically and isn’t necessarily to be trusted—a point that almost all other essays, even good ones, miss. The student insightfully and ironically notes that the “use of a metaphor in the first sentence that compares idleness to an obstacle, such as a rock, underlines the narrator’s opinion of just how catastrophic [*sic*] such a lack of activity is.” The terms used to characterize the narrator—“bewildered,” “surprised,” “frustrated,” “pseudo-sympathetic”—are apt and insightful. The student’s recognition of irony is quite good—not only the narrator’s sarcasm and sense of irony (such as idle rich people doing nothing), but the author’s subtler criticism of the narrator himself. “A modern reader” the student reminds us, recognizes the hyperbole, the narrator’s working-class overreaction to the pursuits of natural science, and his suspicion that the “attempts of the gentlefolk to suppress [*sic*] their idleness end up annoying those who actually recognize the banality of the former’s hobbies.” The writing in this essay is generally correct but not as sophisticated as the very best responses.

Sample: 2B

Score: 5

The student describes the narrator’s attitudes accurately and gives examples of his criticisms—“making a mess of things,” “torturing” or “spoiling something,” and destroying “nature itself.” The essay rightly emphasizes the issue of class difference, that the speaker’s criticism of “so-called ‘gentlefolk’” comes from “the middle and lower class.” In fact, this idea gives the whole essay its focus. But there is very little analysis, so this is mainly an adequate description of the content of the passage. Thus the essay remains mostly a paraphrase with quotations and valid but undeveloped inferences. The student recognizes that the narrator “attempts to prove” his point but fails to discover that the narrator’s excesses and misunderstandings are humorous.

Sample: 2C

Score: 3

This essay mistakes the critique of “gentlefolk” as directed at lower-class peasants and contains the faulty assumption that the narrator is rich. The student seems to understand that what seems to be “savagery” to the narrator is no more than common dissection “in biology class.” The essay ends by staunchly defending the poor and criticizing the narrator for his blindness. While there are some errors and awkwardness in the writing, the essay is reasonably coherent; its low score derives from its nearly total misreading of the passage.