

# A Generalized AP® Essay Scoring Guide

## **EXCEPTIONAL—8-9**

Complex, original, sophisticated, and varied, with no errors in usage.  
Varied sentence construction, with controlled use of subordinate elements.  
Lucid and enjoyable to read; smooth flow of ideas.  
Logical, coherent structure that facilitates flow of ideas or structure of argument.  
Smooth transitions.  
Abundant specific support that relates directly to the stated thesis or argument.  
Nearly flawless. Errors, if any, are minor.

## **ADMIRABLE—6-7**

Varied, with many complex ideas; few, if any, errors in usage; occasional imprecise word choice.  
Uses a variety of sentence forms. Clear prose, with few, if any, tense or agreement errors or awkward constructions.  
Structure appropriate for purpose, although not particularly note-worthy  
Transitions present between elements.  
Primarily specific support with some general statements. Bulk of support is related to thesis.  
A few minor errors: misplaced commas or apostrophes, incorrect capitalization, etc.

## **ADEQUATE—4-5**

Many simple words with some complex ideas, imprecise or incorrect word choice, some errors in usage.  
Primarily simple and short compound sentence structure. Several awkward or unclear constructions, tense/agreement errors.  
Follows formulaic structure, which may not fit intentions or purpose of piece.  
Transitions, if any, are weak or illogical.  
Specific support, if any, is unexplained or illogical. Mostly general statements that are not tied to the thesis or argument.

## **NOT YET ACCEPTABLE—2-3**

Multiple minor errors or errors of greater magnitude  
Primarily simple words; vague, incorrect word choice; use of cliché  
Almost exclusively simple sentences; convoluted, unclear, repetitious  
Multiple tense and agreement errors  
No attempt made at a logical structure. Transitions, if present, are weak or unclear.  
Generalizations, repetitive words and phrases, same idea or example frequently restated  
Major errors: missing or incorrect punctuation, sentence fragments, comma splices, etc.