

AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

2012 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1

The score should reflect a judgment of the essay's quality as a whole. Remember that students had only 15 minutes to read the sources and 40 minutes to write; the essay, therefore, is not a finished product and should not be judged by standards appropriate for an out-of-class assignment. Evaluate the essay as a draft, making certain to reward students for what they do well.

All essays, even those scored 8 or 9, may contain occasional lapses in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. Such features should enter into the holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. In no case may an essay with many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics be scored higher than a 2.

- 9** Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for a 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** develop a position on whether the USPS should be restructured to meet the needs of a changing world, and if so, how. They develop their position by effectively synthesizing* at least three of the sources. The evidence and explanations used are appropriate and convincing. Their 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 a 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** develop a position on whether the USPS should be restructured to meet the needs of a changing world, and if so, how. They develop their position by adequately synthesizing at least three of the sources. The evidence and explanations used are appropriate and sufficient. The language may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

- 5** Essays earning a score of 5 develop a position on whether the USPS should be restructured to meet the needs of a changing world, and if so, how. They develop their position by synthesizing at least three sources, but how they use and explain sources is somewhat uneven, inconsistent, or limited. The argument is generally clear, and the sources generally develop the student'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 student's ideas.

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

AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

2012 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1 (continued)

4 Inadequate

Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately** develop a position on whether the USPS should be restructured to meet the needs of a changing world, and if so, how. They develop their position by synthesizing at least two sources, but the evidence or explanations used may be inappropriate, insufficient, or less convincing. 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 student's ideas but may be less consistent in controlling the elements of effective writing.

- 3** Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for a score of 4 but demonstrate less success in developing a position on whether the USPS should be restructured to meet the needs of a changing world, and if so, how. They are less perceptive in their understanding of the sources, or their explanation or examples 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 developing a position on whether the USPS should be restructured to meet the needs of a changing world, and if so, how. They may merely allude to knowledge gained from reading the sources rather than citing the sources themselves. These essays 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, inaccurate, or inappropriate explanation. The prose of these essays 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 a 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.

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

1. 1A
(1 of 4)

In a fast-paced society of sleek innovations and modern new technologies, it can be easy to get lost ~~in~~ in the hype of popular new gadgets and trends while if not forgetting, moving away from the traditions and enterprises that were so vital to the United States as a developing country. One of these pioneering enterprises, ~~was~~ the United States Postal Service (USPS), has become a casualty of the innovation ~~and~~ we have come to laud so highly. ~~While I do not~~ while we should not discount the progress made in the past decades that has facilitated a ~~switch~~ from transition to faster and sleeker technologies, it is also paramount that we support and maintain traditions and symbols of the American dream like ^{the} USPS by applying modern principles and revamping the company's image and organization.

The United States Postal Service not only serves to deliver mail, get money orders and set up P.O. boxes, but also to remain a symbol of our country's development and progress (DocD). ~~The USPS~~ It serves to remind the US population of where our country has been and can give citizens a ~~part~~ feeling of ~~respect~~ feeling of pride that can be matched by few other countries. With this reminder of where we have been comes a respect for the traditions of our ancestors. Cullen argues, "E-mail is fast and simple, but to me



Question 1

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

1A
(2 of 4)

an old-fashioned, handwritten letter has value in this speed-obsessed world." (Doc F). While new technology and trends come and go, a personal touch and sentimental value gives the USPS value more profound than ~~an personal e-card~~ ^{speed or ease}. Hawkins agrees, "It's nice to sometimes get a personally written letter in the mail... nothing replaces a personally written letter to an old friend. It gives the message a more intimate feeling." (Doc D). The USPS represents more than a graph of profit or delivery points. It represents a long standing tradition that unites Americans.

Furthermore, the USPS connects all citizens of the United States. While we ~~are~~ may come from all different parts of the world, ~~are interested in~~ we all can have at least one thing in common, we get our mail from the US postal service. We ^{can all} support our government and as of 2009, more than 600,000 USPS employees. (Doc B) Hawkins asserts "You know when you send a letter or your bills through the mail, you are helping other Americans keep their jobs." (Doc F) While the internet may have certain advantages, we must keep in mind the larger, and frankly more important issues at hand; not delivery time or total convenience, but national pride and support. Not ~~The USPS must be maintained~~, only do we support



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Question 1 1A
(3 of 4)

our neighbors but according to McDevitt, we are also supporting small businesses. (Doc. E)

The USPS must be maintained, but to do this effectively, certain important aspects must be changed and reorganized. First, the USPS must reorganize and revitalize its business strategy. From 2007 to 2009 the volume of mail carried decreased drastically 35 billion pieces while delivery points increased by 2.1 million. This sort of business model is not practical or efficient. (Doc. B) In order to continue the USPS must take significant action. Stone offers, "close branches if you must, but do it strategically" (Doc. A). Decreasing delivery points by closing branches will make business more efficient. Postmaster General John E. Potter is confident that "At the end of the day, ... we can ~~not~~ continue to provide universal service for Americans for decades to come" (Doc. C) With the right kind of restructuring, distributing can become ~~for~~ more profitable and the business can return to its pre-recession levels.

Furthermore, in order to meet the new and modern population, USPS must revitalize its image. ~~rebranding~~ Stone argues, "A company's brand is its most valuable tool, or its biggest liability." ~~Contract as~~ The USPS, while an important tradition, can not stay



Question 4

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

1A
(4 of 4)

stagnant in its mode of branding itself. This is an area in which the USPS should adapt to the new technology available and the trends of communication. The USPS needs to be known to US citizens and its image as part of the United States history should be capitalized. The company should also follow the "green" initiatives that appeal to so many consumers. Consumers like Colleen Plimpton stress, "[Junk mailers] are cutting down trees willy-nilly and that has got to stop" (Doc E). The USPS should use the opinions of Plimpton and Stone in tandem to create a new image, conscious of the environment and ^{traditional} American values.

In conclusion, the US Postal Service is an important tradition and symbol of our country and should be supported and maintained. That being said, companies new must learn to adapt, however this does not mean it must lose its traditional values and charm.

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1B
(1 of 5)

It is your cousin's third birthday next week. Would she be more ~~is~~ excited to receive a birthday card in the mail with funny characters or a boring e-mail that she ~~is~~ probably can't read? The United States Postal Service hand delivers your cousin's birthday card to her and connects the both of you even when you are miles apart. Although, you may be able to pay your bills online, contact ~~the~~ friends and family via the internet, sending a card or letter comes with a special touch that no technology or other company can compensate for. The USPS should not cut back on delivery dates and services but instead rebuild its efficiency. USPS needs to catch up to America and provide ~~the~~ customers with a more reliable postal service. In order to restructure, USPS needs to hire workers on commission so they are motivated to encourage Americans to use USPS. USPS also needs to lower postage-stamp prices, decrease delivery times for letters and packages and offer 7 day delivery service. The USPS should be restructured to catch up to technology because USPS can provide everything that FedEx or UPS can, not only better, but it does the job of an e-mail with more emotion than any other ~~best~~ ~~service~~ communication service in America.

The USPS needs to impress Americans all over again in order to get them to use the postal service.



①

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

1B
(2 of 5)

Firstly, they need to increase their service. Increasing their service can ~~not~~ potentially lead to Americans trusting USPS and viewing them as reliable. ~~The USPS~~ USPS needs to "[C]onsider tightening hours" so "the USPS could be the first carrier to reliably deliver all week." (Source 4). FedEx or UPS may not deliver on weekends for example, but if USPS offers weekend delivery, many more Americans would be inclined to ~~use their service~~ use their service.

Secondly, USPS needs to higher workers on commission. Commission motivates workers to encourage Americans to use postal service. In turn, expands business of USPS. Also, ~~the USPS~~ USPS needs to work more diligently and efficiently. They must higher workers ~~specialized~~ specialized in certain jobs. If USPS gets that right then the delivery rate should increase say from ~~from~~ ~~the~~ a letter reaching New York from Arizona to 3 days instead of a week. Thirdly, USPS needs to further lower its prices for delivering packages because FedEx and UPS are more expensive. With Americans trying to save money, if USPS has cheaper rates along with reliable service, of course consumers would choose USPS. As well, USPS needs to decrease postage-stamp prices. The end result should be beneficial for USPS. Although, I think USPS should continue making an effort to impress Americans, "the projections anticipate steeper



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① 1B
(B of 5)

drops in mail volume and revenue over the next 10 years" (Source C) But that can change with a renewal of the USPS's services. Once the company makes the changes previously suggested, the trend of decrease in mail volume should not continue.

Aren't you always excited when you receive a letter in the mail and you know it's from your friend? I know I'm ~~excitedly~~ fiercely tearing away at the envelope. Receiving a letter from your friend "gives the message a more intimate feeling" (Source D) compared to receiving an email in size 12 ~~font~~ Times New Roman font. Letters in the mail are much more sentimental, especially because it's handwritten. You can always read the letters ~~again~~ again and again from a box of letters you keep. USPS is a postal service that enables you to keep in contact with family and friends and save these memories in a shoe box instead of an inbox. Although, "email is great for a quick note here and there" (Source D) there's no guarantee that a 100 years from now you will still have these memories. What if your ~~the~~ email crashes? All those connections you made on your email disappear. However, it may seem like a more practical, efficient way of communicating but it's dry and unreliable, ~~the~~ unlike the USPS.



①

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

1B
(4 of 5)

Also, email is full of junk mail! I know I'm constantly getting spammed which is frustrating. ~~So~~ Email does not compensate for the benefits of letters at all.

In addition, you can't send a postcard through the internet. I travel a lot so when I'm traveling, I like to send post cards to family and friends to let them know where I am. Plus, they get a little taste of the country I'm in through the image on the postcard. USPS, everyday, builds connections through its postal service.

Lastly, there are people in America without access to the internet. So how would they possibly communicate? The USPS does everything they possibly can to ensure your close ~~ones~~ ones stay in touch. For example in Source G, there is a mini post office in a small town, where internet may not be accessible. USPS, even in a small town ensures that Americans have the ability to communicate. ~~Although~~ ~~the~~ Although, the ~~postal~~ postal service may not make tons of profit from the mini post office, it does so out of goodness and care.

The USPS should be restructured and come back much stronger to win over Americans. By providing reliable service, ~~the~~ weekend ~~deliveries~~ deliveries,



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

①

18
(5 of 5)

lower prizes, and faster service it can impress
Americans and gain popularity once again. ~~The~~
The USPS provides ~~these~~ services that not even FedEx
or UPS does. With optimism and will USPS
can change its ways and ~~be~~ come back stronger
than ever

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

Question 1

1C
(1 of 1)

I believe that the USPS should not be restricted to meet the needs of a changing world for several reasons.

The first reason is because personal, handwritten letters are much more significant. You can actually keep, hold, and touch a handwritten letter rather than an email that you can only read on the computer or a cell phone. (source D)

The second reason is, let's say a famous person wrote you a handwritten letter over an email. The letter is obviously going to be worth some money over the email.

Another reason I don't think the USPS should change for this world is because if you have an important document you would like to save and someone sends it to you in an email, and you accidentally delete it, it would be much easier to keep and save a handwritten letter for as long as they want to or as long as they would need to.

I think people would appreciate it if the USPS changed, and people would appreciate it if they didn't change. But at the end of the day, I don't believe the USPS is going to change the way they do things.

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AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

2012 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 1

Overview

This question was intended to engage students in a multifaceted writing task that exhibits synthetic, text-based thinking and writing. Synthesis is essentially the integration of parts into a whole. This year, as in years past, the prompt specified that the “whole” of this synthesis task was to be the student’s own argument in response to the question of whether the United States Postal Service should be restructured, and if so, how? The “parts” of the task might be identified as the ideas and perspectives the student gleans from the sources and finds useful in formulating a response. Students could also draw on prior knowledge gained through observation, experience, or reading to answer this question, but they were not required to do so.

A full response to this question required students to take the following steps: (1) **critical reading** of seven sources about the past, present, and future prospects of the United States Postal Service; (2) the **critical use of selected sources** to piece together (synthesize) an understanding of the test question and its implications, and to inform the construction of an original response to the question; (3) clear **attribution to the appropriate sources** for the facts, perspectives, and arguments these sources contributed to the student’s argument. Sources could function to provoke, inspire, and challenge as well as support a student’s own argument.

Sample: 1A

Score: 9

The student takes a nuanced approach to establishing an argument in this essay, suggesting simultaneously that the USPS should be preserved in order to remain “a symbol of our countries [sic] development and progress” but yet must be changed, reorganized, and revitalized to meet the needs of a changing world. The complexity of this position requires that the student ably synthesize the sources that individually make competing claims rather than collate a set of related sources to substantiate a single and simpler position. Throughout the essay, sources are effectively used to convincingly support and develop the student’s argument. Moreover, the student does not only reproduce the content of these sources but is able to assess their formal limitations. For example, the student dismisses the project of Source B, a graph that illustrates a dramatic nosedive in post office revenue, by claiming that the “USPS represents more than a graph of profit or delivery points. It represents a long standing tradition that unites Americans.” The essay earned a score of 9, because it is especially thorough in its development and sophisticated in its argument.

Sample: 1B

Score: 5

This essay does present the argument that the USPS needs to be restructured, but this argument is uneven in its development. That unevenness is in part a consequence of how sources are synthesized to offer support for the argument. On the one hand, one series of sources is used to indicate the many specific ways the USPS might revitalize its operations to meet the needs of a changing world. On the other, the student cites a source that celebrates traditional modes of letter delivery and the personal touch it enables, the connection established when a handwritten card arrives at one’s doorstep. A more fully adequate essay would integrate these positions clearly. It is entirely plausible to argue that the post office might adapt to a changing world yet retain traditional elements of its service, but the essay lacks the organization necessary to sustain such an argument. Moreover, in the discussion of strategies the post office needs to pursue, the essay employs inconsistent evidence and explanations to support the student’s argument: some solutions

**AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
2012 SCORING COMMENTARY**

Question 1 (continued)

based in the sources (for example, the USPS might consider being the only carrier to deliver reliably all seven days of the week) are reasonable and appropriate, but other solutions (for example, paying postal workers on commission) are not as convincing.

Sample: 1C

Score: 2

The essay demonstrates little success in developing a position on the restructuring of the post office. The student alludes to an idea gleaned from a single source (Source D) but then engages in a tangential discussion of the value of handwritten letters by famous people. The essay then proceeds to elaborate on the general value of print over electronic sources but never directly connects this idea to an argument about restructuring the post office. In the conclusion, the student shifts the argument from "the USPS should not be restructured [*sic*]" to the unsupported and undeveloped opinion that, although some people would like it if the USPS changed and others would not, the USPS is not "going to change the way they do things."