

## AP English Language

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

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#### Question 1: Synthesis Essay 6 points

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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><b>4.B</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b></p> <p>For any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no defensible thesis.</li> <li>The intended thesis only restates the prompt.</li> <li>The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim.</li> <li>There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt.</li> </ul>	<p><b>1 point</b></p> <p>Responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis that may establish a line of reasoning.</p>
	<p><b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b></p>	
	<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The intended thesis only restates the prompt.</li> <li>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).</li> <li>The intended thesis simply states an obvious fact rather than a making a claim that requires a defense.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Restates the prompt, does not make a claim.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“For hundreds of years, eminent domain has been used in one way or another around the world.”</li> </ul> <p><b>Addresses the topic of the prompt, but takes no position.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Eminent domain is good and bad depending on what side you stand on and how it effects [sic] you or others.” [Sample A]</li> <li>“...many people are reluctant to agree that eminent domain is beneficial.” [Sample G]</li> </ul> <p><b>Addresses the topic of the prompt, but is not defensible – it is a fact stated as a claim.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Eminent domain gives government power.”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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).</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples that earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Provides a defensible thesis, without establishing a line of reasoning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Although eminent domain might benefit some people in certain cases, the ends do not justify the means.” [Minimally acceptable thesis]</li> <li>“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]</li> <li>“Eminent domain is productive [and] useful because it can open up opportunities for people, and it can benefit many people.” [Sample F]</li> </ul> <p><b>Provides a defensible thesis that establishes a line of reasoning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“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]</li> <li>“While there are many who argue the [sic] eminent domain can be used to revitalize, this power often exploits lower-income areas, violates 5<sup>th</sup> amendment rights, and often fails at the intended good.” [Sample E]</li> <li>“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]</li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The thesis may appear anywhere within the essay.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
<p><b>Row B Evidence AND Commentary</b></p> <p><b>0-4 points</b></p> <p><b>2.A</b></p> <p><b>4.A</b></p> <p><b>6.A</b></p> <p><b>6.B</b></p> <p><b>6.C</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>2 points</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>3 points</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>4 points</b> 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.</p>
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>					
	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are incoherent and do not address the prompt.</li> <li>May offer just opinion or repeat the ideas from a single source.</li> <li>Do not reference information from any of the provided sources. <i>[Sample C]</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 1 point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only use 2 of the provided sources.  <i>[Sample G]</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide commentary that frequently misunderstands, misrepresents, or overgeneralizes complex ideas (is reductive). <i>[Sample F]</i></li> <li>Summarize conflicting positions from the sources but fails to compare, contrast, or reach a conclusion. <i>[Sample A]</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 3 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide commentary that is well-developed in places but with occasional lapses into description or summary (rather than explanation). <i>[Sample H]</i></li> <li>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></li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 4 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide commentary that engages specific details from the sources to draw conclusions.</li> <li>Integrate evidence from sources throughout to support the student’s reasoning. <i>[Sample I and Sample E]</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row.</li> </ul>					

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p><b>Row C Sophistication (0-1 points)</b></p> <p><b>2.A</b></p> <p><b>4.C</b></p> <p><b>6.B</b></p> <p><b>8.A</b></p> <p><b>8.B</b></p> <p><b>8.C</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for 1 point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b> Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.</p>
	<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>	
	<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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>”).</li> <li>Only hint or suggest other arguments (“<i>While some may argue that...</i>” OR “<i>Some people say...</i>”).</li> <li>Use complicated or complex sentences or language that are ineffective in that they do not enhance the argument. <a href="#">[Sample H]</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>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:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crafting a thesis that demands nuanced consideration of textual evidence to prove – and then successfully proves it.</li> <li>Situating the argument within a broader context, recognizing the implications of the argument. <a href="#">[Sample I]</a></li> <li>Engaging concession, rebuttal, and/or refutation of other arguments relating to the thesis. <a href="#">[Sample I and Sample E]</a></li> <li>Making effective rhetorical choices that strengthen the force and impact of the student’s argument. <a href="#">[Sample E and Sample B]</a></li> <li>Utilizing a prose style that is especially vivid, persuasive, convincing, or appropriate to the student’s argument. <a href="#">[Sample I and Sample B]</a></li> </ol>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>		