

2023

AP[®]



AP[®] English Language and Composition

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

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Free-Response Question 1

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Synthesis Essay**6 points**

Urban rewilding is an effort to restore natural ecological processes and habitats in city environments. Many cities around the world have embraced rewilding as part of larger movements to promote ecological conservation and environmentally friendly design. Now, a movement to promote urban rewilding is beginning to take shape in the United States as well.

Carefully read the 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 extent to which rewilding initiatives are worthwhile for urban communities to pursue.

Source A (infographic from Fastnacht)

Source B (Jepson and Schepers policy brief)

Source C (NRPA article)

Source D (Garland article)

Source E (graph from McDonald et al.)

Source F (Chatterton book excerpt)

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
- Select and use evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support your line of reasoning. Indicate clearly the sources used through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. Sources may be cited as Source A, Source B, etc., or by using the description in parentheses.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row A Thesis (0–1 points)</p>	<p>0 points For any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no defensible thesis. • The intended thesis only restates the prompt. • The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. • There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt. 	<p>1 point Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only restate the prompt. • Do not take a position, or the position is vague or must be inferred. • Equivocate or summarize others’ arguments but not the student’s (e.g., some people say it’s good, some people say it’s bad). • State an obvious fact rather than making a claim that requires a defense. 		<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to the prompt by developing a position on the extent to which rewilding initiatives are worthwhile for urban communities to pursue, rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt. Clearly take a position rather than just stating there are pros/cons.
<p>Examples that do not earn this point:</p> <p>Restate the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Having started in Europe, urban rewilding is becoming popular in the United States too.”</i> <p>Address the topic of the prompt but do not take a position</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Many experts favor urban rewilding, while others worry about the safety and health issues that might arise.”</i> <p>Address the topic of the prompt but state an obvious fact as a claim</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Urban rewilding will allow certain portions of some cities to regain the wildlife that once lived in the area.”</i> 		<p>Examples that earn this point:</p> <p>Present a defensible position that responds to the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Urban rewilding will cause serious problems in many cities.”</i> • <i>“Building new spaces for people in cities to interact with nature is an audacious project that will take careful weighing of the pros and cons. Ultimately, this is an idea worth pursuing.”</i> • <i>“The next step in the evolution of cities is to allow residents opportunities to interact with wildlife in their daily lives. This transformation is crucial to keep our cities livable.”</i>
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. • The thesis may be anywhere within the response. • For a thesis to be defensible, the sources must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. • The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn’t do so to earn the thesis point. • 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. 		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
<p>Row B</p> <p>Evidence AND Commentary (0–4 points)</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or references fewer than two of the provided sources.</p>	<p>1 point</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides evidence from or references at least two of the provided sources.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student’s argument.</p>	<p>2 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides evidence from or references at least three of the provided sources.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.</p>	<p>3 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p>	<p>4 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes					
<p>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are incoherent or do not address the prompt. • May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 1 point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to focus on summary or description of sources rather than specific details. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities. • May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument. • May make one point well but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim. • Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 3 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the sources to build an argument. • Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. • Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 4 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the sources to build an argument. • Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained. 	
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row. 					

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row C Sophistication (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt to contextualize their argument, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>In a world where . . .</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time . . .</i>”). • Only hint at or suggest other arguments (“<i>While some may argue that . . .</i>” OR “<i>Some people say . . .</i>”). • Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the argument. 	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: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Crafting a nuanced argument by consistently identifying and exploring complexities or tensions across the sources. 2. Articulating the implications or limitations of an argument (either the student’s argument or arguments conveyed in the sources) by situating it within a broader context. 3. Making effective rhetorical choices that consistently strengthen the force and impact of the student’s argument throughout the response. 4. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.
Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference. 		

Sample 1A (1 of 1)

There is a debate on whether Urban rewilding is the next step to ecological restoration, as its goal is to restore natural processes and habitats in more urban areas. Rewilding is a worthwhile, beneficial approach to preserving nature, as well as implementing it into more city environments.

Enforcing the idea of rewilding in attempts to conserve nature and increase green space sparks opportunity. Writers Jepson, Paul, and Frans Schepers argue that the process "reflects innovation and creates the possibility for a common, but differentiated (situated) mode of conservation" (Document B). Saving as much wildlife as possible is a consistent motive in today's society. In this case, the fresh concept of rewilding will do more good than harm, if anything at all. There is also a matter of future generations to be recognized. Yes, everyone has heard the cliché of "think about the kids and the world they will live in someday," but it stands just as strong. In Document C, Dr. Scott proposes a question to his audience of those who may have their doubts. He asks "If people don't spend any time outside, why are they going to care about their local places let alone the national parks in the distance?" (Document C). Although childhood experiences have evolved over generations, embracing the outdoors should not be something that turns into a fairy tale to future children.

Despite the great effects rewilding may have, there are its downsides as well. Writer Lincoln Garland lists off negatives such as "degradation by trampling, visual and noise disturbance, fire, invasive species, effects of predatory pets etc." (Document D). Sure, going through with the idea of rewilding isn't going to be an entire, shall I say, "walk in the park." However, the benefits in the end will outweigh the difficulties along the way, and the goal of restoring nature will have one more task ticked off the list. When taking the time to look, the statistics are right before one's eyes. Sarah Fastnacht provides the numbers, and they are promising. Going through with rewilding will result in "more than 70% projected extinctions of plants and animals [being] counteracted by restoring only 30% of priority areas" (Document A). Although there is hard work and brain power to be put in, even a little can go a long way.

The rewilding process is one that is worthwhile, and a concept that should be strongly considered. Without innovative ideas and change, society is always going to be wishing for a more ecological friendly world, rather than living in one.

Sample 1B (1 of 1)

When you think about the world you live in, it's easy to overlook the problems that are happening on an every day basis. Urban communities are often at a decline of success because of the way people live today. Which is becoming different from previous years. Rewilding initiatives are something that will have a positive impact on communities. It is something that should be done in order to help the environment around your community. This is easy to see and understand, as you learn more about this topic/issue.

Extinctions of plants and animals, air pollution, big amounts of carbon dioxide and "WHO" limits are all valid reasons as to why rewilding cities would be a positive thing. The blog post published by an architecture and design company that specializes in sustainability in document A shows this idea very clearly. Document A draws out the fact that extinctions of plants and animals and 465 billion tons of carbon dioxide, would simply be sequestered by "restoring only 30% or priority areas" (document A). It's easy to overlook these simple problems because they aren't something we think or worry about on a daily basis. It's important to see images such as this one to get a good understanding about what is actually happening today.

Rewilding is a big concept but easily understandable. It's a powerful term however with the right information, it's easy to learn about. Rewilding "Combines a sense of passion and feeling for nature with advances in ecological science" (document B). Rewilding nature is important for society as a whole. Those who are passionate about nature, and always wanting the best for the environment are usually the ones who are committed to something like this. Rewilding communities is definitely something that will take a lot of time and effort. But it is something that is worth being done. It's worth the stress, and the work. The outcome that will occur after this is done, is something that will make people feel accomplished, even if it's just in the smallest bit. Document B shows this in a really well written way.

Rewilding in urban communities is an attempt to better people's way of living. Some people are against rewilding. They don't want to do the work, they don't feel there is a problem, or they simply just don't care. I can understand why some people might feel "urban rewilding" is pointless. If people don't spend time outside. If they don't see for themselves the issues, then why would they care about helping (document C). Dr. Scott in document C suggests that "urban rewilding in our cities and towns is what's needed to head off this crisis" (document C). Reintroducing better ways of living is important because it allows people the live happier lives. To live in places they feel benefits them. More people than not think that rewilding is a positive thing, and that is something that is important when helping our society.

Urban rewilding is worth the work as it is the only thing that will successfully improve the way people live. Also, if urban rewilding is done right, cities could become places where nature is welcome (document C). People should learn more about this, so in reality, it can actually be done.

Sample 1C (1 of 1)

Rewilding is a term that not many people have heard of or even pay attention to. That doesn't mean it's not important either. Rewilding is a good thing for the planet, it's good for plants and the environment. The world needs to start caring and the children especially, children are the future.

Rewilding is good for our environment and for the future of preserving our world. In source C " If people don't spend any time outside, why are they going to care about their local places let alone the national parks in the distance." Going outside isn't just good for the planet, but it is also good for yourself. Nature isn't really welcome in big cities but reintroducing new plants can make it feel like it is welcome. Kids need to start caring about nature and not just about phones and video games. It gives you a different way to see our planet and care about what happens to it.

In addition rewilding is valuable in our society to learn as a whole. In source B "Rewilding is exciting, engaging and challenging: it is promoting debate and deliberation on what is natural and the natures we collectively wish to conserve and shape." It's important for kids to understand and a challenge can be what a lot of children need. Also In source A " More then 70% projected extinctions of plants and animals would be counteracted by restoring only 30% of priority areas." That can be such a good thing and that's why rewilding especially for our country is important. If we don't we could loose 70% of plants and animals, that would send the ecosystem into whack.

Overall Rewilding should be focused on more, we have a lot to lose. Putting in the time and effort in our cities and urban settings is what we need to do. If you don't care now, start caring, kids especially need to focus in.

Question 1

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

Students responding to this question were expected to read six sources on the topic of urban rewilding and then write an essay that synthesized material from at least three sources and developed their position on the extent to which rewilding initiatives are worthwhile for urban communities. Students were expected to respond to the prompt with a thesis that takes a defensible position; use evidence from at least three provided sources to support their line of reasoning clearly, properly citing the sources; explain how the evidence supports their line of reasoning; and use appropriate grammar and punctuation in presenting their argument.

As per the Course and Exam Description, students were expected to be able to read the prompt, understand the task, use sources provided to write paragraphs that reflect their ability to establish claims and provide evidence, and demonstrate their understanding of prose and their ability to write using cogent, meaningful discourse.

Sample: 1A

Score: 1-3-1

Thesis (0–1 points): 1

The defensible thesis is found in the last sentence of paragraph 1: “Rewilding is a worthwhile, beneficial approach to preserving nature, as well as implementing it into more city environments.”

Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 3

The response uses specific evidence from Sources B and C to support its line of reasoning, as in paragraph 2: “Writers Jepson, Paul, and Frans Schepers argue that the process ‘reflects innovation and creates the possibility for a common, but differentiated (situated) mode of conservation’ (Document B).” However, the commentary following this evidence—“Saving as much wildlife as possible is a consistent motive in today’s society. In this case, the fresh concept of rewilding will do more good than harm, if anything at all”—implies this source citation is self-evident and therefore does not integrate it well into the line of reasoning.

The response works more deftly with Source C, introducing it with a qualified claim: “Yes, everyone has heard the cliché of ‘think about the kids and the world they will live in someday,’ but it stands just as strong” (paragraph 2). The commentary that follows the evidence—“Although childhood experiences have evolved over generations, embracing the outdoors should not be something that turns into a fairy tale to future children”—does a better job of explaining how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.

Sophistication (0–1 points): 1

The response does not situate the argument within a broader context, and while its style is competent, it does not rise to the level of consistently vivid or persuasive. However, the response earned the point in Row C for identifying and exploring complexities or tensions across the sources in paragraph 3. After accurately identifying a counterclaim to the response’s thesis in Source D and

Question 1 (continued)

using an apt quotation from that source, the response both summarizes Source D’s position and introduces a refutation: “Sure, going through with the idea of rewilding isn’t going to be an entire, shall I say, ‘walk in the park.’ However, the benefits in the end will outweigh the difficulties along the way, and the goal of restoring nature will have one more task ticked off the list.” The response uses Source A as evidence to support this claim before continuing its line of reasoning by stating that although “there is hard work and brain power to be put in, even a little can go a long way.”

Sample: 1B**Score: 1-2-0****Thesis (0–1 points): 1**

The defensible thesis is found in the fourth and fifth sentences of paragraph 1: “Rewilding initiatives are something that will have a positive impact on communities. It is something that should be done in order to help the environment around your community.”

Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 2

While the response does provide evidence from three sources (A, B, and C), the response’s attempt at commentary is simplistic in how it explains the importance of that evidence, e.g., “It’s easy to overlook these simple problems because they aren’t something we think or worry about on a daily basis” (paragraph 2). The faulty line of reasoning is exemplified by the simplistic and repetitive commentary throughout the response, e.g., “Rewilding communities is definitely something that will take a lot of time and effort. But it is something that is worth being done. It’s worth the stress, and the work” (paragraph 2) and “Urban rewilding is worth the work as it is the only thing that will successfully improve the way people live” (paragraph 4).

Sophistication (0–1 points): 0

The response does attempt to acknowledge the complexity of the topic in paragraph 3: “Rewilding is a big concept but easily understandable. It’s a powerful term however with the right information, it’s easy to learn about.” However, the apparent dismissal of the complexity keeps this from earning the point in Row C. The response does not situate the argument within a broader context, and while the response’s style is competent, it does not rise to the level of consistently vivid or persuasive.

Sample: 1C**Score: 1-1-0****Thesis (0–1 points): 1**

The defensible thesis is found in the first two sentences of paragraph 4, which is the clearest presentation of the controlling idea: “Overall Rewilding should be focused on more, we have a lot to lose. Putting in the time and effort in our cities and urban settings is what we need to do.”

Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 1

The response does include quotes from three sources (C, B, and A) and accompanying commentary. However, that commentary often describes the source instead of further developing a line of reasoning. For example, after quoting evidence from Source C in paragraph 2, the response observes: “It gives you a different way to see our planet and care about what happens to it.” This pattern repeats in paragraph 3 where Source A is simply summarized: “That can be such a good thing and that’s why rewilding especially for our country is important.”

Question 1 (continued)

Sophistication (0–1 points): 0

The response does attempt to contextualize its argument: “If you don’t care now, start caring, kids especially need to focus in” (paragraph 4). However, this attempt at a call to action did not earn the Row C point as it does not situate the argument within a broader context. The response does not explore complexities or tensions across the sources, and its style is not particularly vivid or persuasive.