AP® CollegeBoard

AP Seminar
End-of-Course Exam
Sample Student Responses
and Scoring Commentary

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Part A

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AP Seminar Rubric 2017-18: End-of-Course Exam

Part A, Questions 1 to 3

Row	Content Area/ Proficiency	Performance Levels			Points (Max)
		Low	Medium	High	
1	**Understand and Analyze Argument**	The response misstates the author's argument, main idea, or thesis.	The response identifies, in part and with some accuracy, the author's argument, main idea, or thesis.	The response accurately identifies the author's argument, main idea, or thesis.	
		1	**2**	**3**	**3**
2	**Understand and Analyze Argument**	The response correctly identifies at least one of the author's claims.	The response provides a limited explanation of the author's line of reasoning by accurately identifying some of the claims AND identifying the connections or acknowledging a relationship among them.	The response provides a thorough explanation of the author's line of reasoning by identifying relevant claims and clearly explaining connections among them.	
		2	**4**	**6**	**6**
3	**Evaluate Sources and Evidence**	The response identifies little evidence. It makes a superficial reference to relevance and/or credibility but lacks explanation.	The response explains various pieces of evidence in terms of credibility and relevance, but may do so inconsistently or unevenly.	The response evaluates the relevance and credibility of the evidence and thoroughly evaluates how well the evidence is used to support the author's argument.	
		2	**4**	**6**	**6**

Additional Scores

In addition to the scores represented on the rubrics, readers can also assign scores of **0** (zero) and **NR** (No Response).

0 (Zero)

- A score of **0** is assigned to a single row of the rubric when the response displays a below-minimum level of quality as identified in that row of the rubric.
- Scores of **0** are assigned to all rows of the rubric when the response is off-topic; a repetition of a prompt; entirely crossed-out; a drawing or other markings; or a response in a language other than English.

NR (No Response)

A score of **NR** is assigned to responses that are blank.

Write your response to PART A, QUESTION 1 on this page only.

The author's main idea is reading stories and literature can stimulate the brain and improve its social interaction.

Begin your response to PART A, QUESTION 2 on this page.

In "The Neuroscience of Your Brain on Fiction" (2012), author Annie Murphy Paul argues reading stories and literature stimulates the brain and can improve social interaction.

Paul begins her article with her first claim: reading sensory words in "narratives activate many other parts of our brains." The author elaborates on this idea, believing words related to the five senses can stimulate areas of the brain the same way interactions relating to the five senses would in real life. Examples relating to smell and touch / texture are given to support this claim, as studies the author utilizes, have found such sensory responses.

The author then makes a second claim, believing that the brain will treat events in fiction and real life the same. Such an idea connects to the first claim because, the author reasons, if people reading sensory stimulating text have a relate response similar to the real world, then people reading thoughts and feelings will to have the same neurological response as real-life social encounters. Paul argues that similarity between the two elements of text can both be illicit the same response in the brain.

Under such a line of thinking, Paul creates a third claim stating that social interactions

Continue your response to PART A, QUESTION 2 on this page.

read in stories can be reflected to a person's social interactions in real life. By analyzing a character's thoughts, emotions, and interactions with other characters or situations, Paul argues, the human brain will be able to learn from a fictional situation and translate it into ~~the real~~ real world applications. Utilizing multiple studies, Paul ~~ben~~ claims such ~~interactions~~ stimulation can ~~improve~~ allows the brain to build connections and stimulate social interaction to improve an awareness around them.

Overall, Paul builds her argument around the three interconnected claims surrounding neurological response to sensory verbs, its similarity to that of the response of emotional and social ~~A~~ interactions in fiction, and ~~the~~ the way in which social interaction ~~s~~ can ~~be~~ improved by reading fiction.

Begin your response to PART A, QUESTION 3 on this page.

Throughout the article "The Neuroscience of Your Brain and Fiction" (2012), author Annie Murphy Paul ⊙ cites ~~studies~~ past studies of neuroscience to support her claim that reading stories and literature stimulates the brain and can improve social interaction.

Aligning with her first claim, Paul opens ⊙ her article with a 2006 study from the scientific journal *NeuroImage* to support the idea sensory words can ~~et~~ bring about the same neurological response as the five ~~senses~~ senses can in real life. The study ~~tested~~ multiple ~~part~~ subjects, using an imaging machine to measure how stimulated a person's brain was upon hearing different sensory or non-sensory words. The research provided appears to be somewhat credible, with a relatively recent date (2006) and a relevent source, a scientific magazine. However, ~~it~~ the article does not give any information as to who conducted the study, only specifying that the scientists were in "Spain." Identifying an organization or institute can improve credibility. ~~because research~~ ~~the answer study~~

~~In~~ The author's second claim, ~~for~~ that because the brain reacts to sensory words ~~, the~~ in one way, ~~it~~ it will react to reading thoughts and emotions the same way. For this claim, however, the author does

not cite any study, and instead uses this cause and effect relationship as evidence to her claim. Such lack of evidence results in a lack of credibility, because if Paul had included ~~only~~ any research or statistics to support this claim, this relationship would appear to be validated and, therefore, hold higher credibility.

~~In P~~ Finally, in Paul's third claim, she cites studies from Dr. Oatley and Dr. Mar to support that reading fiction improves neurological social skills. As experts on the subject, Dr. Mar and Dr. Oatley hold credibility and are effective citations of evidence towards the topic of neuroscience. However, when citing their studies, the author did not mention how their studies were conducted and how their results were measured as Paul had previously done when citing other studies. Such inconsistency brings the evidence into a question of credibility as information is withheld.

Write your response to PART A, QUESTION 1 on this page only.

Annie Murphy Paul believes that reading great literature improves us as human beings because it stimulates the brain and can even change how we act in life.

Begin your response to PART A, QUESTION 2 on this page.

One claim Paul uses is that when you read certain narratives it not only does the language-processing area create a response but the areas devoted to smells create a response as well. ~~Paul says," words like "lavender," "cinnamon"~~ In a study published in the journal Neuro Image, "When subjects looked at the spanish words for "perfume" and coffee," their primary olfactory cortex lit up; when they saw the words that mean "chair" and "key". Words that have a connotation of smell are able to activate parts of the brain that aren't normally used when reading. This connects to the argument because reading great literature with these aspects can stimulate many parts of the brain. Another claim that Paul makes is that the brain does not make much of a distinction between reading about an experience and encountering it in real life." Paul says," Fiction — with its redolent details, imaginative metaphors and attentive descriptions of people and their actions—offers an especially rich replica." When you read a piece of literature it stimulates the same part of your brain as if you were to do it in real life. Another claim Paul makes is that individuals who frequently read fiction seem to be better able to understand the people, empathize with them and see the world from their perspective. Paul says "...novels, stories and dramas can help us understand the complexities of social life. This connects to the argument because when people read novels they are able to be more ~~socially~~ social and this might be different if they didn't read novels.

Begin your response to PART A, QUESTION 3 on this page.

Annie Murphy Paul's evidence to support the claims is very effective because she used many published journals. She used a 2006 study published in the journal NeuroImage where, "participants were asked to read words with strong oder associations, along with neutral words, while their brains were being scanned by a functional magnetic resonance imaging machine." This study proved the claim that words that have a connotation of smell were able to activate parts of the brain that weren't activated while reading neutral words. ~~False~~ Paul's evidence is also effective because she uses expert opinion. She uses an analysis from Raymond Mar, a psychologist at York University "that showed," "that there was substantial overlap in the brain networks used to understand stories and the network used to navigate interactions with other individuals." This evidence supported the claim that reading great literature changes thing we do.

Write your response to PART A, QUESTION 1 on this page only.

The author, Annie Murphy Paul, argument, main idea, or thesis of "The Neuroscience of Your Brain on Fiction" is stories stimulate the brain and changes how we act in life.

The claim used to build the argument is narratives activate many of the parts of the brain causing the experience of reading to feel so alive.

The evidence that Annie Murphy Paul chooses to use to support her claim is effective because it is credible. For example, she uses evidence from a ~~study~~ study that was published in a journal by researchers in Spain. This evidence was also fairly recent since it was published in 2006. She also uses evidence from a psychologist at York University in Canada who performed an analysis of 86 fMRI studies which goes with the purpose of the claim.

End-of-Course Exam
Short Answer

Overview

- Q1. Responses to this question were expected to demonstrate students' ability to accurately identify, in its entirety, the author's argument, main idea, or thesis. In this case, students were expected to address three components of the author's main idea: (1) The impact of fiction; (2) its stimulation/activation of the brain; and (3) the resulting improvement in the ability to interact and/or empathize with others.

- Q2. Responses to this question were expected to demonstrate students' ability to identify the claims the author uses and explain the connections among them.

- Q3. Responses to this question were expected to demonstrate students' ability to identify specific pieces of evidence the author uses and to assess that evidence in terms of relevance and credibility.

Sample: A
Question 1 Score: 3
Question 2 Score: 6
Question 3 Score: 6

HIGH SAMPLE RESPONSE

Row 1: Understand and Analyze Argument (3)
This response earned a score of 3 on row 1. The response accurately identifies all three elements of the author's argument (stories and literature; brain; social interaction) and demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between them (stories and literature *stimulate* the brain and *improve* social interaction).

Row 2: Understand and Analyze Argument (6)
This response earned a score of 6 on row 2. The response accurately conveys several of the author's claims (narratives stimulate many parts of the brain; the brain does not distinguish between fiction and real life; social interactions read in stories can allow for exploration of social interactions). The response also clearly connects the claims to each other throughout the response ("this idea connects to the first claim because, the author reasons …"), explaining how each claim leads into the next. The response concludes by summarizing these connections, demonstrating their relevance to the main argument.

Row 3: Evaluate Sources and Evidence (6)
This response earned a score of 6 on row 3. The response evaluates in detail how well the evidence supports the author's argument. It does so by connecting claims and specific pieces of evidence the author uses to support them and assessing the strength and credibility of the evidence. For example, for the claim that fiction stimulates the brain, the response identifies and describes the study published in the journal *NeuroImage*, which speaks to its relevance. It accurately evaluates the journal as a credible scientific source but is critical of the lack of information regarding the affiliation of the scientists who conducted the study. The response engages in further detailed and insightful evaluation throughout, noting several strengths and weaknesses.

End-of-Course Exam
Short Answer

Sample: B
Question 1 Score: 2
Question 2 Score: 4
Question 3 Score: 4

MEDIUM SAMPLE RESPONSE

Row 1: Understand and Analyze Argument (2)
The responses earned a score of 2 because it contains only two parts of the author's argument ("reading great literature," "stimulates the brain"). The response does not include the third part, addressing the improvement of understanding, empathizing, or interacting with others, necessary to elevate the score ("improves us as human beings" is not specific enough to earn full points).

Row 2: Understand and Analyze Argument (4)
The response earned a 4 because while accurately identifies claims ("great literature can stimulate many parts of the brain"; "the brain does not make much of a distinction between reading about an experience and encountering it in real life"; "individuals who frequently read fiction seem to be better able to understand other people") it lacks a clear reference to connections between claims beyond the usage of simplistic transitions "another claim." The other attempt "when people read novels they are able to be more social" is not a clear or logical explanation of the line of reasoning.

Row 3: Evaluate Sources and Evidence (4)
The response earned a score of 4 because it accurately identifies evidence ("a 2006 study published in the journal *NeuroImage*"; "an analysis from Raymond Mar, a psychologist at York University"). However, the evaluation is limited to "the study proved the claim" and "evidence is also effective because she uses expert opinion". Because there is little evaluation of strengths, weaknesses, and credibility, and only a perfunctory assessment in the first line of how well the evidence supports the author's overall argument, this response did not elevate beyond a medium.

Sample: C
Question 1 Score: 2
Question 2 Score: 2
Question 3 Score: 2

LOW SAMPLE RESPONSE

Row 1: Understand and Analyze Argument (2)
The response earned a score of 2 because it identifies two of the parts of the main idea ("stories" and "stimulate the brain,"). Stating "changes how we act in life" is too broad of a response and fails to address how reading fiction improves one's social interactions.

Row 2: Understand and Analyze Argument (2)
The response earned a score of 2 because it only, albeit generally, identifies one claim ("narratives activate many parts of the brain") and does not provide an explanation about the author's line of reasoning.

Row 3: Evaluate Sources and Evidence (2)
The response earned a score of 2 because it provides a general identification of two pieces of evidence (2006 study and fMRI study), but it does not provide any specific evaluation beyond "it [the evidence] is credible." Also, the response provides no explanation of how the evidence from the fMRI study supports the author's argument simply stating it "goes with the purpose of the claim."