

AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LITERATURE  
2004 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1

Emily Dickinson's "We Grow Accustomed to the Dark"  
and Robert Frost's "Acquainted with the Night"

**General Directions:** This scoring guide will be useful for most of the essays that you read, but in problematic cases, please consult your table leader. The score that you assign should reflect your judgment of the quality of the essay as a whole—its content, its style, its mechanics. Reward the writers for what they do well. The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by one point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a three (3).

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- 9-8** These essays offer a persuasive comparison/contrast of both poems and an effective analysis of the significance of "dark" and "night" in each. The writers of these essays offer a range of insightful interpretations, and they consider how such elements as point of view, imagery, and structure function in each poem. These essays provide convincing readings of **both** poems and demonstrate consistent and effective control over the elements of composition, which includes language appropriate to the analysis of poetry. Their textual references are apt and specific. Although they may not be error-free, these essays are perceptive in their analysis and demonstrate writing that is clear and controlled and—in the case of a nine (9) essay—especially persuasive.
- 7-6** These essays offer a reasonable comparison/contrast of both poems and a plausible analysis of the significance of "dark" or "night" in each. The writers of these essays offer a range of interpretations of each poem, and they make appropriate textual references, suggesting how such elements as point of view, imagery, and structure function in each. These essays provide a plausible reading of **both** poems and demonstrate the writer's ability to express and support ideas clearly, though they do not exhibit the same level of effective writing as the 9-8 papers. Essays scored 7-6 are generally well written, but those scored a seven (7) demonstrate more sophistication in both substance and style.
- 5** These essays respond to the assigned task with an acceptable reading of the two poems, but they tend to be superficial in their analysis. The writers often rely on paraphrase that contains some implicit or explicit analysis. The comparison/contrast of such elements as point of view, imagery, and structure may be vague, formulaic, or inadequately developed, and there may be minor misinterpretations of the poems. The writers demonstrate adequate control of language, but their essays may be marred by surface errors and may lack effective organization.
- 4-3** These lower-half essays attempt to respond to the task required by the prompt. Writers may misread either or both poems; they may fail to develop a coherent basis for comparing/contrasting the two poems; they may slight one of the poems; or they may rely completely on paraphrase. Evidence may be inadequate. The writing often demonstrates a lack of control over the elements of composition: inadequate development of ideas; an accumulation of errors; or a focus that is unclear, inconsistent, or repetitive. Essays scored a three (3) may contain significant misreadings.