Chief Reader Report on Student Responses:

2024 AP® English Language and Composition Set 1

Free-Response Questions

- Number of Students Scored 597,097
- Number of Readers 2,937
- Score Distribution

Exam Score	N	%At
5	58,358	9.8
4	127,676	21.4
3	140,253	23.5
2	171,865	28.8
1	98,945	16.6

- Global Mean 2.79

The following comments on the 2024 free-response questions for AP® English Language and Composition were written by the Chief Reader, Akua Duku Anokye, Associate Professor, Arizona State University. They give an overview of each free-response question and of how students performed on the question, including typical student errors. General comments regarding the skills and content that students frequently have the most problems with are included. Some suggestions for improving student preparation in these areas are also provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend a College Board workshop to learn strategies for improving student performance in specific areas.

Question 1

Task: Synthesis
Topic: Historic Preservation
Max Score: 6
Mean Score: 3.65

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

Students responding to this question were expected to read six sources on the topic of historic preservation laws and then write an essay that synthesized material from at least three sources and developed their position on the value, if any, of laws designed to preserve buildings to be of historic importance. 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 a minimum number of 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.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

This year's synthesis question asked students to develop a position on "the value, if any, of laws designed to preserve buildings deemed to be of historic value." Many students seemed to find the prompt accessible, which is evidenced by so few blank responses. Students also seemed to generally be familiar with the idea of preserving historically valuable buildings. However, those with less success often did not demonstrate an understanding about the role of laws in the preservation process. In these responses, students tended to make a claim for or against a value or need in preserving historical buildings but did not argue about the need for laws intended to preserve buildings deemed of historic value.

Students also understood the demand of the task to utilize evidence from at least three of the provided sources; in fact, many referenced or cited evidence from four or five sources. The successful responses engaged with the sources and incorporated source material into their own argument, including evidence from at least one source in every body paragraph. These responses used specific words and details from multiple sources to support an argument and offered commentary to explain the connections to the student's thesis and supporting claims. Note, for instance, how this response provided thorough commentary: "Historical buildings are meant to be preserved 'due to their connection with past' (Source A). This is, again, a past we need to be reminded of. Our country did not fight for our values and Freedom just to be forgotten. The implementation of renewing buildings may cause people to lose the reminder of what our country stands for." Explanations like these moved beyond mere summary or a simplistic or repetitive explanation of the source. Instead, responses like this one incorporated the evidence to advance their argument. Students who were able to integrate evidence from the sources more smoothly into their own argument were usually able to develop a strong enough line of reasoning to earn a 3 in Row B.

Although Row C of the scoring guidelines offers several ways for a response to earn the point, most did not earn the point merely for employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive. The responses that were vivid and persuasive also tended to demonstrate sophistication through crafting a nuanced argument by exploring the tensions and complexities among the sources and/or situated the argument within a broader context to explore the limitations and tensions of the argument. The responses that earned the Row C point suggested a student who is insightful and critical as a reader and skillful and deliberate as a writer.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
• Many students attempted to introduce a counterargument, often setting up a thesis beginning with "Although." Those with lower scoring responses failed to fully address a counterargument, failed to offer a rebuttal to a counterargument, or lacked organization, moving back and forth between their argument and the counterargument without control, contributing to a faulty line of reasoning.	• A high scoring essay successfully addressed the counterargument and offered a rebuttal when it acknowledged the counterargument that "the preservation of buildings prevent progress, negatively impact real estate developement, building renovation, and building design has validity if the goal was to preserve countless buildings," which it then rebutted by using information from Source B to build a substantial argument that historical preservation represents too small a portion of buildings to have any meaningful effect.
• Responses that scored lower often struggled with the task of synthesizing source material to support a student's argument. These responses tended to provide simplistic explanations; they quoted or paraphrased the sources and often followed with an attempt to explain the connection to their argument but were not successful. For example, these explanations often followed a quote and began with the phrase, "This means that" or "This shows that." While these phrases are helpful in teaching students to pair evidence and commentary, students should make the connection of ideas presented in the sources and the student's own argument. They do not need to explain what they are quoting. Students often attempted to connect the sources superficially by oversimplifying the evidence in them, like one that wrote "as can be found in sources B, C and E."	• More successful responses were able to synthesize the evidence as part of their argument with thorough explanations that connected the source material to the claims and thesis. In one response, for example, the student referenced the claim from Source D about the economic challenges of preservation and followed it with a discussion of the claim Source A offered regarding the economic benefits of tourism. It then thoroughly explained that, "Ultimately, money must be put into historic sites, but their preservation stimulates the economy by driving tourism."

• Weaker responses often demonstrated a misunderstanding that a writer can build a line of reasoning simply by using transitions between paragraphs so that paragraphs cannot be reordered within the response. They may have been taught that this is a sufficient organizational method to build a line of reasoning, or they may have a limited understanding of the effect of using transitions. These responses did not build an argument but rather presented a series of claims (typically 2 or 3) that were each supported by a different source; thus, the organization structure was tied to individual sources and did not build a line of reasoning.	• Successful responses built an argument with a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that was clearly explained. In these responses, students organized their argument with claims that worked together in support of an overall thesis. For example, in one high scoring paper, the student consistently displayed rhetorical choices that strengthened their argument. Nearly every sentence in each paragraph was marked with a transition that indicated the relationship of ideas in the line of reasoning: "for instance," "although," "furthermore," "conversely," "however," and "to sum up." In the same way, the relationships between paragraphs were clearly articulated. Furthermore, the response effectively balanced the use of short direct quotes and specific paraphrases from the sources in a way that emphasized the student's central argument.

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

Readers found that many students still struggle with truly synthesizing sources to build and support an argument in a line of reasoning. While students demonstrated an ability to take a position in response to the prompt and to find evidence in the provided sources to quote or reference in support of their claims, many still struggled to explain how the evidence supported their claims and merely restated or summarized what they'd quoted. Providing ample opportunities for students to engage with and respond to a variety of texts through formal and informal writing and discussions in class is integral in helping them to develop the critical reading skills they need to be successful on the Synthesis task.

To move beyond restatement or summary of source material, teachers could have students working with explaining quotes. Individually, with partners, or in small groups, students could read a text and then use a 3-column chart for quote, summary, and explanation columns. Above the chart, they would write a thesis or claim statement in response to a position they take about what they read. Then, in the first column of the chart, they would put a quote that they identify to support their claim statement. In the second column, they could practice paraphrase or summary (teachers can scaffold by providing a sentence starter like, "This shows that" or "This means"). Then, in the third column, students could explain how what they wrote in the first two columns connects to their claim. The key is that they cannot repeat themselves in the third column. They must provide something in the connection that is not stated in the quote or summary. The final step would be to have students practice writing paragraphs that include the claim, the quote from the first column, and the explanation from the third column. They cannot use what's in the second column. To scaffold, teachers could provide the claim statement and/or the quotes students must use. They could also require students to switch papers with another student or group to evaluate the clarity of the explanations or to write a rebuttal statement using additional evidence.

Some general suggestions include:

- Expose students to different types of practice prompts; (e.g., ones about values and factors)
- Model and practice putting ideas, evidence, and sources in conversation; provide language (a second source can compete, challenge, expand, complicate, etc.)
- Translate statistical data into words
- Practice dissecting prompts and how to answer different types of questions
- Practice finding personal entry points into the conversation

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- Teachers will find example responses for this free-response question (FRQ) on the AP Central AP English Language and Composition Exam page, along with scoring notes and specific commentary explaining why each point was or was not earned.
- The AP English Language and Composition Course and Exam Description (CED) includes a diverse collection of resources, including the Instructional Approaches section, which has a dedicated description of key questions and activities to guide instruction for the Synthesis FRQ. Additionally, pages 87–88 of the CED define synthesis and how teachers might approach the task with students.
- Teachers will find formative assessment practice for Synthesis in Unit 3, Unit 6, and Unit 9 AP Classroom Progress Checks. These FRQs are scaffolded to provide students support as they practice synthesizing sources and constructing their own argumentation. Specifically, the Unit 3 FRQ Progress Check breaks the Synthesis task into bite-size pieces to guide students into the development of a response.
- Teachers may also make use of the released Synthesis FRQs in the AP Classroom Question Bank as a part of classroom practice for students. Simply filter the Question Type for FRQ: Synthesis.
- Many of the AP Daily Videos located in AP Classroom will support building students' skills specifically for the Synthesis FRQ. The videos that accompany Units 3, 6, and 9 are particularly useful for students who need practice for this FRQ. Listed below are some of the AP Daily videos that offer a range of entry points for students who are working to develop and refine their Synthesis skills.
    - Unit 7: Skill 4.C Daily Video 1
        - One concept explored in the "Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps" table is the value of the counterargument. Developing a sophisticated Synthesis argument is discussed in Unit 7: Skill 4.C Daily Video 1, which includes tutelage on how the counterargument can be a key to sophistication.
    - Unit 9: Skill 3.C Daily Video 2
        - As addressed in the "Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps" table, strong responses reflected the relationship between sources through sophisticated transitions. This video provides specific transitions students can use in their writing to demonstrate their understanding of relationships.
    - Practice Session 4: FRQ (Question 1: Synthesis)
        - A common feature of high-scoring Synthesis essays is exploring the relationship between sources. Identifying thematic concepts across sources is addressed in this video, which provides strategies for students to use while reading sources to aid true synthesis of ideas.

Question 2

Task: Rhetorical Analysis
Topic: Reshma Saujani Essay
Max Score: 6
Mean Score: 3.32

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The students responding to this question were instructed to read an excerpt from Reshma Saujani's contribution to *American Like Me: Reflections on Life Between Cultures*, a 2018 anthology of essays by prominent Americans with backgrounds in multiple cultures, and then write an essay that analyzed the rhetorical choices Saujani made to convey the nature of bravery. Students were expected to respond to the prompt with a thesis that analyzed the writer's rhetorical choices; select and use evidence to support their line of reasoning; explain how the evidence supported their line of reasoning; demonstrate an understanding of the rhetorical situation; and use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating their argument.

As per the Course and Exam Description, students were expected to be able to read and understand the rhetorical situation and address the strategic choices related to that rhetorical situation, explain how the writer/speaker's rhetorical choices contributed to the purpose of the address, identify and describe their claims, and analyze and select the appropriate evidence to support their claims.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

The large majority of the responses attempted to craft a thesis, and most were successful. Students generally focused on Saujani's bravery in running for public office and founding Girls Who Code as examples of the nature of bravery; however, many students focused on other aspects as well: her Indian-American identity, her ethos as a lawyer, her status as an immigrant and her desire to be her authentic self. While thesis statements needed to address the prompt and analyze choices, they could also be broader, identifying how the reader would always need bravery no matter their identity or gender. Responses tended to be stronger when students could articulate the connection between these relationships at some point in the response such as "To the general public, especially her audience of girls, running for such positions in office and sacrificing one's own job seems especially daunting and impossible to do. However by using this repetition Saujani shows the audience that these daunting actions can be accomplished by employing bravery, proving its importance."

Students identified numerous rhetorical choices in their responses. Traditional device-driven responses were the most common across all score points. Responses that were anchored in traditional rhetorical devices performed neither better nor worse than essays that took an idea-driven approach to the types of choices the speaker made. Some responses were also a hybrid of traditional devices and broader choices, including one response that claimed "Saujani repeats the word bravely and describes incidents relating to her authentic identity to convey her message that a person must find bravery in themselves despite and due to the hardships they may face."

The rhetorical choices that were used most commonly were repetition, anaphora, ethos, pathos, juxtaposition and anecdotes. Students felt comfortable identifying and explaining why Saujani would use repetition, as well as anaphora, and how they helped convey the nature of bravery, while also inspiring

bravery among her readers. Stronger responses recognized that the discussion of Saujani's childhood bravery was mimicked while discussing the bravery of her parents under unique and different circumstances, which furthered her message that bravery is imperative while overcoming obstacles.

Additionally, students recognized Saujani's use of ethos, as a lawyer and as someone who had been successful because of her bravery, granted her credibility in inspiring bravery in others. More nuanced responses identified that bravery does not always come with immediate success, but bravery prepares you for success in the future. These responses noted that Saujani left a lucrative career to run for Congress multiple times and lost, but her bravery impacted how others would live their lives.

Many of the responses that earned the point in Row C did so by recognizing the significance of the writer's rhetorical choices given the rhetorical situation and paring that with an explanation of the passage's complexities. Responses identified that bravery was a choice that required action and connected the nature of bravery and "flexing that bravery muscle" to how we must exercise our muscles in order to move as well as grow stronger, and we must do the same with bravery. There were also responses that earned the point in Row C that identified either a successful understanding of the rhetorical situation or the tensions in the passage. This was especially true in understanding the differences between the bravery required for Saujani's immigrant experience, "barging into Schaumburg High to start a diversity club" and that of her parents who "gave up their communities and their careers, their language, their own *names*."

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
• Weaker responses were based on thesis statements that misinterpreted the prompt or simply responded with a summary of information and no defensible thesis, such as "Bravery is in everyone and everyone can achieve bravery no matter your race or gender."	• Stronger responses developed thesis statements that recognized the complexities of bravery being connected to identity and someone being their authentic self. One response argued that Saujani's quest to be herself is defined "as a strength intrinsic for one's unique identity, and often exemplifies in one's willingness to ditch conformity for progressive individualistic expression."
• The prompt at times seemed abstract for students. Students often seemed unsure of what the nature of bravery was and would substitute responding to the prompt with a simpler task about how a choice made a point, but they were unsure of what that point was, such as "Reshemas mother and father gave her the gift of bravery laced in a name. A name not like any other powerful women."	• Stronger responses articulated the complexity of bravery. One response stated, "By describing the presence of bravery in Saujani's decisions such as her seemingly daunting run for office and her decision to stay true to her name, Saujani proves to her audience that bravery can indeed lead to a successful, satisfying life despite the challenges."
• Students could identify some of the rhetorical choices Saujani made but were unable to	• Stronger responses explored the function of the choices with commentary that explained how the

understand or identify the function of those choices. For instance, some responses would recognize the repetition of "brave/bravely" or the juxtaposition of Saujani's bravery with that of her parents but were unable to provide sufficient commentary to support their claim. Additionally, many of the responses referenced the "Key-Chain Rita," "Sweet Vally Jessica's," "bravery is contagious," and "Schaumburg Reshma's," but the weaker responses had difficulty understanding why Saujani used these strategies and often responded with "Saujani uses these terms to appeal to her audience" or "Saujani makes this point to connect to her readers" with minimal commentary.	rhetorical choices contributed to Saujani's message. For example, one response stated "Saujani compares the quality of bravery to perfections, when using alliteration and saying 'perfection Is pretty pointless.' This use of alliteration is used to indicate that Saujani believe that failure will come with bravery, but is apart of the journey to achieving one's goals or making an impact." • Stronger responses adequately explained and connected evidence, such as specific words and details from the passage to their argument: "she recalls how her parents 'paid the ultimate price for my authenticity'. Through her parents sacrifices of their own names, she was able to own hers."

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

Students would benefit greatly from receiving instruction in creating strong thesis statements. In conjunction with learning how to craft better thesis statements, students would also grow from instruction that allows them to fully engage with the rhetorical situation. If students are able to confidently identify the rhetorical situation and have a firm grasp of the author's intended message, they would be better able to use that information to develop complex, strong perspectives that will guide them through creating a thorough and well-crafted response.

It would be advantageous for students to develop their skills in conducting in-depth analysis. Educators can implement a strategy where students are mandated to produce three to five sentences dissecting a specific element or rhetorical decision within a work being examined. For example, in addition to identifying specific rhetorical moves, students could discuss why an author made that choice and if the choice was successful. Although challenging for some inexperienced writers, consistent practice over time can assist students in moving past superficial observations and delving into more profound and perceptive interpretations.

Students should also have an opportunity to practice embedding quotes, so they can learn to rely less on the speaker's words and more on their own in their responses. They would also benefit from practicing paraphrasing to reference longer pieces of evidence without quoting large chunks to allow them time and space to focus on their analysis. Students need to learn to include what the speaker says in the text, but also to focus on how the speaker says it (the choices they make) and why they say it (the impact of those choices on an audience to achieve a purpose). Providing sentence stems to scaffold instruction could be helpful. Teaching students to include the phrase "in order to" in the discussion of evidence and/or an author's rhetorical choices will help them connect the choices to the purpose, leading to a better depth of analysis.

Finally, it is good to address some of the more common grammar and stylistic issues that are common on student responses by practicing pacing (one extra-long paragraph followed by one or more underdeveloped paragraphs), using rhetorical questions sparingly, reviewing synonyms/antonyms for disagree/agree, and stressing the importance of maintaining a scholarly/academic tone to avoid a tangential-based argument.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- Teachers will find example responses for this free-response question (FRQ) on the AP Central AP English Language and Composition Exam page, along with scoring notes and specific commentary explaining why each point was or was not earned.
- The AP English Language and Composition Course and Exam Description (CED) includes a diverse collection of resources, including the Instructional Approaches section, which has a dedicated description of approaches for the Rhetorical Analysis FRQ.
- Teachers will find formative assessment practice for Rhetorical Analysis in Unit 1, Unit 4, and Unit 7 AP Classroom Progress Checks. These FRQs are scaffolded to provide students support as they practice examining the rhetorical situation and rhetorical choices that authors/speakers employ.
- Teachers may also make use of the released Rhetorical Analysis FRQs in the AP Classroom Question Bank as a part of classroom practice for students. Simply filter the Question Type for FRQ: Rhetorical Analysis. To practice rhetorical analysis with pieces like the memoir featured on this year's FRQ 2, teachers might consider using the following prompts, all of which have a more narrative style: "Erdrich 2018 Balancing Acts Excerpt," "Eudora Welty 1983 One Writer's Beginnings," and "Woolf Memoir Moments of Being."
- Many of the AP Daily Videos located in AP Classroom will support building students' skills specifically for the Rhetorical Analysis FRQ. Listed below are some of the AP Daily videos that offer a range of entry points for students who are working to develop and refine their Rhetorical Analysis skills.
    - Practice Session 5: FRQ (Question 2: Rhetorical Analysis)
        - One recommendation in the Chief Reader Report is to encourage students to go beyond merely restating the prompt in their thesis. This video instructs students how to read the passage in order to articulate a larger message.
    - Unit 3: Skill 6.A Daily Video 3
        - Another feature of high-scoring essays, according to the "Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps" table, is connecting a rhetorical choice to the writer's message. This video provides concrete strategies to help students more fully analyze the writer's choices.
    - Unit 7: Skill 3.C Daily Video 1
        - This video presents how to identify complexity within a passage by exploring how the message and choices evolve from the beginning to the end of the text, which is an organizational structure many students followed this year.

Question 3

Task: Argument
Topic: J Wortham on the value of selfies
Max Score: 6
Mean Score: 3.44

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

Students responding to the prompt were asked to develop a position on a 2013 quote by *New York Times* contributor J Wortham discussing the potential value of selfies and to write an argument on the extent to which Wortham's claim about selfies is valid. Students were expected to respond to the prompt with a thesis that presented a defensible position; provide evidence to support their line of reasoning; explain how their evidence supported a line of reasoning; and use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating their argument.

As per the Course and Exam Description, students were expected to select evidence to develop and refine their claims, use appropriate approaches of organization and reasoning to support their arguments, and make stylistic choices that advance the argument.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

This year's argument question asked students to respond to the following prompt: "In a 2013 *New York Times* article on the practice of taking selfies, writer, editor, and podcast host J Wortham wrote: 'Rather than dismissing the trend as a side effect of digital culture or a sad form of exhibitionism [behavior that is meant to attract attention to oneself], maybe we're better off seeing selfies for what they are at their best—a kind of visual diary, a way to mark our short existence and hold it up to others as proof that we were here.' Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Wortham's claim about the value of documenting one's life with selfies is valid."

This prompt was highly accessible, engaging students at a wide variety of skill levels to think reflectively on the role of selfies in their own lives, in society, and in preserving history, as inspired by Wortham's observation that they could be a "visual diary." Responses offered a variety of thesis statements, engaging a wide range of positions on the extent to which Wortham's claim is valid. In service of such arguments, responses used a wide array of evidence, including cave paintings and historical works of art, family photo albums, social media, personal anecdotes, and hypothetical examples, to develop insightful observations about the complex role of selfies in our society.

Most students were able to develop defensible thesis statements. However, even some that earned the point often offered a simplistic understanding of the value of selfies, asserting, "I personally agree with J Wortham because I find pictures and selfies as a beautiful way to show others your experiences," or "Ultimetely Wortham's claim about the value of documenting one's life with selfies is valid." Stronger thesis statements forecasted their intent to investigate the complications of selfies, arguing, "J Wortham, a writer and podcast host, claims that selfies allow people to document their lives and create a 'visual diary.' However, this is an invalid claim as selfies often promote false images on social media and do not actually capture the moments in a person's life, compared to videos or home movies." Such responses examined a number of the roles that selfies play in our lives, all in service of establishing a line of reasoning.

Many responses relied heavily on personal anecdotes for evidence, discussing the role of selfies in both helping record family memories, as well as how posing for them can disrupt fun outings with family and friends. Responses saw selfies as a permanent record valuable for personal reflection or as primary source documents for a distant future, but they also made cautionary observations about altering images or becoming consumed with posting on social media. Responses explored the history of documenting ourselves through self-portraits or made comparisons to the evolution from painting to the advent of photography (admittedly not selfie-friendly to start) to selfie as a common sense and somewhat egalitarian next step in documenting our lives. Some responses included detailed, hypothetical examples that created such a clear scenario that they became compelling evidence when paired with adequate commentary. Weaker responses often struggled with either providing enough specificity for their evidence, conflated selfies and photographs in a way that was not helpful in developing a line of reasoning or provided commentary about their evidence that made sweeping generalizations that created limited lines of reasoning.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
• Responses struggled with providing clear connections between evidence and commentary. These responses often stopped after providing detailed evidence instead of connecting that evidence back to the thesis.	• After providing evidence about friends posting selfies on "Snapchat or Instagram stories," one response explained: "Rather than do something for yourself, posting selfies has shifted the focus to doing things for other people rather than for enjoyment." This line of reasoning extended, explaining, "I ask them not to include me. I prefer making the most out of the time I'm there rather than being distracted." This sentence clearly connected this evidence and commentary back to the response's thesis questioning the value of selfies.
• Responses often conflated selfies and photos, discussing them as synonyms when the corresponding commentary only discussed the value of selfies, therefore impacting the response's line of reasoning. Common examples were of physical photo albums, yearbooks, and older individuals looking at old photos.	• Stronger responses controlled the evidence to make it clear they recognize that not all photos are selfies, thus increasing the effectiveness of the response's rhetorical choice: "The practice of using pictures as a visual diary is not new—selfies are just a newer, more convenient method. For example, at a child's first time at the beach, the parents are going to want to take a picture of the child at the beach, not just the beach. Now, if it is someone's first time at the beach is later in their life, they would still want to be in the picture. Taking a selfie is one way to do that."

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

Students need help learning how to frame their evidence in service of an abstract idea. In this instance, students had little difficulty coming up with specific evidence for this prompt, but they often struggled with how to explain the relevance of that evidence in terms of the more philosophical premise of the value of selfies.

One classroom exercise to help students learn this skill is through having them research current events, encouraging them to look for articles that contain multiple perspectives. While it is easy to encourage students to find debatable topics, look for the exciting teachable moment when a student brings in something that is not debatable, but simply sensational. When discussing these sensational articles, ask students to reframe them not as something about which to take a thesis, but as evidence for a broader conversation. For example, a sensational article about a wild animal breaking into a local business is not something about which there is much debate: it's bad for the animal, it's bad for the business. But, about what debatable topic *could* the story act as evidence? Are we building businesses too close to animal habitats? What should we do about the reduction of animal habitats that might force animals into developed areas? What we are teaching students to do is frame content that is really an observation of something happening in the world and turning it into evidence for a more complex conversation. We are, in effect, teaching them to take a position on an abstract concept and show us its physical manifestations in our daily experiences.

An additional step is to help students understand the audience for a response like this. Students should anticipate someone who is interested in the topic, but skeptical (though not hostile) to their thesis. Many students do not provide enough evidence because they are only writing enough evidence to persuade themselves or someone who is predisposed to believe their thesis. Imagining an audience who is going to push for clarifying sentences that make the connection between evidence and thesis clear often helps students write more thorough commentary that more clearly develops a response's line of reasoning.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- Teachers will find example responses for this free-response question (FRQ) on the AP Central AP English Language and Composition Exam page, along with scoring notes and specific commentary explaining why each point was or was not earned.
- The AP English Language and Composition Course and Exam Description (CED) includes a diverse collection of resources, including the Instructional Approaches section, which has a dedicated description of approaches for the Argument FRQ. Additionally, page 86 of the CED defines argument and how teachers might approach the task with students.
- Teachers will find formative assessment practice for Argument in Unit 2, Unit 5, and Unit 8 AP Classroom Progress Checks. These FRQs are scaffolded to provide students support as they practice synthesizing sources and constructing their own argumentation.
- Teachers may also make use of the released Argument FRQs in the AP Classroom Question Bank as a part of classroom practice for students. Simply filter the Question Type for FRQ: Argument. If interested in providing students practice with prompts in which personal anecdotes or hypotheticals are relevant, there are several Argument FRQs in the AP Classroom Question Bank that replicate this task: "Value of Exploring the Unknown," "Grit," "Value of Perfection," and "Pursuit of Happiness."

- Many of the AP Daily Videos located in AP Classroom will support building students' skills specifically for the Argument FRQ. Listed below are some of the AP Daily videos that offer a range of entry points for students who are working to develop and refine their Argument skills.
    - Unit 4: Skill 6.C Daily Video 2
        - This video discusses personal and hypothetical examples as a sufficient way to support a claim. It focuses on advancing an argument through definition and description, two modes that rely heavily on anecdotes like this year's prompt.
    - Unit 5: Skill 6.A Daily Video 2
        - While explaining how body paragraphs contribute to a line of reasoning, this video explores how to strengthen a body paragraph by including multiple pieces of evidence and layers of commentary. It provides examples of a range of evidence, including historical and hypothetical, to support a claim.
    - Unit 7: Skill 4.C Daily Video 2
        - One challenge to the Argument FRQ is developing a complex position. To discourage a binary response to the prompt, this video addresses how to avoid absolute claims in the thesis and body paragraphs.