

Student Sample 2 With Commentary

Score row	Score points:  Total = 20 (out of 30 possible points)	Scoring Commentary
Understanding and Analyzing Content	2: The report poses a problem, question or issue simplistically, places the problem in a limited context and provides no rationale, or a weak rationale, for the inquiry process.	The report addresses a complicated issue, reducing poverty, and contextualizes it using current global, national, and state statistics. However, after claiming that those in poverty are “unable to get the essentials, like food, clothing, and shelter,” the report contradicts itself and uses a quote from the Heritage Foundation to support the counter-claim. This confusion and the simple question “What can we do to reduce the poverty rate?” suggests limited understanding of the complexity of the issue. No rationale for the inquiry process is offered.
Understanding and Analyzing Perspective	4: The report identifies relevant perspectives, provides limited evaluation of the validity of arguments and reflects a limited understanding of how the reasoning is logically aligned with the conclusions of those arguments.	Although the report does not explicitly mention any perspectives, it does consider an economic issue from various points of view including community, nationally, and globally. Along with programs for reducing poverty, the report considers the distribution of wealth. No evaluation of the validity of arguments or their reasoning is offered.
Selecting and Using Evidence	4: The report cites evidence to build its argument.	Synthesis is limited as the report consists mostly of unsupported claims. The “Helping in your Community” section includes an extended hypothetical example that makes unsupported claims about human behavior, an attempt to make Singer’s hypothetical situations analogous to the one in the report, and a paragraph that begins with 4 categories of aid, “feeding, housing, water, and medication,” and ends with helping “them excel to new heights in the work force.” “The Government’s Role” section begins with the Depression before talking generally about welfare eligibility. The quote “Studies show that about \$59 billion is spent on social welfare programs; \$92 billion is spent on corporate welfare programs” is irrelevant to the section, and including it suggests a lack of understanding of the difference between social welfare and “corporate welfare.” The “Expanding the Issue” section does a more effective job of synthesis.
Building and Communicating an Argument	4: The report draws weak connections between the evidence and one or more resolutions, conclusions, and/or solutions.	Some simple solutions are offered - “continue doing what works,” along with more complicated ones like raising the minimum wage, but no understanding of the implications of that solution are considered. Additionally, a UN committee is suggested that would redistribute wealth equally. While the solutions are linked to the evidence, they are not well-reasoned.
Selecting and Using Evidence	3: The report accurately attributes and cites all sources used. The bibliography includes all referenced sources and aligns with a recommended style guide.	The report accurately attributes and cites sources used. The bibliography appears to include all referenced sources and align with the APA style guide except for a lack of page numbers and the Singer citation on the bibliography page.

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Grammar and Style	<b>3:</b> The report contains few flaws in grammar and style and clearly communicates to the reader.	Few flaws in grammar or style exist, although some portions are difficult to understand. Examples: “a lady signs off a child”; “Most contributions category if necessary will be made through shelter homes, for those not able to provide themselves with water on their own will most likely not be on their own”; “benefit from hands-on care from the proposed more specifically—to what extent do we give, instead of just to give aimlessly.”
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## Standard of Living/Quality of Life:

### *To what extent should aid be given to those who live below the poverty line?*

What does it mean to be poor or to live below poverty line? In 2012, half of the world's population was living on less than \$2.50 a day ("World Poverty Facts and Stats"), 15 percent of Americans are considered "poor" ("About Poverty"), and 10 percent of Marylanders are living in poverty ("Spotlight on Poverty"). Living below the poverty line means struggling to make ends meet; it could mean being unable to get the essentials, like food, clothing, and shelter; however, getting the basic needs isn't exactly the main problem of people living below poverty line in America today. People who live below the poverty line usually have a home and enough food and clothes. According to the Heritage Foundation, the poor are "struggling to pay for air conditioning and the cable TV bill as well as to put food on the table." What can we do to reduce the poverty rate?

#### Helping in Your Community

Imagine a normal lunch break you decide to spend at your favorite restaurant. Recently you've received a \$40 gift card for this restaurant and you intend to utilize this card to compensate for your lunch break visits for the next few weeks. As you prepare to swipe the card following your order, you notice a poor mother and child, obviously suffering from lack of food and shelter, who approach you and utter the words "Have not eaten in over 2 days. Please help". If asked if you would at least consider sacrificing money on your gift card in order to help the family, a lot of people would probably answer yes. Now if we introduce the factor, that besides this gift card, you have no way to compensate for a meal at this favorite restaurant due to the rest of your money being at home, it is probable that people would begin to ponder their response to the question a little further. Would you then sacrifice your lunch for the day and the technically free lunches you would receive for the next few weeks in order to help this poor and starving mother and child? Or simply tell them you cannot help them then proceed to utilize your \$40 gift card? Most people would probably answer that they would give them the gift card. Now we must consider the instance in which this same mother and child were on the other side of the street holding a sign that read the words they uttered to you, sitting across the street as you walked into the restaurant. With it being so much easier to ignore them, would you then overlook them and simply proceed to purchase your meal with the gift card and provide the excuse that it is not your responsibility.

In his essay, *The Singer Solution to World Poverty*, Peter Singer presents two hypothetical situations similar to the ones above—a situation in which a lady signs off a child to be killed for money, and in which a man allows a train to kill a child instead of pulverize his precious Bugatti. The lady is appeared to be of inferior morality amongst the two, but Singer presents that the situation in which the man lets the train pulverize the child instead of his Bugatti, that eventually paid for his retirement and was one of his valued possessions, is no different from the situation that many Americans are in today.

**Comment [Reader1]:** Rubric Row 1: The report addresses a complicated issue, reducing poverty, and contextualizes it using current global, national, and state statistics.

Rubric Row 2: Although the report does not explicitly mention any perspectives, it does consider an economic issue from various points of view including community, nationally, and globally.

**Comment [Reader2]:** Rubric Row 1: However, after claiming that those in poverty are "unable to get the essentials, like food, clothing, and shelter," the report contradicts itself and uses a quote from the Heritage Foundation to support the counter-claim. This confusion and the simple question "What can we do to reduce the poverty rate?" suggests limited understanding of the complexity of the issue. No rationale for the inquiry process is offered.

**Comment [Reader3]:** Rubric Row 3: Synthesis is limited as the report consists mostly of unsupported claims. The "Helping in your Community" section includes an extended hypothetical example that makes unsupported claims about human behavior, an attempt to make Singer's hypothetical situations analogous to the one in the report, and a paragraph that begins with 4 categories of aid, "feeding, housing, water, and medication," and ends with helping "them excel to new heights in the work force."

**Comment [Reader4]:** Rubric Row 6: Few flaws in grammar or style exist, although some portions are difficult to understand. Examples: "a lady signs off a child"

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“The child was a complete stranger to him and too far away to relate to in an intimate, personal way,” Singer points out, just as in the second instance the poor mother and child are too far away to dismiss personally, and also just as families in your community today are distant in the sense that just like the child to Bob, are “too far away to relate to in an intimate personal way.” All in all, if you would view it as morally wrong to walk into that restaurant and simply ignore the poor mother and child, then there is no reason not to view ignoring those members of your community, who are below the poverty level essentially living their lives with a sign that says “HELP” on their forehead as morally wrong as well. There are several ways to aid those below the standard of living in your community, and we should not ignore them, but rather we should seek ways to help.

There are 4 categories of aid all those who are below the standard of living could possibly need assistance in, if not all. These categories include feeding, housing, water, and medication. Depending on the extremity of the poverty in your community, or the outlets to help that are available to you, you can explore all four or even one of these categories and make a sizable impact on your community. In terms of water, probably the most intense but least likely of struggles amongst poor people in the United States, it would not be very difficult to contribute in this field. Most contributions category if necessary will be made through shelter homes, for those not able to provide themselves with water on their own will most likely not be on their own. Those without food, water, and medication however would benefit from hands-on care from the proposed more specifically—to what extent do we give, instead of just to give aimlessly. In order to help a family excel beyond the poverty line, we must assist them to the point where they are employed, and eventually earning an income that exceeds the poverty line. If they are already employed, we must help them excel to new heights in the work force, in order to make more. Ways to accomplish these goals include perhaps assisting the poor in entering job search programs and the more obvious helping them to go to school and get additional education, furthermore increasing their ability and prosperity in the work force. We should help those in need in our community to the extent in which we do enough that they can have a good start towards helping themselves .

### The Government’s Role

The stock market crash of 1929 was infamous for what followed after it: The Great Depression. After the stock market crashed, banks were failing, consumers cut back on spending, and businesses were struggling. Unemployment rose to about 25 percent, millions were out of work, and people were struggling to make ends meet (Ayers 677-682). President Franklin Roosevelt and the government passed the “New Deal” programs that offered relief to those suffering the effects of the Depression. These programs either provided jobs or provided relief to those who needed it; these programs put money into the pockets of the poor and offered them the help they needed (Ayers 712). In the 1960s, during Lyndon Johnson’s presidency, another round of programs was passed called the “Great Society.” These programs “provided for job training, adult education, and loans to small businesses to attack the roots of unemployment and poverty” (Garson). In the 1970s, Earned Income Credit was enacted to generate tax refunds depending on the level of income and the number of dependent a taxpayer has; it

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**Comment [Reader6]:** Rubric Row 3: Synthesis is limited as the report consists mostly of unsupported claims. “The Government’s Role” section begins with the Depression before talking generally about welfare eligibility. The quote “Studies show that about \$59 billion is spent on social welfare programs; \$92 billion is spent on corporate welfare programs” is irrelevant to the section, and including it suggests a lack of understanding of the difference between social welfare and “corporate welfare.”

**Comment [Reader7]:** Rubric Row 5: The report accurately attributes and cites sources used. There are multiple examples of this throughout the paper.

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was designed to help lower income working families or individuals. Some of these programs are still in existence and are still helping people in need (Perez).

The U.S. welfare program started during The Great Depression in the 1930's. Families and individuals who were in need and were receiving little to no income were aided by government welfare programs in order to sustain a manageable livelihood above poverty level. Welfare checks, food stamps, healthcare, cash aid, housing assistance are used to ensure that people who are in desperate need of help can have the necessities they need as humans just to make it through ("Welfare Info"). Studies show that about \$59 billion is spent on social welfare programs; \$92 billion is spent on corporate welfare programs (Sinn). The eligibility to apply for a welfare program varies and depends on numerous factors such as net income, family size, medical emergencies, crisis situations, homelessness, or unemployment. Each person that applies for aid is assigned a case worker who will who review the applicants' current state of living to decide the amount and types of benefits they are eligible for ("Welfare Info").

Globally, one of the United Nations Millennium Goals is to "eradicate extreme poverty and hunger": by 2015, their goal is to halve the proportion whose income is less than \$1.25 a day; by the same time, they also want to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger; their third goal is to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for everyone. ("UN Millennium Goals") It's up to the country how they achieve these goals. Most countries that are part of UN's Millennium Goals are on track to achieving (if they haven't already) the goal to eliminate extreme poverty. ("Tracking the Millennium Development Goals")

We believe we should continue doing what works. Some of the welfare programs already mentioned didn't help reduce poverty; however, those programs that created jobs or helped people develop the skills they need to get jobs should be the programs we keep. People in poverty need jobs to help support themselves and their families, but they can't get these jobs if they don't have the education or the skills to get the job. Government should continue to make education one of their main priorities; they should continue to fund schools that have children who live below poverty line; they should help adults who live below poverty line to get the education they need to get jobs that will help them; they could also provide programs that equips adults with the skills they need to get jobs. They should have a system that makes sure these people are learning what they need to, or that the kids are staying in school because once they have the skills, they can achieve anything and they wouldn't have to live in poverty anymore.

Another problem is that once they get a job, they are typically paid the minimum wage, which is usually not enough to make ends meet (Edelman). If they get paid \$7.25 per hour for eight hours for seven days, it wouldn't be enough to pay bills and be able to provide food for the family, especially in times like the recession. Raising the minimum wage would be a good idea because most of the jobs poverty-stricken people get are low paying jobs; if their pay is slightly higher, it would help them make ends meet. It doesn't even have to be a big change to the minimum wage. I agree with President Obama's call for an increase of the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$9 (Jackson).

Over the years, welfare programs coined a bad reputation: claims were made that individuals were abusing and cheating the welfare system by purposely not applying for jobs, having more children just to receive more aid, receiving assistance from outside sources and not informing the welfare worker, and remaining unmarried to qualify for

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more benefits. As a solution to this issue, there should be more concrete and in depth guidelines for those wishing to apply for public aid, because it is unfair for those who are in genuine need of help to have to suffer at the expense of those who are selfish and look for a hand to help them get to where they are every opportunity they can get. The welfare system should be more regulated and more carefully analyzed to make sure that those who are on it are in compliance with whatever benefits they are entitled to and don't seek to manipulate the system into giving them more money than they really need.

Expanding the Issue

Today, we are living in a world dominated by the rich. The poor are only left behind to suffer. Even in the wealthiest countries of the world, the percentage of people living under the poverty line is about 13%. There is an approximate 1% of the human population who control the resources of the world, and in turn control the money of the world. KD Tait writes that "the natural wealth of the world is continuously replenished," therefore it is unreasonable to say that there is not enough to go around. The problem that we are facing then is the fact that the rich are causing poverty, from the issues of corruption and unequal distribution.

There is a plethora of issues in our world that point to some form of corruption on behalf of the wealthy. Rich countries often try to take advantage of less developed countries through bribing rulers for certain contracts. According to Dr. Susan Hawley, "Every year, Western businesses pay huge amounts of money in bribes to win friends, influence and contracts." They tend to weasel their way into LDCs to take all the natural resources they can get. They are able to do this through "payments made to rulers" that also help keep these "corrupt rulers in power, who also embezzle a lot of money away." It is a horrible cycle that keeps the rich, and only the rich, happy. The drug trade is perhaps the worse of them all. In less developed countries, it can even destroy government, leaving drug lords and gangs to run rampant. They suck the wealth out of a country, and leave everyone to suffer in poverty (Shah, "Corruption"). The rich essentially have the power to take the wealth out of third world countries. As they do this, they are only exacerbating poverty. The issue at hand then is not the lack of wealth in this world, but rather, who's hands it is in.

Although some may say that as there are seven billion people on this earth, there is no possible way that everyone can be happy. I would answer that our gigantic earth is plentiful with bountiful resources that are more than capable of supporting a decent quality of life for everyone. An extremely small percent of people are merely taking in massive amounts of money for themselves. In fact in 2007 "the two richest people in the world had more money than the combined gross domestic product of the 45 poorest countries" ("National Geographic"). It is clear that wealth is not being distributed equally.

There have fortunately already been endeavors to counter the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Many of these hopeful endeavors have unfortunately been in vain. Although the "rich countries" of the world agreed in 1970 to give 0.7% of their gross national income for international aid, many don't meet the promised target. From 1970-2010, these countries fell short 4.37 trillion dollars. So what happens to this money? Again, there is more trouble. Most often, the money does not actually make it into the

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hands of the poorest, and some sort of embezzlement occurs along the way (Shah, “Foreign Aid”).

On a global scale, it is thus recommended that there be a UN committee or subcommittee to crack down on countries with rulers who have more control over the wealth than they should. The UN and EU among other international entities have much power in the world, so they are the clear choice to go to for such a large issue as world poverty. Although it may be difficult, there are hardly any other options. A UN committee of some sort that is devoted to the efficient and equal distribution of wealth is most preferable and logical. It would be devoted to checks on problem areas where wealth does not reach those under the poverty line. It would be devoted to stamping out power hungry rulers. It would be devoted to pressuring rich countries to provide its 0.7%. It would be devoted for a more equal distribution of wealth in our world. As poverty is such an expansive issue, there are plenty of small acts that can be done locally. Individuals should always seek opportunities for donating to charities that are well-known to be reliable in actually giving the money to the poor. They should also look for grassroots lobbying. In the United States for example, “Occupy Wall Street” is a perfect idea for someone who is against the 1% of America, and the 1% of the world who control all the wealth. Poverty is a large aspect of our world, but it can be stamped out.

Ultimately, whether it is on a communal, governmental, or on a global scale, in order to decrease the number of people around the world under the standard of living, changes must be made and actions must be done. In order to help those under the standard of living excel to positions of those in the middle class and even higher, they are going to need a push from those above and more well off than them. For a wise man named Franklin D. Roosevelt once said “The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.”

**Comment [Reader11]:** Rubric Row 4: Some simple solutions are offered - “continue doing what works,” along with more complicated ones like raising the minimum wage, but no understanding of the implications of that solution are considered. Additionally, a UN committee is suggested that would redistribute wealth equally. While the solutions are linked to the evidence, they are not well-reasoned.

**Comment [Reader12]:** Rubric Row 2: Along with programs for reducing poverty, the report considers the distribution of wealth. No evaluation of the validity of arguments or their reasoning is offered.

**Comment [Reader13]:** Rubric Row 6: Few flaws in grammar or style exist, although some portions are difficult to understand. Examples: “a lady signs off a child”; “Most contributions category if necessary will be made through shelter homes, for those not able to provide themselves with water on their own will most likely not be on their own”; “benefit from hands-on care from the proposed more specifically—to what extent do we give, instead of just to give aimlessly.”

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**Comment [Reader14]:** Rubric Row 5: The report accurately attributes and cites sources used. The bibliography appears to include all referenced sources and align with the APA style guide except for a lack of page numbers and the Singer citation on the bibliography page.

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