

Section 1, Part B Commentary
2014 Practice AP Seminar Exam

Task Overview

This question requires students to perform a close reading of two documents and to then craft a comparative analysis and evaluation of the authors' arguments. The question requires students to evaluate the effectiveness of two arguments related to America's role in the global obesity epidemic.

Sample A
Score: Low

This response misstates the perspectives, the implications, and the limitations of the two arguments. While it addresses the relevance and credibility of the evidence in the two arguments, the evaluations are inaccurate and unsound. There is no clear line of reasoning to support the superficial comparison offered at the conclusion of the response.

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Article A uses a ton of evidence to very effectively explain that the US is globalizing bad eating habits in order to make money. Article B uses ~~more~~^{less} evidence but is still pretty effective in explaining that people in other countries are interested in fast food, and that the market is real.

Article A is ~~practically~~^{practically almost} perfect. The claims create a reasonable argument, and every claim has evidence to back it. The only issue is that when discussing high fructose corn syrup, there is evidence given of a correlation, not a causation. Corn syrup has actually been proven to not be ~~the~~ bad for people, which ~~the~~ Norris neglected to mention. In addition, there is no counter argument. However, it has examples and statistics to back up every single claim, and concludes very sensibly.

Article B is less convincing, because there is ~~less~~^{less} evidence. However, there are some numbers, quotes, and examples, which

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and the well structured argument. In fact, I think the friendliness of the article helps get the point across. In terms of evidence, it's mediocre, but in terms of effectiveness, it ~~works~~ works. Effectiveness deals ~~in~~ in appealing to the audience as well as evidence, and though it is ideal for the average reader to be a super genius, most people care more about the ^{tone} ~~image~~ of what they're reading, so in that way, this article is effective. Plus, statistics ~~are~~ often have multiple sides to them, like with the corn syrup ~~situation~~ correlation is Article A.

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Sample B
Score: Medium

This response identifies the different perspectives, implications, and limitations of both arguments. It provides a thorough but flawed evaluation, citing logical fallacies in the first document that do not exist. The essay adequately assesses pieces of evidence in terms of credibility and relevance. The response clearly identifies the authors' lines of reasoning, but the response is limited in its discussion of weaknesses and strengths of the authors' arguments and offers summations rather than analyses. Additionally, this essay contains no final comparative judgment based upon an evaluation of the two arguments.

Student Sample B

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Document 1 and Document 2 both explain how and why the United States is showing

In Document 1 and document 2, the authors state why United States food companies are growing their ~~international~~ international market and what the effects ~~of~~ of this growth ~~are~~ have on the people. In both articles, the authors describe the large economic returns of expanding into new ~~international~~ international markets and the benefits that this has for a company. The authors also mention the effects that these companies have on the people of the countries they are expanding into. Both articles offer slightly different perspectives on a similar problem and ~~both~~ both arguments have strengths and weaknesses.

Document 1, written by John Norris, talks specifically about how the United States foreign economic policies have effected the increase of obesity rate in Mexico. ^{and other nations} Norris backs up his claim with evidence that links the introduction of foreign policies with the increased obesity rate. The first foreign policy that he mentions is the North American

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Free Trade Agreement. This "opened Mexico to a flood of cheap junk food and soda pop." He linked this to the increase in obesity by stating the statistic that since this agreement, there has been a "1200 percent increase in high fructose corn syrup exports from the US to Mexico." High Fructose Corn Syrup is a cheaper way to sweeten something and can lead to obesity if consumed in large amounts. Next, Norris quotes a study by ^UUniversity of Minnesota talking about the increased likelihood of dying of heart disease ~~due~~ due to eating at Fast Food restaurants. Both of the studies Norris points ~~to~~ ^{are done} by credible universities and have background and evidence to support the claims that they make. Another strength of Norris' article that adds to his credibility is he lays out a clear argument that follows a direct course of actions and consequences. His argument, however, is undercut in the slippery-slope logical fallacies he makes in the beginning of his article. Although he does pick up backing those claims, they give the reader a false sense of ~~urgency~~ ^{urgency} and

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are not necessary for the article. This article shows relevance because the problem of obesity is a hot topic that plagues many Americans. By speaking of ^{how} the Obama's administration is working on solving obesity domestically, it seems ironic that they are passing laws that ^{aid in} hurting other countries health. Lastly, although we are not given any background on the author, this article was written recently and speaks directly about foreign policy.

In Document 2, John Shoen speaks about the expansion of American fast food chains into international markets, specifically those in developing countries. This expansion is ~~not~~ economically driven and has proved to be very successful in increasing revenue and growing a global brand. His article is credible for a few reasons. First, there are quotes from a IBT world analyst and a Yum spokeswoman. Both of these quotes lend credibility to his argument because they focus on the reason these companies are expanding into global markets. Next, with several of the statistics Shoen uses,

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he backs his point and shows what the driving reason for these companies to move overseas is economic. He includes the net profits of large fast food companies overseas compared to those domestically. It can be seen that due to the changing demographic in the US, many companies are going to other countries to make money.

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Sample C
Score: High

This response begins with an elegant introductory comparison between the two documents. The response analyzes how each article presents a perspective and recognizes that the second article is less successful in presenting alternative perspectives by critiquing the specific sources cited as evidence. The response addresses the credibility and the relevance of evidence used by the first article and then successfully compares it to the relevance and credibility of the evidence in the second article to arrive at an effective judgment in the final paragraph. The response effectively addresses the reasoning in the two articles and address strengths and weaknesses in each author's argument and reasoning in order to arrive at a sound comparison.

Student Sample C

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The two articles discuss ~~different~~ the phenomena of US' increased export of fast food and obesity-inducing food. Article A looks at the effect and reason for obesity in countries other than the US due to unhealthy food ~~is~~ imported from the US, while Article B talks about how American fast food is "invading developing countries' middle class people. The two articles introduce similar evidence to support different arguments.

In Article A, the author gives a counterargument first in the second paragraph by saying that the US is not to blame for obesity in Mexico. Instead, their lack of exercise has caused the problem. However, it goes on claiming that "American agricultural, trade, marketing and scientific practices" drives global obesity trend. The author ~~breaks up~~ breaks down this claim into smaller ones, focusing on soft drink's ~~effect~~ evolution that produces economic incentives for US companies, fast food chain expansion, and overall monetary pressure for US companies to export or expand abroad. These individual claims are all backed up with sufficient evidence such as statistics in third, fourth and fifth paragraph, as well as authorities' such as NAFTA, US Agriculture Department ^{claims}

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and the Economist. In each argument, the author is able to analyze a specific example such as the technological advancement of high-fructose corn syrup production, fast food induced heart disease in Singapore and revenue increase for major fast food companies. These examples and evidence are detailed and convincing. They also prove the point that US ~~causes~~ food "caused" global obesity due to its economic incentive to export unhealthy food.

In Article B, the author is explaining a phenomena rather than making an argument. He suggests that fast food has become popular ~~is~~ among new middle-class people in developing countries. He ~~uses~~ quotes IBIS World Industry analyst Andy Brennan, and uses statistics of Yum Brand to support the claim. The statistics he uses in Yum Brand's case assimilates that of Article A. However, in Article B, the author focuses more on the trend from 12% to 70% in revenue, rather than the total amount in Article A. Article B goes on giving a different claim that adapting to countries other than the US is challenging, a point that is not closely related to previous content. However, Article B does a good job in introducing quotes from people in the industry, and

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giving examples in specific countries such as China, Saudi Arabia and India.

Many of the evidence in Article B are of doubtful ~~of~~ credibility as they are either from "an email" sent by a ~~Iran~~ spokeswoman, or analyst from an unexplained company. Article ~~one~~ A has better sources comparing to Article B ~~is~~ because they are well-reputed organizations or newspaper.