

Following the Thesis, Evidence and Commentary, and Sophistication sections for each FRQ type, students review what they have learned by exploring the rubric row associated with that section.

**ARGUMENT Thesis Review (Row A)**

**Eyes on the Exam**  
Readers will score your thesis based on Row A in the Argument rubric.

**LEARN**

Carefully read each section of the Row A rubric and scoring guide.

- The first row under "Row A: Thesis . . ." explains in general terms how a response can fail to receive the point (first column). The second column explains, also in general terms, what a response needs to do to earn the point.
- The row beneath that provides *general examples* of ways to miss or earn the point.
- The second to the last row provides *specific examples* of the items in the previous row.
- The final row provides additional clarifications for acceptable thesis statements.

Row A: Thesis (0-1 points), Scoring Criteria [4.B]	
<p><b>0 points</b></p> <p>For any of the following:</p> <p>There is no defensible thesis.</p> <p>The intended thesis only restates the prompt.</p> <p>The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim.</p> <p>There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b></p> <p>Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.</p>
<p><b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b></p>	
<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <p>Only restate the prompt.</p> <p>Do not take a position, or the position is vague or must be inferred.</p> <p>State an obvious fact rather than making a claim that requires a defense.</p>	<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <p>Respond to the prompt rather than restate or rephrase the prompt. Clearly take a position on the value (or harm) of taking difficult classes and/or facing other challenges</p>

Similar reviews follow the Evidence and Commentary lessons and the Sophistication lessons.


## PRACTICE

Complete the following activities and answer the questions about the Row A Thesis rubric and scoring guide.

1. In your own words, explain three problems that could keep you from earning the thesis point.
2. Explain whether restating the prompt in different words is a useful strategy. Identify the part of the prompt that addresses that.
3. Can a thesis statement stretch out in separate sentences over several paragraphs? Identify the part of the rubric that answers that question.
4. Does a thesis statement need to be closed? Identify the part of the rubric that answers that question.
5. Will you miss the point if you save your thesis statement for the final paragraph? Identify the part of the rubric that answers that question.

### You Be the Reader

Read sample essay ARG.3.B in the Appendix on page 281. Decide whether that essay earns the thesis point. Explain your answer.

 Watch as Beth Hall describes [a formula for writing an effective thesis statement](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2s4hhhp9) (tinyurl.com/2s4hhhp9). Then try using that formula to revise the thesis in the sample essay ARG.3.B.



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### Revise

Review the thesis statement you have developed in response to Prompt B about boredom and creativity. If you think it does not earn the thesis point based on this rubric and Beth Hall's explanations, revise as needed to correct that. Even if you believe it earns the thesis point

Students get a close look at the rubric row by answering questions.

Students then use what they learned about the rubric row to evaluate sample essays and revise their own.

Additional sample essays for each FRQ type are available in the Appendix.

## LESSON ARG.21 Sample Essay: From a 4 to 5

### Eyes on the Exam

While the score of 4 is considered well-qualified, moving that 4 to a 5 can be easier than you think.

### LEARN

The line between an essay scoring a 4 and an essay scoring a 5 (1-4-0) really comes down to one quality: **consistent explanation in your commentary.**

You may have written some outstanding explanations in your commentary of one or two of your examples, but if the commentary on the others is not consistent, then you will struggle to score higher than a 1-3-0.

Make sure you provide enough explanation of your thinking for each example for your audience to see how the details of the example relate to your argument.

**KEY POINT:** Consistent commentary for each example will help you earn a higher score.

The following essay is a student draft in response to Prompt A on challenging classes (“Write an essay that argues your position on the value to students of taking challenging classes”). This student earned a total score of 4 out of 6 points based on the AP English Language and Composition argument scoring rubric. The score breakdown is shown below. The points awarded for each row are in bold type.

Row A: Thesis	0				<b>1</b>
Row B: Evidence and Commentary	0	1	2	<b>3</b>	4
Row C: Sophistication	<b>0</b>				1
Total					<b>4/6</b>

Students review a sample essay just as an exam reader would. The lesson provides tips for improvement.

A Key Point Review precedes the Practice FRQ at the end of each section:

**ARGUMENT Key Point Review**

**PROMPT**

**ARG.1** An argument prompt contains three main parts: the **introduction** of a topic and situation to give you context to consider, the **task** explains the topic for your argument, and the **directions** provide essential specific guidance for your essay. (page 193)

**ARG.2** The first step in responding to the prompt is **identifying key words and the questions they might raise**. Your response must be reasonable based on possible understandings of the key words. (page 196)

**ARG.3** Considering **big ideas** related to the topic of the prompt can deepen your understanding of that topic and lead to a better argument. (page 198)

**ARG.4** Connecting to worlds or domains beyond the prompt will give you a chance to **tap into your knowledge** and find interesting examples to support your argument. (page 200)

**THESIS**

**ARG.5** Your thesis must have a **defensible claim** and should **suggest a line of reasoning** that shows your thinking about the topic and claim. (page 203)

**ARG.6** An **introduction**, though not required, may help focus your argument and also help the reader connect to it. (page 207)

**ARG.7** Effective arguments address **alternative perspectives** without taking the focus away from the main perspective. (page 209)

**ARG.8** Topic sentences **aligned with the thesis** unify your essay and create clarity. (page 212)

**EVIDENCE AND COMMENTARY**

**ARG.9** Supporting examples need **specific details** that help the reader understand why each example helps support your argument. (page 218)

**ARG.10** Commentary is your **analysis, interpretation, or explanation of the examples** you have chosen as evidence and how those examples support your reasoning and claim. (page 221)

**ARG.11** Use words and phrases that **guide your reader's understanding** of how your examples relate to your thesis. (page 224)

**ARG.12** For a reliable way to organize your paragraphs, follow the **I (identify), E (explain), and L (link)** pattern. (page 227)

This review is a collection of the Key Points in each lesson. Students are encouraged to go over it in small groups before completing the Free-Response Practice Question.

**Free-Response Practice Question: Argument**

Suggested time—40 minutes  
(This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

In a collection of lectures written in the 1st century, Greek philosopher Epictetus stated: “Be silent for the most part, or, if you speak, say only what is necessary and in a few words. Talk, but rarely, if the occasion calls you [to speak].”

Write an essay that argues your position on the value of being silent and/or using a few words.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
- Provide evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.