

2024



AP[®] English Language and Composition

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

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Free-Response Question 1

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Synthesis Essay**6 points**

Mobile food service establishments, such as food trucks and food carts, have become increasingly trendy in recent years, offering customers appealing and often innovative dining options out of vehicles that can easily be located near workplaces and leisure activities. These businesses have sometimes been held back from expanding because of local regulations that restrict their activities and require operators to obtain licenses and certifications. Proponents of these regulations say that laws are needed to ensure that the meals offered by mobile food services are safe and that these businesses do not have an unfair advantage over traditional restaurants.

Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the sources and develops your position on what are the most important factors for cities to consider when regulating mobile food service establishments.

Source A (Baker article)

Source B (New Orleans permit guide)

Source C (U.S. Census Bureau graph)

Source D (Meehan article)

Source E (Neseman cartoon)

Source F (Weber book)

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
- Select and use evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support your line of reasoning. Indicate clearly the sources used through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. Sources may be cited as Source A, Source B, etc., or by using the description in parentheses.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Thesis (0–1 points)	0 points For any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no defensible thesis. • The intended thesis only restates the prompt. • The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. • There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt. 	1 point Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only restate the prompt. • Do not take a position, or the position is vague or must be inferred. • Equivocate or summarize other’s arguments but not the student’s (e.g., some people say it’s good, some people say it’s bad). • State an obvious fact rather than making a claim that requires a defense. 		Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to the prompt by developing a position on what are the most important factors for cities to consider when regulating mobile food service establishments, rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt. Clearly take a position rather than just stating there are pros/cons.
Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Mobile food services have become very popular lately and that popularity has caused problems for cities and food truck operators.”</i> Address the topic of the prompt but do not take a position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Cities have much to consider when they think about food truck regulations.”</i> Address the topic of the prompt but state an obvious fact as a claim <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Unlike traditional restaurants, mobile food services are able to move around to different locations.”</i> 		Examples that earn this point: Present a defensible position that responds to the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Cities should focus on whether regulations hurt businesses.”</i> • <i>“In the end, regulating food trucks so that they cannot set up in close proximity to restaurants will help preserve restaurants, which, in turn, help to preserve culinary diversity.”</i> • <i>“Cities should prioritize the health and well-being of communities when setting regulations for mobile food services. However, since these businesses improve the community and create jobs for members of the community, cities need to make it easy for them to succeed.”</i>
Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. • The thesis may be anywhere within the response. • For a thesis to be defensible, the sources must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. • The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn’t do so to earn the thesis point. • A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning. 		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
<p>Row B</p> <p>Evidence AND Commentary (0–4 points)</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or references fewer than two of the provided sources.</p>	<p>1 point</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides evidence from or references at least two of the provided sources.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student’s argument.</p>	<p>2 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides evidence from or references at least three of the provided sources.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.</p>	<p>3 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p>	<p>4 points</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes					
<p>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are incoherent or do not address the prompt. May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 1 point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tend to focus on summary or description of sources rather than specific details. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities. May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument. May make one point well but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim. Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 3 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the sources to build an argument. Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim. 	<p>Typical responses that earn 4 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the sources to build an argument. Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained. 	
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row. 					

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row C Sophistication (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt to contextualize their argument, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>In a world where...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time...</i>”). • Only hint at or suggest other arguments (“<i>While some may argue that...</i>” OR “<i>Some people say...</i>”). • Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the argument. 		
<p>Responses that earn this point may demonstrate sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation by doing any of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Crafting a nuanced argument by consistently identifying and exploring complexities or tensions across the sources. 2. Articulating the implications or limitations of an argument (either the student’s argument or arguments conveyed in the sources) by situating it within a broader context. 3. Making effective rhetorical choices that consistently strengthen the force and impact of the student’s argument throughout the response. 4. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive. 		
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference. 		

Sample 1A (1 of 1)

Many sit-in restaurants, especially family-owned restaurants, have put tremendous work, money, and time into building a scenic, tasty, and successful restaurant. However, as the mobile food industry begins to evolve, it is extremely important that cities implement certain regulations on food trucks. Some of these restrictions may include the proximity to other restaurants, or the extent to which the features on food trucks can be manipulated outside of a standard truck in order to ensure that traditional restaurants are not being dominated and pushed out of their business.

First and foremost, cities should absolutely consider implementing a restriction on how close food trucks can station themselves to a restaurant. For instance, Source D highlights the issue of food trucks parking right outside of restaurants that are "there 365 days a year, paying taxes, utilities, et cetera" (Source D). For clarification, what is being enunciated here is that restaurants are always stationed on their property 24/7 year-round, and have to pay various bills in order to maintain function and cleanliness of their buildings. So, it is rather unreasonable that food trucks would station themselves in food service territory that is very much not their place to intrude in. Unfortunately, however, it is emphasized in the food truck regulation guide of New Orleans that there is "no proximity restriction from restaurants for food trucks" (Source B). If such restrictions are not placed in New Orleans, it is almost certain that such rules are absent in other cities where mobile food trucks are becoming increasingly popular. As a result of this lack of regulation, however, sit-in restaurants may become jeopardized and overruled by food trucks if restaurant-proximity rules are not put into place for food trucks. Hence, it is direly important that cities consider implementing a rule for how close a food truck can park to a restaurant when regulating mobile food service establishments.

In addition to parking on, or near, restaurant property, it is critical that certain rules are developed in order to prevent food trucks from evolving outside of their traditional structure and furnishing, thus further protecting sitting food establishments from being outcompeted. In order to illustrate this worry, Source E shows a food truck decked out with tables and furniture, as well as the traditional grab-and-go style of food trucks. What this image of lush food trucks is meant to convey is the idea that as latter establishments develop and become more popularized, they will take advantage of the extent to which they can morph themselves into a literal moving restaurant. This issue is emphasized in a *New York Times* magazine, claiming that mobile food truck owners are "building mini empires" (Source A). On the other hand, food trucks started off and are traditionally known to be rather simple, and it is crucial that such simplicity stays in order to keep restaurants from dealing with unfair competition that has mutated too far outside of tradition. The only way to be sure that food trucks will not evolve into walking restaurants rather than their respective moving food service is for cities to place regulations on the food trucks such as restricting furniture and sitting options.

Since food trucks have only recently become popular in cities, it is all the more important that rules and restrictions are put in place by cities as soon as possible in order to prevent any unfair conditions for restaurants that have been established much longer than mobile food services. Even just a few policies such as the proximity that a food truck is allowed to park from a restaurant and the restriction of features that do not maintain distinguishability from a sit-in restaurant are vital implementations in order to sustain normalcy within city food industries.

Sample 1B (1 of 1)

From fast food, to ice cream trucks and delivery services, the trend of convenient food has been on the rise in the past few decades. Yet, one major innovation has oft been overlooked. Food trucks are a valuable addition to the dining industry in many places, providing aspiring restaurant owners a realistic avenue for development. However, when regulating this industry, cities should consider how to keep them from impeding on existing establishments and laws as well as the value they provide in the particular city.

To keep competition fair and laws in place, the food truck industry should be regulated with already existing practices in place. A major point of contention for food trucks is their interference with the operation of pre-existing restaurants. Baltimore currently requires all food trucks operating within its city to be more than 300 feet away from any competing business (Document D). Yet, this seems fairly extreme. Competition with similar markets has existed since capitalism was invented and wouldn't be the same without. I do see the point however, a mobile business sapping one's customers isn't pleasant, but it's an essential part of capitalism. This competition shouldn't violate existing laws though. In New Orleans, food trucks are allowed to operate within any proximity to existing businesses as long as they respect existing laws including parking meters (Document B). Opposed to Baltimore, New Orleans has adopted a more classic, capitalist approach to food trucks. As long as they don't break the law, competition with existing businesses by food trucks is fair. The regulation in New Orleans fosters much more of the growth in industry by competition than that in Baltimore, creating a diverse food industry in the area.

When regulating food trucks, it's important to note how they bring value to a city. Food trucks, by nature, bring a diversity to pre-existing food industries. These mobile restaurants often promote community with outdoor seating, resulting in a widespread community, according to Document F. The community strengthened by the presence of food trucks certainly does exist, yet the document misses an important point. Growth of community only happens in this respect because of the nature of the trucks, bringing a mobile approach to a static local food industry. Not to say that static is bad per se, but the competition these trucks bring allow one's local area to respond in kind, innovating. Development of this kind only happens when competition is abound, and with strict regulation like that in Baltimore, competition is much more of a static and slow process.

With this rise in food trucks in the past few decades, many things need to be thought of in the process of regulating the business. Regulation shouldn't impede on a food truck's operation, nor stifle potential for innovation through competition, but existing laws should be followed. Regulation should allow the growth of one's city, not impede it.

Sample 1C (1 of 1)

Food trucks have become a popular choice around growing cities. They're convenient, fast, and best of all, affordable. Due to food trucks being a recently "new" method for fast dining, people have yet to know how to properly regulate them and end up creating many regulations that can harm the business. The regulations set are helpful to navigate and illustrate how to open up the business, however, it ruins its ability to get more customers and harder to keep the food truck business open. Some factors can contribute to helping, but others do not.

Food trucks are the recently new thing that's been popular amongst the people, so creating the new regulations could be a difficult task. The most important ones should be keeping the truck clean and sterile. Especially in large cities, many food trucks can forget to clean the area, making it unsafe to eat the food without people knowing. These types of regulations are normal and expected. However, there are also dramatic laws made that upset many of the food truck workers. For example, the extreme parking regulations they have to follow such as, not being allowed to park YOUR truck next to a restaurant, even when you're paying all the taxes and fees. According to document D, it states, "And the Annapolis city council is considering a bill that would expand the areas where food trucks can park but prohibit them from setting up within 100 feet of an established restaurant." "I don't see anything constitutional about parking your food truck or mobile restaurant within those distances of restaurants that are there 365 days a year, paying taxes, utilities, et cetera." The parking regulations are seen to be unfair as they are paying for that truck and don't feel like it's fair to not place a food truck near restaurants, especially in big cities, where restaurants are placed all over. Other parking regulations that are important to consider is that the truck isn't allowed to remain in an area for over 4 hours, they need to obey all traffic laws, and have other limitations as where they can't park. These factors are important to recognize because it's making food truck drivers stress over where to place their business and paying even more fees on top of what they pay. According to the regulations on document B it writes "Vendors must obey all applicable parking, traffic and vehicle safety laws, regulations, and restrictions. This includes the feeding of parking meters. Mobile food trucks may not operate: within 20 feet of any intersection, within 20 feet of any stop sign..., within 3 feet of any public or private driveway...." These factors contribute to many food trucks needing to shut down because this causes their business to not be affordable.

Other factors to consider when regulating food truck establishments are the terms to be able to operate. These can definitely cause major headaches on the business owner. In document B the bullet points show how some of these regulations are limiting how many food trucks can open per year, the need for a completed application before allowing to open, close expiration/renewal dates, not being able to sell other things besides food, and more. Food truck operators are tired of this and end up closing. These regulations are important for the citizens too that love food trucks and don't want them to close either. In document C, it shows a chart representing the growth in food trucks from 2013-2018, symbolizing the citizens' growth in love for them as well. They can support the small business owners and help make the change.

Overall, these factors stated are the most important factors that can contribute to food trucks' growth in business. These establishments are new so it's not unexpected that many rules were put up in order for other safety concerns. However, I think it's finally time to realize that the food truck owners have created a great way of getting food and shows how all these regulations are highly unnecessary and should consider newer/more updated regulations.

Question 1

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

Students responding to this question were expected to read six sources on the topic of mobile food service establishments and then write an essay that synthesized material from at least three of the sources and developed their position on the most important factors for cities to consider when regulating mobile food service establishments. Students were expected to respond to the prompt with a thesis that takes a defensible position; uses evidence from at least three provided sources to support their line of reasoning clearly, properly citing the sources; explains how the evidence supports their line of reasoning; and uses 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 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.

Sample: 1A
Score: 1-4-1

Thesis (0–1 points): 1

The response presents a defensible position in the last two sentences of paragraph 1: “However, as the mobile food industry begins to evolve, it is extremely important that cities implement certain regulations on food trucks. Some of these restrictions may include the proximity to other restaurants, or the extent to which the features on food trucks can be manipulated outside of a standard truck in order to ensure that traditional restaurants are not being dominated and pushed out of their business.” These defensible claims establish important factors for cities to consider when regulating food trucks.

Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 4

The response offers specific evidence from three sources (D, B, E and A) in the form of paraphrase and reference to specific details, such as the direct quotation from Source D in paragraph 2, or the description of a “food truck decked out with tables and furniture” from Source E in paragraph 3. Claims are uniformly supported by evidence from the sources and the evidence is clearly connected to the claim. For example, in paragraph 2, the claim that proximity restrictions are important is supported by the evidence, “Unfortunately, however, it is emphasized in the food truck regulation guide of New Orleans that there is ‘no proximity restriction from restuarants for food trucks’ (Source B).” The connection between this piece of evidence and the claim that proximity restrictions are very important is clearly explained through the commentary: “As a result of this lack of regulation, however, sit-in restaruants may become jeopradized and overruled by food trucks.”

The response is organized with a line of reasoning established in the thesis statement. Paragraphs 2 and 3 each focus on different factors involving economic friction between food trucks and restaurants.

Question 1 (continued)

The final sentence of paragraph 3 reinforces this line of reasoning: “The only way to be sure that food trucks will not evolve into walking restaurants rather than their respective moving food service is for cities to place regulations on the food trucks such as restricting furniture and sitting options.”

The grammatical and mechanical errors in the response do not interfere with communication, and so do not restrict the response from a score of 4 in Row B.

Sophistication (0–1 points): 1

The response earned the point in Row C for crafting a nuanced argument that explores the inherent tension between food trucks and traditional establishments expressed by the sources. This tension is central to the line of reasoning throughout the response, which clearly identifies this tension and responds with the nuanced policy argument that: “Since food trucks have only recently become popular in cities, it is all the more important that rules and restrictions are put in place by cities as soon as possible in order to prevent any unfair conditions for restaurants that have been established much longer than mobile food services” (paragraph 4).

The response situates the argument of food truck regulation within the broader context of how cities chose to organize themselves by articulating the implication that urban economies are complex systems where regulations can have wide-ranging consequences.

Sample: 1B **Score: 1-3-1**

Thesis (0–1 points): 1

The response presents a thesis in the last two sentences of paragraph 1: “Food trucks are a valuable addition to the dining industry in many places, providing aspiring restaurant owners a realistic avenue for development. However, when regulating this industry, cities should consider how to keep them from impeding on existing establishments and laws as well as the value they provide in the particular city.” This statement responds to the prompt with the defensible position that cities should consider the economic impact and value to the community when regulating food trucks.

Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 3

The response provides specific evidence from at least three sources (D, B, and F) in the form of paraphrase and reference to specific words and details, such as the detail that “all food trucks operating within its city to be more than 300 feet away from any competing business” from Source D. Paragraphs 2 and 3 each support a distinct claim that is connected to the thesis statement and establish a line of reasoning that organizes the response. Paragraph 2 uses evidence from Sources D and B to support the claim that competition is already appropriately regulated, using food truck regulations in Baltimore and New Orleans. The response clearly explains that “As long as they don’t break the law, competition with existing businesses by food trucks is fair. The regulation in New Orleans fosters much more of the growth in industry by competition than that in Baltimore, creating a diverse food industry in the area.”

While evidence is uniformly provided from the sources to support all claims in the line of reasoning, the explanations fail to integrate a key claim. Paragraph 3 focuses on the value of food trucks in promoting community, which is supported by evidence drawn from Source F. However, the

Question 1 (continued)

explanation provided does not clearly connect the diversity food trucks bring “to pre-existing food industries” and the resulting promotion of “widespread community,” instead returning to the earlier discussion regarding the impact of competition.

Sophistication (0–1 points): 1

The response demonstrates sophistication by exploring complexity across sources, particularly in its comparison of food truck regulations in Baltimore and New Orleans. For example, the explanation that “Opposed to Baltimore, New Orleans has adopted a more classic, capitalist approach to food trucks” begins a nuanced discussion of how this has impacted the industry, and the response consistently develops this theme.

The response also explores the implications of food trucks within the broader context of civic goals, both in terms of economic theories (the role of capitalism in paragraph 2) and community spirit (paragraph 3). The summation returns to this idea: “Regulation should allow the growth of one’s city, not impede it.”

Sample: 1C
Score: 1-2-0**Thesis (0–1 points): 1**

The response presents a defensible thesis in the last two sentences of the first paragraph: “The regulations set are helpful to navigate and illustrate how to open up the business, however, it ruins its ability to get more customers and harder to keep the food truck business open. Some factors can contribute to helping, but others do not.” This takes a defensible position that responds to the prompt with the claim that regulations ought to help food trucks operate and that some factors contribute to this.

Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 2

The response does include specific evidence from three sources (D, B and C) in the form of direct quotations from D and B and a description of specific details in Source C. However, the response offers simplistic explanations of each rather than an explanation of how each supports the line of reasoning. For example, the paragraph 2 commentary regarding Source D explains “The parking regulations are seen to be un fair as they are paying for that truck and dont feel like its fair to not place a food truck near restaurants, especially in big cities, where restaurants are placed all over.”

The line of reasoning is also faulty as it shifts abruptly in paragraph 2 from factors cities should consider, such as “keeping the truck clean and sterile” to factors food truck owners should consider, including “extreme parking regulations” (paragraph 2) and “the terms to be able to operate” (paragraph 3). The response then shifts again to factors important to citizens: “a chart ... symbolizing the citizens growth in love for them.” The response does not explain the connections or progression between these ideas, nor the connection between these ideas and the thesis.

Question 1 (continued)

Sophistication (0–1 points): 0

The response does not explore complexities across the sources as part of its argument. While the response’s opening stance that “Some factors can contribute to helping, but others do not” begins to explore complexity, the idea is not developed and there is not a nuanced argument. The implication or limitations of the sources are also not explored with the response instead providing simplistic explanations.