

# Introduction to the Synthesis Essay

## IN THIS CHAPTER

**Summary:** An introduction to the synthesis essay and its purpose as it is presented on the AP English Language exam.



### Key Ideas

- ★ Learn how the synthesis essay differs from the argumentative and analysis essays.
- ★ Learn the process of dealing with many texts.
- ★ Learn the strategies that can be used to incorporate specific texts into your essay.
- ★ Learn the basics for constructing your response to the synthesis prompt.

## Some Basics

### What Is the Synthesis Essay on the Exam Like?

Basically, the student is presented with an introduction to and a description of an issue that has varying viewpoints associated with it. Accompanying this is a selection of sources that address the topic. These sources can be written texts that could include nonfiction, fiction, poetry, or even drama, as well as visual texts, such as photos, charts, artwork, cartoons, and so forth.

After carefully reading and annotating the sources, the student is required to respond to the given prompt with an essay that incorporates and synthesizes at least **THREE** of the sources in support of his position on the subject.

## What Is the Purpose of the Synthesis Essay?

The College Board wants to determine how well the student can do the following:

- Read critically
- Understand texts
- Analyze texts
- Develop a position on a given topic
- Support a position on a given topic
- Support a position with appropriate evidence from outside sources
- Incorporate outside sources into the texts of the essay
- Cite sources used in the essay

The synthesis essay is a chance to demonstrate your ability to develop a “researched idea,” using not only your personal viewpoint, but also the viewpoints of others. This essay is a reflection of your critical reading, thinking, and writing skills.

## What Kinds of Synthesis Essays Can I Expect?

The synthesis essay has two primary approaches.

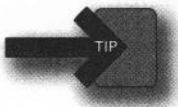
The first kind of synthesis essay is one you’re probably familiar with. This is the expository essay in which you develop your thesis and support it with specific examples from appropriate sources. You could develop this type of synthesis essay using any of the rhetorical strategies, such as:

- Compare and contrast
- Cause and effect
- Analysis

The second kind of synthesis essay presents an argument. Here, you take a position on a particular topic and support this position with appropriate outside sources, while indicating the weaknesses of other viewpoints.

You should be ready to write either of these two types of synthesis essays. Given the nature of the AP Language exam, however, it is more likely that you will be presented with a synthesis essay prompt that requires a response in the form of an argument.

The important thing is to practice composing both types of synthesis essays. Practice. Practice. Being familiar and comfortable with the synthesis process is the crucial factor.



Don’t be put off by the length and/or complexity of the introduction to the subject and the prompt. Remember, you are the one who will choose your position on the topic. And you are the one who chooses which sources to incorporate into your essay.

You can do this—AS LONG AS YOU ADDRESS THE PROMPT AND INCORPORATE AND CITE THE REQUIRED NUMBER OF SOURCES.

## How Is the Synthesis Essay Rated?

As with the other essays on the AP Language exam, the synthesis essay is rated on a 9-point scale that is based on the AP Reader’s evaluation of this first draft of an essay written in approximately 40 minutes. Here is a sample rubric for the synthesis essay.

A **9** essay has all the qualities of an 8 essay, and the writing style is especially impressive, as is the analysis and integration of the specifics related to the given topic and the given sources.

An **8** essay effectively and cohesively addresses the prompt. It clearly takes a position on the given topic and supports the claim using carefully integrated and appropriate evidence, including at least three of the given sources. The essay will also show the writer's ability to control language.

A **7** essay has all the properties of a 6, only with a more complete, well-developed, and integrated argument or a more mature writing style.

A **6** essay adequately addresses the prompt. The claim is on the given topic and integrates, as well as makes use of, appropriate evidence, including at least three references from the given sources. These elements are less fully integrated and/or developed than scores in the 7, 8, or 9 range. The writer's ideas are expressed with clarity, but the writing may have a few errors in syntax and/or diction.

A **5** essay demonstrates that the writer understands the prompt. The argument/claim/position about the given topic is generally understandable, but the development and/or integration of appropriate evidence and at least three of the given sources are limited, strained, or uneven. The writer's ideas are expressed clearly with a few errors in syntax or diction.

A **4** essay is not an adequate response to the prompt. The writer's argument indicates a misunderstanding, an oversimplification, or a misrepresentation of the assigned task. The writer may use evidence that is inappropriate or insufficient to support the argument, or use fewer than three of the given sources. The writing presents the writer's ideas, but it may indicate immaturity of style and control.

A **3** essay is a lower 4 because it is even less effective in addressing the question. It is also less mature in its syntax and organization.

A **2** essay indicates little success in speaking to the prompt. The writer may misread the question, only summarize the given sources, fail to develop the required argument, or simply ignore the prompt and write about another topic. The writing may also lack organization and control of language and syntax. (**Note: No matter how well written, a summary will never rate more than a 2.**)

A **1** essay is a lower 2 because it is even more simplistic, disorganized, and lacking in control of language.

## Timing and Planning the Synthesis Essay

### Before Writing

Before you begin to write your essay, you need to perform an important series of tasks.

**The first among these tasks is to wisely use the allotted, prewriting 15 minutes of reading time.**

- Read ALL three of the prompts
- Deconstruct the synthesis prompt
- Read and annotate each of the given texts related to the synthesis prompt
- Decide how you will address the synthesis prompt

**The second of these tasks is to be aware of the timing of writing your essay.** You've been told to open the test booklet and begin to write. Now what? Well, you've already read each of the three prompts and decided what position you're going to take on the synthesis essay. Here's what we recommend as a timeline for writing the synthesis essay:

- 5 to 6 minutes going back to the texts and deciding which you will use in your essay
- 8 to 10 minutes planning the support of your position
- 20 minutes writing the essay
- 3 to 4 minutes checking to make certain you've included at least the minimum number of sources and correctly cited each of them
- 3 minutes proofreading

## Working the Prompt



As with the analysis and argument essays, you **MUST** spend time carefully reading and deconstructing the prompt. This entails your carefully reading and looking for key words, phrases, and other information that make your task clear. **DO NOT FORGET TO READ ANY INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL PROVIDED.** The introduction will set up the situation and give you any needed background information. Plan to spend about three minutes carefully reading both the introduction and the assignment, and highlighting the important terms and elements of the prompt.

The following is the prompt from the Diagnostic Master exam.

A recent Supreme Court decision has provoked much debate about private property rights. In this decision, the court ruled that the city of New London was within the bounds of the *U.S. Constitution* when it condemned private property for use in a redevelopment plan. This ruling is an example of the classic debate between individual rights versus the greater good.

Carefully read the following sources, including any introductory information. **Then, in an essay that synthesizes at least three of the sources for support, take a position that supports, opposes, or qualifies the claim that the government taking property from one private owner to give to another for the creation of further economic development constitutes a permissible “public use” under the Fifth Amendment.**

Make certain that you take a position and that the essay centers on your argument. Use the sources to support your reasoning; avoid simply summarizing the sources. You may refer to the sources by their letters (Source A, Source B, etc.) or by the identifiers in the parentheses below.

- Source A (*U.S. Constitution*)
- Source B (*60 Minutes*)
- Source C (*Kelo* decision)
- Source D (Koterba, political cartoon)
- Source E (Broder)
- Source F (Britt, political cartoon)
- Source G (CNN and American Survey)

**DO THIS NOW.**

Time yourself for this activity.

Highlight the essential elements of the prompt.

How long did it take you? \_\_\_\_\_

Compare your highlighting with ours.



A recent Supreme Court decision has provoked much debate about private property rights. In it, the court ruled that the city of New London was within the bounds of the *U.S. Constitution* when it condemned private property for use in a redevelopment plan. This ruling is an example of the classic debate between individual rights versus the greater good.

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Notice we have highlighted or underlined the essential parts of both the introduction and the prompt itself. All other words and phrases are nonessential.

We now know a debate is centering around private property rights and public use for the greater good. We know the U.S. Supreme Court recently handed down a ruling supporting the principle of eminent domain, and we know we must take a position on this debate. And, lastly, we know we must choose at least three of the seven given sources.

## Developing the Opening Paragraph



Now that you are aware of what is expected of you, you can begin to plan your essay.

Before beginning the actual writing, we recommend you jot down a few notes about HOW you are going to present your material. There is no need to construct a formal outline. Simply create a brief listing of the major points you want to include and the order in which you will present them.

DO THIS NOW.

I have decided to use the following sources in my essay:

Source \_\_\_ A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D \_\_\_ E \_\_\_ F \_\_\_ G

When creating the opening paragraph, most student writers feel more in control if they:

- refer specifically to the prompt and/or introduction
- clearly state their position on the given topic

Now is the time to write your opening paragraph.

DO THIS NOW.

The position I'm going to take on this issue is \_\_\_\_ support \_\_\_\_ oppose \_\_\_\_ qualify

The following are three sample introductory paragraphs.

### A

Payday. As usual, the line at the bank drive-thru is a mile long, so Joe Citizen just sits and listens to the radio. This paycheck is especially important to him because it is the final payment on his castle—his home. Mr. Smith has a family waiting back at home for him. Even his dog will be happy to see Joe walk through the door. What Joe Citizen and his family don't know is this: waiting for Joe is a notice from his local government, a letter notifying him that his home and property are being taken, using the right of eminent domain. One has to ask, "Is this fair?" I think not.

### B

Every time that my grandparents visit, I have to vacate my bedroom, so they can have a room of their own during their visit. It's always a painful few days because I'm locked out of the room that I've decorated, the room that holds all of my things; it's the room that's "mine." As my mother always says, "It's for the good of the family." But, no matter how much I feel deprived, I always know that I'll have it back in a few days. However, the results would be different if she applied the principle of "eminent domain." I would lose my room permanently, and it would be turned into a real guest room. I would not be a happy family member.

### C

Today there is a wide-ranging debate about the individual's right to possess and protect his private property and the right of the government to seize a person's home and land needed for redevelopment that would benefit the entire community. Even though the principle of eminent domain is granted to the government in the *U.S. Constitution's* Fifth Amendment, it should be used only in the most extreme circumstances.

Each of the previous opening paragraphs could be used to begin the synthesis essay demanded of the eminent domain prompt.

- Each introduces the subject and its context.
- Each clearly indicates the writer's position on the issue.

Let's examine these paragraphs.

**Sample A** clearly states a position in opposition to eminent domain. This writer tries to place his opinion in the context of a generic man and his family. This brief paragraph begins to indicate the writer's voice. By answering the rhetorical question, the writer emphatically declares a position.

**Sample B** uses personal experience to present an opposing opinion. By placing the general concept of eminent domain in the context of a very personal experience, the reader hears a real voice that defends private property rights with some exceptions.

**Sample C** presents an objective statement of the subject and its context. There is no indication of the personal in this introduction, and the reader can expect the objectivity to continue as the writer develops his qualifying essay.

Which of these introductory paragraphs is similar to yours? Are there any changes you would make in your opening? If so, what are they?

## Developing the Body of the Essay



DO THIS NOW.

— Plan the body of your synthesis essay.

**Take a close look at the planning our writer did for this synthesis essay.**

**Position on issue:** qualifying position on eminent domain

**Sources to use:** (Refer to the sources given in the Diagnostic Master exam)

- ✓ Source A (*U.S. Constitution*)
- Source B (*60 Minutes*)
- ✓ Source C (*Kelo* decision)
- Source D (Koterba, political cartoon)
- ✓ Source E (Broder)
- Source F (Britt, political cartoon)
- ✓ Source G (CNN and American Survey)

**Points to make:**

1. The *Kelo* decision + the Fifth Amendment = right of eminent domain. Empathize with private property owners.
2. *60 Minutes* interview to support negative idea of what happens when eminent domain takes private property.
3. Get into the idea of the greater good. Use *60 Minutes* interview with the mayor and the Broder points about the need for urban development to help blighted areas.
4. Use the *Washington Times* survey to support my position of leaning toward those who oppose this type of use of eminent domain.

With these points in mind, our writer is now ready to compose the body of the synthesis essay.

### **Body Paragraph Based on Point 1 (*Kelo* + Fifth Amendment)**

Because of this experience, I can empathize with the home owners affected by the recent 5:4 Supreme Court decision *Kelo v. New London* that cited a section of the Fifth Amendment to the *U.S. Constitution* that states, “nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation” (Source A). The Court ruled that New London, Connecticut, was within its constitutional rights to take private property and give it to another private individual in order to further the economic development of the city (Source C).

- Uses a transition to refer to the opening paragraph
- States empathy with those affected by the *Kelo* decision and summarizes both the case and the Fifth Amendment
- Appropriately cites the sources as directed in the prompt

### **Body Paragraph Based on Point 2 (*60 Minutes* interview + negative attitude)**

Contrary to what the Court sees as “permissible public use” (Source C), I believe that a government taking a person’s home or business away and allowing another private individual or company to take it over goes against the idea of our private property rights. A good example of this is the situation in Lakewood, Ohio, where the mayor wants to condemn a retired couple’s home in order to make way for a privately owned, high-end condominium

and shopping mall. As Jim Saleet said in his interview with *60 Minutes*, “The bottom line is this is morally wrong . . . This is our home . . . We’re not blighted. . . . This is a close-knit, beautiful neighborhood” (Source B). The Saleets, who have paid off their mortgage, should be allowed to remain there as long as they want and pass it on to their children. Here, individual rights should prevail.

- Uses the transition device of repeating a phrase from the previous paragraph
- Maintains the personal with *I*
- Backs up personal position with the *60 Minutes* interview of the Saleets
- Appropriately cites the sources as directed in the prompt

#### **Body Paragraph on Point 3 (Qualifying + Broder + 60 Minutes and mayor)**

However, I must also take into consideration the need for cities and states to improve troubled urban areas and clear blighted sections with new construction, tax revenues, and jobs (Source E). If governments are blocked from arranging for needed improvements and income, decline of cities and other areas could result. For example, the mayor of Lakewood, Ohio, Madeleine Cain, claims that the city cannot make it without more tax money coming in. As she sees it, Lakewood needs more money to provide required services. “This is about Lakewood’s future. Lakewood cannot survive without a strengthened tax base,” Mayor Cain told *60 Minutes* (Source B). Here, it sounds like the greater good should prevail.

- Introduces ambivalence with the transitional word “however”
- Uses both the Broder source and the mayor’s words from the *60 Minutes* interview to illustrate and support the qualifying position
- Appropriately cites the sources as directed in the prompt

#### **Body Paragraph Based on Point 3 (Qualifying + Broder)**

Legal experts disagree about which of the two positions is the better one. Scott Bullock of the Institute for Justice sees the principle of eminent domain as an important one for government planning and building, but not for private development (Source E). On the other hand, John Echeverria, the executive director of the Georgetown Environmental Law and Policy Institute, sees a danger in legislators going to the extreme in the opposite direction and limiting essential powers of government. “The extremist position is a prescription for economic decline for many metropolitan areas around the country” (Source E).

- Transition created by referring to “the two positions”
- Uses the Broder source to give an overview of both sides of the issue
- Appropriately cites the sources as directed in the prompt and names authorities cited in the source material

*Note:* This is just one example of the many ways this synthesis essay could be planned and developed. The important thing to remember is **YOU MUST PLAN BEFORE YOU WRITE.**

#### **DO THIS NOW.**

Spend about 20 minutes writing the body of your essay. Make certain that your essay follows your plan and that you cite your sources.



## Writing the Conclusion

Now that you've written the intro and body paragraphs, you can't just drop your pen or leave your laptop and walk away. You need to end your essay with a final remark. This concluding idea is the last pertinent thought you want your reader to remember.



**ATTENTION. ATTENTION.** Avoid final paragraphs that are merely summaries. This is not a lengthy, complicated presentation. Your reader can remember what you've said in the previous paragraphs.

### DO THIS NOW.

Spend about five minutes quickly writing the concluding paragraph. Keep in mind what you said in your introduction and what you developed as your major points in the body of your essay.

#### **Now, take a look at our three sample conclusions.**

In the case of this synthesis essay, you'll recall that our writer wanted to make four major points. The body paragraphs developed three of those ideas. What to do with the fourth: "Use the *Washington Times* survey to support my position of leaning toward those who oppose this type of eminent domain."

Our writer realizes this could be an important source to solidify the qualifying position, and it brings both sides of the argument together.

The decision is made. Use Source G to develop the concluding paragraph. The following are three sample conclusions that make use of the survey.

#### **A**

It seems that there is no right position in all circumstances. According to a *Washington Times* survey, 60% of the American public is against local governments having the power to seize private homes and businesses (Source G). However, there may be times when the greater good has to win the toss.

#### **B**

Finally, 60% of the responders to a *Washington Times*/CNN survey opposed the right of eminent domain to local governments. Even though this may seem to be the most compelling position on this issue, there are going to be special circumstances when the greater good trumps private ownership.

#### **C**

Ultimately, I have to agree with the large majority of people who responded to recent polls conducted by both the *Washington Times* and CNN. When asked if local governments should be able to take over private homes and businesses, over 60% said "no" (Source G). But, I will have to be open to the possibility that public use and the greater good may, in some cases, be the only viable solution to a complicated problem.

Which of these concluding paragraphs is similar to yours? Are there any changes you would make in your ending? If so, what are they?

## Sample Synthesis Essay from the Master Exam

The following is the complete essay that our writer developed for the eminent domain synthesis prompt, which is found in the Master exam.

Every time that my grandparents visit, I have to vacate my bedroom so that they can have a room of their own during their visit. It's always a painful few days because I'm locked out of the room that I've decorated, the room that holds all of my things; it's the room that's "mine." As my mother always says, "It's for the good of the family." But, no matter how much I feel deprived, I always know that I'll have it back in a few days. However, the results would be different if she applied the principle of "eminent domain." I would lose my room permanently, and it would be turned into a real guest room. I would not be a happy family member.

Because of this experience, I can empathize with the home owners affected by the recent 5:4 Supreme Court decision *Kelo v. New London* that cited a section of the Fifth Amendment to the *U.S. Constitution* that states, "nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation" (Source A). The Court ruled that New London, Connecticut, was within its constitutional rights to take private property and give it to another private individual in order to further the economic development of the city (Source C).

Contrary to what the Court sees as "permissible public use" (Source C), I believe that a government taking a person's home or business away and allowing another private individual or company to take it over goes against the idea of our private property rights. A good example of this is the situation in Lakewood, Ohio, where the mayor wants to condemn a retired couple's home in order to make way for a privately owned, high-end condominium and shopping mall. As Jim Saleet said in his interview with *60 Minutes*, "The bottom line is this is morally wrong . . . This is our home . . . We're not blighted. . . . This is a close-knit, beautiful neighborhood" (Source B). The Saleets, who have paid off their mortgage, should be allowed to remain there as long as they want and pass it on to their children. Here, individual rights should prevail.

However, I must also take into consideration the need for cities and states to improve troubled urban areas and clear blighted sections with new construction, tax revenues, and jobs (Source E). If governments are blocked from arranging for needed improvements and income, decline of cities and other areas could result. For example, the mayor of Lakewood, Ohio, Madeleine Cain, claims that the city cannot make it without more tax money coming in. As she sees it, Lakewood needs more money to provide required services. "This is about Lakewood's future. Lakewood cannot survive without a strengthened tax base," Mayor Cain told *60 Minutes* (Source B). Here, it sounds like the greater good should prevail.

Legal experts disagree about which of the two positions is the better one. Scott Bullock of the Institute for Justice sees the principle of eminent domain as an important one for government planning and building, but not for private development (Source E). On the other hand, John Echeverria, the executive director of the Georgetown Environmental Law and Policy Institute, sees a danger in legislators going to the extreme in the opposite direction and limiting essential powers of government. "The extremist position is a prescription for economic decline for many metropolitan areas around the country" (Source E).

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governments should be able to take over private homes and businesses, over 60% said “no” (Source G). But, I will have to be open to the possibility that public use and the greater good may, in some cases, be the only viable solution to a complicated problem.

### Rubric for Eminent Domain Synthesis Essay

A **9** essay has all the qualities of an 8 essay, and the writing style is especially impressive, as is the analysis and integration of the specifics related to eminent domain and the given sources.

An **8** essay effectively and cohesively addresses the prompt. It clearly takes a position on eminent domain and supports the argument using carefully integrated and appropriate evidence, including at least three of the given sources. The essay will also show the writer’s ability to control language.

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A **1** essay is a lower 2 because it is even more simplistic, disorganized, and lacking in control of language.



## Sample Student Essays

### Student A

Eminent domain. Two little words that strike fear in the hearts of homeowners all over the country. But what exactly is it anyway? Eminent domain is the power of the government to take privately owned property away for “public use” as long as the original owners are given “fair” compensation for it. (Source A) However, the more the

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government exercises this power given to it by the Fifth Amendment, the more the public feels the need to curtail it.

I agree with those opposing this governmental sledge hammer. My parents own their own house and have spent much of their lives paying off the mortgage, and now it is finally ours. I would never want to give it away—just compensation or not. The same appears to be true for Jim and Joanne Saleet who live in Lakewood, Ohio, who in a *60 Minutes* interview described their feelings about their mayor, Madeleine Cain, deciding to invoke this right of eminent domain. The mayor's reason for seizing this house that the Saleets "plan to spend the rest of their days [in] and pass on to their grandchildren" is not to build a needed highway or a hospital. NO, it is to build a high-end shopping mall (Source B). This is hardly justifiable—the neighborhood being seized is just your basic middle class suburbia—much like the house you most likely live in. Much like the house 80% of America lives in.

Since the Saleets, their neighbors in Scenic Park don't want to leave, the mayor has labeled Scenic Park, ironically enough, as "blighted." This has created a negative picture of the area in the public's mind. Jim Saleet told *60 Minutes*, "You don't know how humiliating this is to have people tell you, 'You live in a blighted area,' and how degrading this is. . . . This is an area that we absolutely love." (Source B) The intent of the new classier condos and mall is to raise Lakewood's property tax revenues, but so far, by calling the area "blighted," all they have done is to lower the reputation of Scenic Park. As Mr. Saleet said, "This is morally wrong, what they're doing here. This is our home." (Source B)

Some might say, "Well, this is just one small town example with just one guy's opinion." This is hardly so. In a CNN commissioned survey of 177,987 voters, 66% of those who responded said that local government should never be able to seize homes and businesses. Only 33% said it should be permitted for public use, and only a measly 1% voted to allow eminent domain for private economic development. (Source G)

Cities have claimed that invoking the right of eminent domain is being done to further "the greater good." And, yet, as the CNN survey shows, the masses who are supposedly benefiting from it either are not feeling this greater good or just plain don't appreciate it. In either case, something tells me that if most people are not happy about a situation something ought to be done about it. (We are still living in a democracy aren't we?)

Some have tried to stop it. But, the Supreme Court ruled on February 22, 2005, in the case of *Kelo v. City of New London* that "the governmental taking of property from one private owner to give to another in furtherance of economic development constitutes a permissible 'public use' under the Fifth Amendment." (Source C) This decision not only went against what the vast majority of the public feels, but it also was made with a very narrow margin of 5:4. This is because the Fifth Amendment doesn't state any specifics regarding what public use is, only that the owner of the property seized must be duly compensated.

The Supreme Court's narrow margin of votes demonstrates how heavily disputed this topic is. The public feels that their individual rights are being infringed upon—and I'm on their side.



**Student B**

The debate over government's authority over private property and the seizing of it has been heard ever since the creation of the Constitution. For over two hundred years, both federal and local governments alike have been taking private property for public use (with compensation): a power known as eminent domain. While government officials have used this right to help build public services such as roads and railroad tracks, they have also used this power under the label of "economic development" to benefit private corporations that build these projects.

Government should be allowed to take private property only for the creation of public goods and services. This right is stated in the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution, which deals with the issue of private property rights (Source A). However, the term "public use" is ambiguous and is open for much interpretation. Eminent domain should be used to build services like roads and schools. As the nation grows, and new economic centers develop, there is a need for the creation of new roads. The land for these roads needs to be taken from somewhere, and often times the only option is to take land from private owners. A similar situation arises when towns need to build new schools because of growing population pressures. Scott G. Bullock of the Institute for Justice concurs when he says, "It [eminent domain] has an important but limited role in government planning and the building of roads, parks, and public buildings" (Source E).

Although the Supreme Court in *Kelo v. New London* ruled that eminent domain can be used to seize private property to sell to private buyers for economic development that would benefit a needy area (Source C), the results of this power can cause unnecessary displacement and pain for the individuals whose homes are part of this "buy out." The Saleets of Lakewood, Ohio, present one example of this situation. This couple has been living in their home for 38 years and feels that the government is morally wrong in trying to evict them from their house in order to create high priced condos and shopping malls. The area in question is not a run down locale; therefore, it doesn't need renovation. The mayor of Lakewood claims the city needs money, and that the "area can be used for a higher and better use" (Source B).

However, it can also be argued that there is always room for improvement when it comes to the use of land, especially because of the ever changing needs and desires of people and governments. The United States was built on the principle of capitalism and private enterprise. It is not run with a planned economy as communist nations are. Therefore, the economy should be allowed to take its own course without government interference. The invisible hand of the free market guiding the economy has led and will continue to lead to better outcomes for the entire society.

Additionally, because the government is run by the people and for the benefit of the people, the public's opinion should be taken into consideration. In a recent CNN poll, only 1% indicated that it affirms the right of eminent domain for private economic development. While the poll doesn't display everyone's opinion, it is a good indicator of the attitudes of American citizens (Source G).

Clearly, eminent domain shouldn't be invoked for economic development by private developers. It should be limited to the construction of public services. However, this debate over property rights, and in a sense, individual rights versus the greater good, will continue for years to come as the conditions and outlooks of the American people change. 6

## Rating the Essays

### Student A

This is a high-range essay for the following reasons:

- Opening forcefully catches the reader's attention and immediately identifies the subject
- Brings the reader into the conversation with the rhetorical question
- Presents a brief overview of both sides of the debate
- Integrates sources smoothly into the text of the essay
- Uses proper citations
- Utilizes transitions
- Exhibits control of language, for example: parallel structure, punctuation, parenthetical statements, and diction
- Recognizes the opposite position—"Some might say . . ."
- Employs irony to comment on textual material
- Incorporates not only sources, but also provides pertinent comments to develop the argument
- Presents a succinct and straightforward final point
- Presents a true voice

### Student B

This is a mid-range essay for the following reasons:

- Clearly takes a position on the issue
- Uses appropriate evidence
- Clearly incorporates sources into the text
- Cites the opposition (paragraph 4)
- Presents a personal opinion (paragraph 4)
- Develops a clear organizational pattern
- Uses good transitions
- Develops a final paragraph that makes a clear statement
- Uses a matter-of-fact voice
- Accomplishes the task demanded by the prompt

## Rapid Review

- Read ALL information in the prompt.
- Carefully read and annotate the prompt and the given texts.
- Choose your position on the issue.
- Choose suitable texts from among those given to support your position (choose at least three).
- Plan your essay.
- Write your essay in the allotted time.
- Check your essay to make certain you have cited your sources.
- Proofread.