

## AP Essay Prompts for '09-'10

### Essay 1:

Adversity has the effect of eliciting talents which in prosperous circumstances would have lain dormant.

—Horace

Consider this quotation about adversity from the Roman poet Horace. Then write an essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies Horace's assertion about the role that adversity (financial or political hardship, danger, misfortune, etc.) plays in developing a person's character. Support your argument with appropriate evidence from your reading, observation, or experience.

### Essay 2:

The passage below is from *The Worst Years of Our Lives* by Barbara Ehrenreich. Ehrenreich is writing about life in the 1980s. Read the passage carefully and then write an essay in which you support, refute, or qualify Ehrenreich's assertions about television. Support your argument with appropriate evidence.

Only after many months of viewing did I begin to understand the force that has transformed the American people into root vegetables. If you watch TV for a very long time, day in, day out, you will begin to notice something eerie and unnatural about the world portrayed therein. I don't mean that it is two-dimensional or lacks a well-developed critique of the capitalist consumer culture or something superficial like that. I mean something so deeply obvious that it's almost scary: when you watch television, you will see people doing many things—chasing fast cars, drinking lite beer, shooting each other at close range, etc. But you will never see people watching television. Well, maybe for a second, 15 before the phone rings or a brand-new, multiracial adopted child walks into the house. But never really watching, hour after hour, the way real people do.

Way back in the beginning of the television era, this was not so strange, because real people actually did many of the things people do on TV, even if it was only bickering with their mothers-in-law about which toilet paper to buy. But modern people, i.e., couch potatoes, do nothing that is ever shown on television (because it is either dangerous or would involve getting up from the couch). And what they do do—watch television—is far too boring to be televised for more than a fraction of a second, not even by Andy Warhol,\* bless his boredom-proof little heart.

So why do we keep on watching?

\* Artist and filmmaker known for using repeated images and for making movies dealing with time, boredom, and repetition

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### Essay 3:

Write an essay in which you identify Gaarder's and Magee's intended audiences. You should provide evidence for your findings through a discussion of the authors' diction, syntax, and organization.

**Essay 4: See attached**

**Essay 5: See attached**

**Essay 6:**

We have been discussing tone and assumptions. Your assignment is to choose one passage from either of the two works and determine the tone of the passage and the assumptions buried within the passage. When choosing a passage, you may focus on as little as one paragraph or on as much as one complete section. Be sure to use specific examples.

**Essay 7:**

Megee does not devote time to Jesus and Darwin. Gaarder does. This points to a fundamental difference between the "academic" and the "lay person." Explore this difference by commenting on how it is manifested in the two books as well as how it is manifested in history and modern society.

**Essay 8:**

Look closely at the Darwin section in Gaarder's book. Do some outside research and support, refute, or qualify his claims about Darwin

**Essay 9: See attached**

**Essay 10: See attached**

**Essay 11: See attached**