

2023



AP[®] Seminar

Free-Response Questions

Set 2

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AP SEMINAR

Part A

Suggested time — 30 minutes

Directions: Read the passage below and then respond to the following three questions.

1. Identify the author’s argument, main idea, or thesis. (3 points)
2. Explain the author’s line of reasoning by identifying the claims used to build the argument and the connections between them. (6 points)
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the evidence the author uses to support the claims made in the argument. (6 points)

Write your responses to Part A only on the designated pages in the separate Free Response booklet.

From “Your polyester sweater is destroying the environment. Here’s why”

By Adrienne Matei (*The Guardian*, October 23, 2020)

Last week, an exclusive report [in the British newspaper *The Guardian*] revealed that a mind-boggling 13.3 quadrillion microfibers (infinitesimal strands of fabric) were released into the California environment in 2019.

All fabrics release microfibers, whether they are organic, like hemp and wool, or synthetic, like polyester and acrylic. Since their discovery in 2011¹ by ecologist Mark Browne, much of the conversation surrounding microfibers has focused on synthetic fibers in particular. That’s because, as a product of the petrochemical industry, synthetic fabric is essentially plastic, making the microfibers it releases a form of microplastic pollution. As the California study suggests, plastic microfibers are a disturbingly abundant foreign substance in the Earth’s ecosystem—they make up 90%² of the microplastic pollution in the Atlantic Ocean, and are easily ingested by the tiny fish and plankton that support the entire marine ecosystem.

While larger pieces of plastic garbage in the ocean are largely attributed to poor waste management in rapidly developing economies, microfiber pollution is predominantly linked to wastewater from developed nations, according to an article recently published by the American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists. Clothing releases the most microfibers while being machine-washed, and many of those fibers elude filtration in treatment centers, ultimately ending up in waterways and oceans. One study³ from 2017 even found that 83% of global tap water samples contained microfibers.

So, is the solution to stop buying synthetic clothing?

“Shifting away from synthetic fabrics is one way to reduce microplastics in the ocean,” says Dr. Brian Hunt, a biological oceanographer at the University of British Columbia. “Decreasing the demand for synthetics would decrease production.”

¹ Mark Anthony Browne et al, “Accumulation of Microplastic on Shorelines Worldwide: Sources and Sinks,” *Environmental Science & Technology* 45, no. 21 (2011): 9175.

² La Daana K. Kanhai et al, “Microplastic abundance, distribution and composition along a latitudinal gradient in the Atlantic Ocean,” *Marine Pollution Bulletin* Volume 115, no. 1–2 (2017): 307.

³ Kosuth M, Mason SA, Wattenberg EV, “Anthropogenic contamination of tap water, beer, and sea salt,” *PLOS ONE* 13, no. 4 (2018).

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Recently, some retailers have marketed “anti-microbial” or “anti-odor” clothing they claim requires only infrequent washing; Hunt considers such initiatives, as well as a movement among eco-conscious consumers to buy more organic, natural fabrics, generally encouraging.

“But still,” he says, “there’s the question of: what happens with these new approaches? Everything we do has some kind of effect. Even with natural clothing, depending on how it’s treated, there might be some contributions to pollution in the ocean.”

Wool and cotton may be chemically processed; they also require much water and energy to produce. Buying lots of fancy new environmentally friendly gear is still less sustainable than sticking with what you already have. In the same sense, boycotting polyester is good, but let’s not forget the problem of microfibers is amplified by the amount of clothing we’re producing and buying on a macro level.

The emergence of fast fashion in the early 2000s introduced consumers to cheaply made, often synthetic clothing on a massive scale. A growing middle class has helped clothing production double in the last 15 years, according to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, an environmental charity; the global clothing industry is estimated to grow from \$1.9tn in 2019 to over \$3tn by 2030. Textile production is the world’s second-most polluting industry, behind only oil—and every year we prematurely discard \$400 billion worth of clothing.

Fashion corporations must be held accountable for implementing sustainable practices across their supply chains, including developing and using sustainable fabrics that do not emit microplastics. On a consumer level, we need to ensure the trend of resale continues its encouraging trajectory by shopping thrift and vintage, renting trendy and special occasion-wear, and consigning or donating our used clothing. We can also wash our clothing less frequently and in cold, quick cycles—this reduces microfiber shedding, and helps retain the clothes’ quality, too.

Did you know that you can often recycle old clothing almost the same way you recycle bottles and cans? In many places you can bring old clothes to specific textile recycling depots or sign up for a free recycling program. In 2018, a Hong Kong textile mill even pioneered a technology which recycles waste textiles into new yarn on an unprecedented scale. The technology caught the interest of fast-fashion giants like H&M.

With effort and innovation, microfiber pollution—among the other environmental ills caused by the fashion industry at large—can be reduced. As for the quadrillions of fibers the fabrics all around you are shedding: think of them the next time you catch yourself impulse shopping for a new outfit, and perhaps take a minute to reflect on whether you have enough, already.

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Part B**Suggested time — 1 hour and 30 minutes**

Directions: Read the four sources carefully, focusing on a theme or issue that connects them and the different perspective each represents. Then, write a logically organized, well-reasoned, and well-written argument that presents your own perspective on the theme or issue you identified. You must incorporate at least two of the sources provided and link the claims in your argument to supporting evidence. You may also use the other provided sources or draw upon your own knowledge. In your response, refer to the provided sources as Source A, Source B, Source C, or Source D, or by the author’s name.

Write your response to Part B only on the designated pages in the separate Free Response booklet.

Source A**From “Meet the 79-year-old man who lives alone on an Italian island”**

By Francesca Street (*CNN*, March 25, 2018)

Each day for the past 29 years, Mauro Morandi has woken up to a golden sunrise illuminating the Mediterranean Sea.

It’s a view that doesn’t grow old—and one Morandi doesn’t share with a single soul.

The enigmatic 79-year-old lives alone on the beautiful Isle of Budelli in the Maddalena archipelago of Italy. He’s called this slice of paradise his own since 1989, when he departed mainland Italy in an attempt to quit modern society and start anew.

After years of living in solitude, in recent years Morandi has opened up his corner of the world, taking striking photographs of Budelli’s landscapes and wildlife and showcasing them on his Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

Now, Morandi is as much of a draw for summer visitors as Budelli’s famous rose-colored sandy beach, La Spiaggia Rosa, but his quiet life remains almost unchanged since he first docked on the shores of this destination.

Morandi says his unconventional life is the result of a lifelong nonconformist streak. . . .

“I was a protester in ’68. Then I stopped engaging in politics because I realized I was not made for armed conflict, I hate weapons,” he says. . . .

“I started thinking about leaving a society that does not take the individual into account, but thinks only of power and money.”

Frustrated, Morandi made the decision to depart Italy, alongside a couple of friends.

“We took a catamaran to go to Polynesia to look for a desert island to start a new life,” he says.

Instead, the party landed on the blush-colored shores of Budelli, which lies between Corsica and Sardinia. . . .

When Morandi arrived in the late 1980s, he realized he had the perfect deserted island right in front of him. And as luck would have it, Budelli’s caretaker was about to retire.

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“And that’s how I took his place and found my Polynesia here,” he says.

Morandi became the island’s official guardian, monitoring the upkeep of Budelli and—at first—consciously avoiding summer daytrippers.

He inherited the tumbledown shack the former caretaker had lived in, and it’s been his home ever since.

“The first few years I was very standoffish,” recalls Morandi. “I did not want to communicate with anyone who came to see the pink beach, and I enjoyed all this beauty alone.”

As the years passed, Morandi mellowed.

“I felt a bit selfish and I wanted to share with the whole world what I consider one of the great beauties of nature,” he says. “Because I think like Dostoevsky that only beauty can save this world from man-made destruction.”

Morandi started to engage with the daytrippers who stopped off at Budelli on their boat tours of the seven Maddalena islands.

Now he gives tours and talks to guests in the summer months. He says he makes a particular effort to speak to children.

He cares about the environment—and stringently protects La Spiaggia Rosa, which due to erosion from frequent tourism has been cordoned off since the 1990s. Now visitors walk around the beach, leaving its famous sand untouched.

Morandi spends his days photographing island life, enjoying his own company and reflecting.

But his time enjoying this idyll might be coming to an end. Ownership of the island has changed several times over the last few years. Since 2016, Budelli has been a government-owned national park, rendering Morandi’s role obsolete.

“The island has been acquired by the state and I am here until the new president of the park decides what to do with me,” he says.

The authorities made Budelli part of La Maddalena National Park and installed Wi-Fi for visitors. Morandi might resent government interference, but he’s pleased he can now share his photographs on social media.

“I just get up in front of the sea to take pictures of the sunrise, have breakfast, I feed the two cats and then the hen,” he says. “Then I start working on the tablet to process photos, comment and answer questions, given that I have 5,000 Facebook friends.”

Morandi shares photographs of the sun rising and setting, the tide lapping over the sand, stormy skies and the pink-colored microorganisms that give La Spiaggia Rosa its name.

“I think that on Google Maps my photos have been viewed so far by almost 600,000 people,” says Morandi.

Thanks to his increased exposure, Morandi has become as much of an attraction to visitors as the beaches.

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“In the summer, the days are exclusively dedicated to communicating with tourists, who now come more than anything else to meet the ‘madman’ who lives alone on an island,” he says.

In the winter months, however, visitors remain infrequent. Morandi spends huge stretches of time alone. “I’ve never felt loneliness, because I’m fine by myself,” he insists.

He has family ties to Italy’s mainland, but remains committed to his life on Budelli. Ideally, he says, he’ll stay there for the rest of his life. . . .

Courtesy CNN

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Source B

From “How your college friendships help you—or don’t”

By Janice M. McCabe, Associate Professor of Sociology, Dartmouth College (*The Conversation*, December 14, 2016)

College students spend a tremendous amount of time with their friends. One estimate suggests that the average college student spends only 15 hours a week in class but 86 hours a week with his or her friends.

But how much do we understand about the role friendships play and how they influence students both academically and socially? . . .

How networks influence us

We all know how important social networks can be in our lives—they can impact our health, happiness, wealth, emotions and even weight. Indeed, as social scientists Nicholas A. Christakis and James H. Fowler describe in their recent book, *Connected*, social networks play a role in everything that people “feel, think, and do.”

One important part of social networks is the connections. We can be tied to people in many ways, including family, friends, coworkers or less intense connections.

For example, some four decades ago, sociologist Mark Granovetter showed the importance of “weak ties”—that is, connections with people we do not even know well, who are mere acquaintances—in finding a job. His work was important in showing that it’s not just having someone in your network but the type of tie that matters. . . .

I focused on a person’s friends and the connections between friends. In doing so, I found three network types, each of which came with particular benefits and potential costs.

Mapping college networks

I started a study about college networks because I felt that friendships are one of the most overlooked and crucial aspects influencing students’ success. In 2004, I interviewed 82 students at “MU,” a pseudonym for a large public four-year university in the midwestern United States, about their friendships.

This was a diverse group of students—white, black, and Latina/o men and women of different class backgrounds, who were involved in a range of campus organizations (including some who were not in any organizations). Each of these students named between three and 60 friends.

I collected information about each friend and the connections between each friend—thus mapping the network of friendships.

I categorized each student into one of three network types: tight-knitters, compartmentalizers and samplers. . . .

So what are these networks and how do they work?

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A tight-knit network

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The tight-knitters have one densely woven friendship group, where nearly all of their friends know each other. One tight-knitter I met was Alberto, a Latino man whose friendship group included hometown friends and the new friends he made at MU. He referred to them as a “family.”

His friends helped him cope with some racist incidents on campus. Alberto talked with his friends about these incidents, for example, discussing times that professors and peers made what Alberto called “derogatory” and “offensive” comments about Latinos.

In Alberto’s case, his tight-knit group of friends provided both academic and social support: they studied together, provided emotional support around academics and engaged in stimulating intellectual conversations.

However, not all tight-knit networks provide similar support. Some could also distract students. I found that for half of tight-knitters, friends were more of a distraction than a helping hand. For example, they distracted each other from attending class and from studying. As Latasha explained, she could be trying to study, but seeing a friend sleeping makes her tired, and she ends up sleeping instead.

Behavior was most contagious in tight-knit networks—both the academically helpful behaviors of Alberto’s friends and the distracting behaviors of Latasha’s friends spread easily. I found tight-knit networks had the potential to have the most powerful impact on academic and social outcomes.

A network of clusters

A second group that I called “compartmentalizers” had networks divided into two to four clusters, where friends knew each other within clusters but rarely across them.

For example, Mary, a white middle-class student, “compartmentalized” her friends into two clusters—friends from home and friends from MU—who provided different types of support.

Mary felt supported socially by her hometown friends, but the friends in her sorority also provided some emotional support regarding academics. Her main source of academic support, however, came from acquaintances, not friends, who met in class, shared notes and quizzed each other before exams. Unlike tight-knitters who only had one group of friends providing multiple types of support, compartmentalizers had multiple groups with each providing different types of support.

In general, compartmentalizers came from more advantaged backgrounds, experienced greater ease on campus and succeeded in college with less support from friends as compared to those with other network types.

One challenge of this network type was keeping up with each cluster. For example, Jim told me, “I’m worried that if I don’t hang out with my friends enough, they’re gonna stray away from me.” He felt that he’d already “lost contact” with his hometown friends, and he was struggling to keep up with his schoolwork along with his two clusters of MU friends.

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Individual friendships

A third network category, “samplers,” collected friends one by one from a variety of places, such as campus organizations, classes and workplaces, resulting in friends that were less connected to one another.

While many tight-knitters and compartmentalizers found friends helping them thrive academically and socially, samplers achieved academic success independently.

One sampler I met was Steve, a black man from a working-class background. Steve formed individual friendships at events, food courts and other campus locations. Like many students of color I interviewed, Steve described experiencing race-based isolation on campus.

However, like other samplers, Steve rarely discussed these isolating experiences with friends and remained isolated. Steve also felt lonesome in his academic pursuits. Despite having many friends and being involved on campus through a range of student organizations, Steve felt alone socially and academically at MU. . . .

So, what does it mean?

Friends matter for students’ academic and social success. As the examples of Alberto, Mary and Steve show, each network type comes with particular benefits as well as drawbacks during college and beyond.

Students need to be aware of their networks and how that is helping or hindering them. . . .

“How your college friendships help you—or don’t” by Janice M. McCabe, from *The Conversation*. © 2016. Used by 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).

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Source C

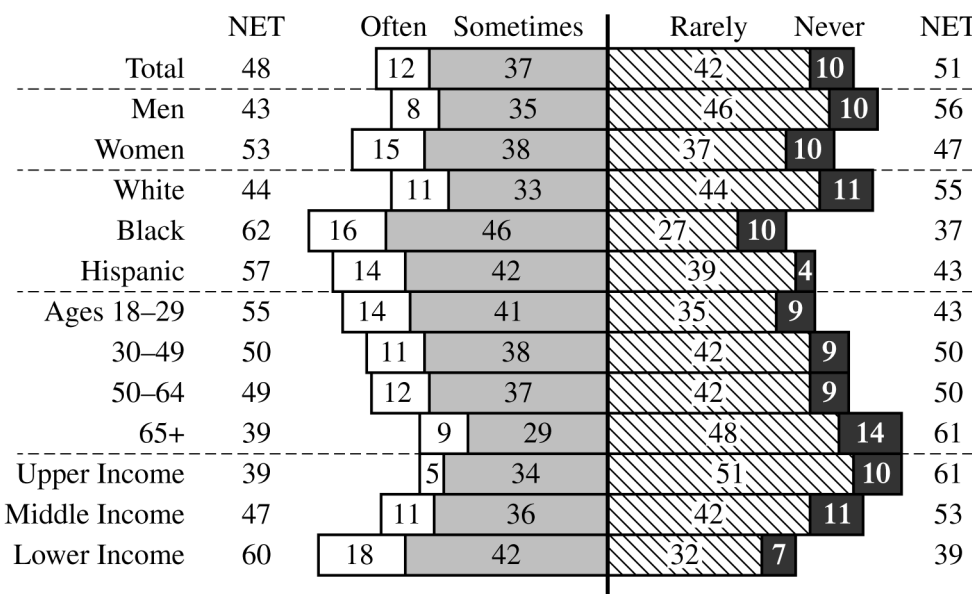
From “Navigating technological challenges”

By Colleen McClain, Emily A. Vogels, Andrew Perrin, Stella Sechopoulos and Lee Rainie (*Pew Research Center*, September 1, 2021)

With increased demands placed on home internet connections and the nation’s internet infrastructure during the pandemic, the quality and affordability of home internet connections became a focus for users on several fronts. About half of U.S. broadband users say they have struggled with their connections, and roughly three-in-ten upgraded their connections during the pandemic. Some broadband users worry about the ongoing expense of connectivity. And at a time when the internet became a platform for social, workplace, educational and commercial activity, portions of Americans also report they have difficulty independently and effectively using tech devices.

Majority of U.S. broadband users with lower incomes report at least sometimes experiencing problems with their internet connection

% of home broadband users who say they ___ experience problems with the speed, reliability or quality of their high-speed internet connection at home in a way that makes it hard to do the things they need to do online



Note: Figures may not add to subtotals due to rounding. White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Family income tiers are based on adjusted 2019 earnings. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 12–18, 2021.

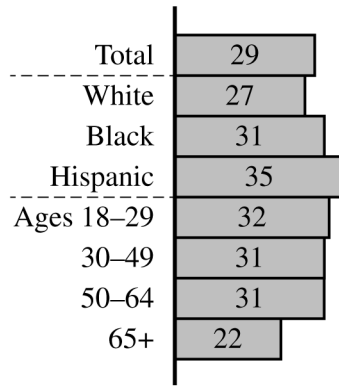
“The Internet and the Pandemic”

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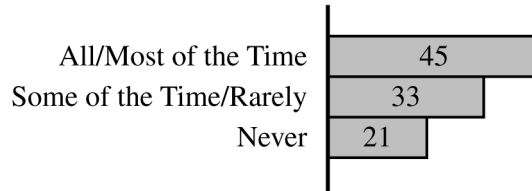
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29% of home broadband users have done something to improve their internet since the start of the pandemic

% of home broadband users who say they have done something to improve the speed, reliability or quality of their high-speed internet connection at home since the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak in February 2020



Employed broadband users currently working from home ...



Note: “Employed” refers to those who say they are currently employed full or part time. White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Family income tiers are based on adjusted 2019 earnings. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 12–18, 2021.

“The Internet and the Pandemic”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Source: Navigating technological challenges by COLLEEN MCCLAIN, EMILY A. VOGELS, ANDREW PERRIN, STELLA SECHOPOULOS AND LEE RAINIE. 2021. Pew Research Center.

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Source D

“No Man is an Island”

By John Donne (1624)

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory¹ were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

¹ a high point of land or rock projecting into a body of water

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