

2002 AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE
QUESTIONS (Form B)

Question 3

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

The passage below is an excerpt from *What Are People For?* by Wendell Berry. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you support, refute, or qualify Berry’s argument. Use appropriate evidence to develop your position.

To ask a still more obvious question, what is the purpose of this technological progress? What higher aim do we think it is serving? Surely the aim cannot be the integrity or happiness of our families, which we have made subordinate to the education
Line 5 system, the television industry, and the consumer economy. Surely it cannot be the integrity or health of our communities, which we esteem even less than we esteem our families. Surely it cannot be love of our country, for we are far more concerned about the desecration of the flag than we are about the desecration
10 of our land. Surely it cannot be the love of God, which counts for at least as little in the daily order of business as the love of family, community, and country.

The higher aims of “technological progress” are money and ease. And this exalted greed for money and ease is disguised and
15 justified by an obscure, cultish faith in “the future.” We do as we do, we say, “for the sake of the future” or “to make a better future for our children.” How we can hope to make a good future by doing badly in the present, we do not say. We cannot think about the future, of course, for the future does not exist: the existence of
20 the future is an article of faith. We can be assured only that, if there is to be a future, the good of it is already implicit in the good things of the present. We do not need to plan or devise a “world of the future”; if we take care of the world of the present, the future will have received full justice from us. A good future is implicit in
25 the soils, forests, grasslands, marshes, deserts, mountains, rivers, lakes, and oceans that we have now, and in the good things of human culture that we have now; the only valid “futurology” available to us is to take care of those things. We have no need to contrive and dabble at “the future of the human race”; we have
30 the same pressing need that we have always had—to love, care for, and teach our children.

And so the question of the desirability of adopting any technological innovation is a question with two possible answers—not one, as has been commonly assumed. If one’s motives are
35 money, ease, and haste to arrive in a technologically determined future, then the answer is foregone, and there is, in fact, no question, and no thought. If one’s motive is the love of family, community, country, and God, then one will have to think, and one may have to decide that the proposed innovation is undesirable.

(1990)

END OF EXAMINATION