

# Free-Response Scoring Guidelines

When grading your exam, the AP Computer Science A grader will compare your code for each question to the rubric for each question. After this process is complete, penalty points may be deducted from your score based on the list below. A penalty point can only be deducted once per question (even if you make the same mistake multiple times in the same question). You can't get a negative total. These are the most current set of guidelines as of the 2015 exam. Be aware that they are sometimes modified from year to year.

## **General Penalties** (assessed only once per problem)

- 1 using a local variable without first declaring it
- 1 returning a value from a void method or constructor
- 1 accessing an array or ArrayList incorrectly
- 1 overwriting information passed as a parameter
- 1 including unnecessary code that causes a side effect like a compile error or console output

## **No Penalty** (*These may change from year to year!*)

- Extra code that doesn't cause any problems or doesn't print to the console
- Minor spelling mistakes such as "wile" for "while"
- Code that includes private or public on a local variable
- Forgetting to put public when writing a class or constructor header
- Accidentally using the mathematical symbols for operators ( $\times$ ,  $\bullet$ ,  $+$ ,  $\leq$ ,  $\geq$ ,  $<>$ ,  $\neq$ )
- Accidentally using "=" rather than "==" and vice versa
- Confusing length with size for either String, ArrayList, List, or array
- Accidentally putting the size in array declaration such as `int[25] myArray = new int[25];`
- Missing a semicolon if you write the majority of them and you provide proper spacing
- Missing curly braces when your indenting is proper and you used them elsewhere
- Accidentally forgetting to put parentheses on no-argument method or constructor calls
- Forgetting to put parentheses on if statements or while loops provided indenting is proper

Note: Suppose your code declares `"Bunny bunny = new Bunny()"` and then uses `"Bunny.hop()"` instead of `"bunny.hop()"`. The mistake is not treated as a grammatical error. Instead, you will not earn points, because the grader is not allowed to assume that you know the difference between "Bunny" and "bunny" in the context of this problem.