

2023

AP[®]



AP[®] English Language and Composition

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

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Free-Response Question 2

- Scoring Guidelines**
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Rhetorical Analysis**6 points**

On May 21, 2016, the poet Rita Dove delivered a commencement address to graduating students at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, where she was a professor of English at the time. Dove received a Pulitzer Prize for her poetry and served as the United States poet laureate from 1993 to 1995. She also writes in a variety of genres including fiction and drama. The following is an excerpt from her speech. Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Dove makes to convey her message about what she wishes for her audience of graduating students.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the rhetorical situation.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

| Reporting Category | Scoring Criteria | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Row A Thesis (0–1 points)</p> | <p>0 points</p> <p>For any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no defensible thesis. The intended thesis only restates the prompt. The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt. | <p>1 point</p> <p>Responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices.</p> |
| Decision Rules and Scoring Notes | | |
| <p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only restate the prompt. Fail to address the rhetorical choices the writer of the passage makes. Describe or repeat the passage rather than making a claim that requires a defense. <p>Examples that do not earn this point:</p> <p>Restate the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Former poet laureate Rita Dove, a professor of English at the University of Virginia, gave the commencement speech there in 2016.”</i> <p>Make a claim but do not address the writer’s rhetorical choices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Dove considers this particular commencement speech to the graduating class at the University of Virginia to be ‘personal’ because she teaches there.”</i> <p>Repeat provided information from the passage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Dove tells her audience of graduating students that they need to step out of their comfort zone and be 150% prepared for what comes ahead.”</i> | | <p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt <u>and</u> clearly articulate a defensible thesis about the rhetorical choices Dove makes to convey her message about what she wishes for her audience of graduating students. <p>Examples that earn this point:</p> <p>Present a defensible thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Rita Dove uses allusions, personal examples, and a friendly tone to convey her message to her audience of new graduates.”</i> <i>“Comparing herself to a ‘wily genie,’ Dove structures her speech through a series of ‘wishes’ to convey her advice to the graduating students.”</i> <i>“Under the guise of giving her audience of graduating students wishes instead of advice, Dove imparts advice and life lessons through examples both from her own life and from the lives of others.”</i> |
| <p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. The thesis may be anywhere within the response. For a thesis to be defensible, the passage must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn’t do so to earn the thesis point. A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning. | | |

| Reporting Category | Scoring Criteria | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| <p>Row B Evidence AND Commentary (0–4 points)</p> | <p>0 points Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.</p> | <p>1 point EVIDENCE: Provides evidence that is mostly general. AND COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student’s argument.</p> | <p>2 points EVIDENCE: Provides some specific, relevant evidence. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.</p> | <p>3 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning. AND Explains how at least one rhetorical choice in the passage contributes to the writer’s argument, purpose, or message.</p> | <p>4 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning. AND Explains how multiple rhetorical choices in the passage contribute to the writer’s argument, purpose, or message.</p> |
| Decision Rules and Scoring Notes | | | | | |
| <p>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are incoherent or do not address the prompt. • May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant. | <p>Typical responses that earn 1 point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to focus on summary or description of a passage rather than specific details or techniques. • Mention rhetorical choices with little or no explanation. | <p>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities. • May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument. • May make one point well but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim. • Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established. | <p>Typical responses that earn 3 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage to build an argument. • Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. • Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim. | <p>Typical responses that earn 4 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. • Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage to build an argument. • Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained. • Explain how the writer’s use of rhetorical choices contributes to the student’s interpretation of the passage. | |
| <p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row. • To earn the fourth point in this row, the response may observe multiple instances of the same rhetorical choice if each instance further contributes to the argument, purpose, or message of the passage. | | | | | |

| Reporting Category | Scoring Criteria | |
|---|---|---|
| Row C Sophistication (0–1 points) | 0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point. | 1 point Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation. |
| | Decision Rules and Scoring Notes | |
| | Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt to contextualize the text, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>In a world where . . .</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time . . .</i>”). • Only hint at or suggest other arguments (“<i>While some may argue that . . .</i>” OR “<i>Some people say . . .</i>”). • Examine individual rhetorical choices but do not examine the relationships among different choices throughout the text. • Oversimplify complexities in the text. • Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance their analysis. | Responses that earn this point may demonstrate sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation by doing any of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explaining the significance or relevance of the writer’s rhetorical choices (given the rhetorical situation). 2. Explaining a purpose or function of the passage’s complexities or tensions. 3. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive. |
| Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference. | | |

Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page. 11:10

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

and ~~with~~ ~~parallelism~~ ~~and anecdotes~~ In her speech, DOVE, a renowned poet, employs ~~anecdote~~, diction ~~and~~ ~~parallelism~~ ~~and~~ ~~anecdotes~~ in order to advise college graduates on the key values, such as intellectual curiosity, effort, and bravery, ^{she deems} that ~~are~~ necessary for navigating the world.

Dove's utilization of ~~ambiguity~~ ~~diction~~ ~~often~~ ~~through~~ ~~her~~ ~~inert~~ ~~curiosity~~ ~~engagement~~ ~~and~~ ~~paired~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~parallelism~~ ~~of~~ ~~her~~ ~~3~~ ~~points~~. Through the parallelistic structure of her three main points, Dove ~~she~~ shares with the audience of college students that she "wishes you...hunger, hard work, [and] uncertainty" (Dove). Although initially these wishes ~~are~~ are interpretable as ~~negatives~~ their denotation and appear to be ill-omens, Dove explains the ~~connotative~~ ^{figurative} ~~and~~ ^{figurative} meanings which serves to keep the audience attentive. By ~~catching~~ ^{surprising} the audience, Dove is able to clarify her meaning, explaining how when she wished the audience hunger she did not "mean physiological want, but a continued spiritual and intellectual appetite" (Dove). ~~By~~ ~~differentiating~~ the meaning allows Dove to explain the importance of possessing a desire to learn and take advantage of "follow[ing] what attracts you" (Dove). This piece of advice serves to inspire students that learning is a continual practice and should actively continue post-college. Additionally, ~~hard~~ ~~work~~ Dove explained that "hard work" does not "mean back-breaking labor", but instead gaining "an appreciation

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- Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Question 1 Question 2 Question 3



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for the work that comes before the big slow" (Dove). This strength has her utilization of direct language creating hard work to mean something that serves a celebrated process, therefore, encouraging people to put effort and enjoy hardships. Similarly, Dove introduces ^{negative} uncertainty to not mean something ~~that relates to~~ but instead of comfort because she explains that "Sometimes you don't ~~even~~ know where you're going, but the only way you'll find out is if you get going" (Dove). The quotation illuminates that despite doubt, an individual must be bold to reach out of their comfort zone and grow. Through these ~~ambiguous~~ multi-faceted words, Dove ~~employs~~ inspires her audience to put a ~~twist on and more~~ possess a more positive outlook on the challenges.

Furthermore, Dove employs her message of the importance and efficiency of her values through ~~personal~~ anecdotes. Dove shares her father's pep talk of putting "150%" effort into everything one does in order to express its applicability and impact on both her and her father. ^{As} The first African-American research chemist, Dove's father, ~~she~~ understood the importance of hard work and holding oneself accountable. From this, Dove learned the importance of putting in effort and accountability which she shared through telling her own story of how through each stage of her life, from ^{troubling} ~~troubling~~ ~~times~~ when

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Question 1

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

"giving ~~high school graduation~~ ^{class presentations in high school} to being
 "awarded the Pulitzer Prize" + being named "Poet Laureate"
 to joining the "White House celebration" she always used
 the 150th effort rule. By ~~explaining~~ ^{demonstrating} the power of
 her father's message through both her and her
 father's stories, Dove not only explains the process,
 but also the effects and impacts gaining her
 argument credibility.

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0035115



Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

The poet Rita Dove delivered a speech to her graduating students at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville on May 21, 2016. The purpose of the speech was to give Dove a chance to state her wishes for her graduating class. In order to convey her message, Dove makes an appeal to her audience's emotions, states some of her own personal experiences, and says short sentences specifically stating her wishes.

To begin her speech, Dove makes a personal connection with her audience full of her students. Dove says, "Although I have given commencement speeches before, this one is different; this is personal." By making this statement, Dove is able to connect with her students on a deeper level. The phrase "this is personal" shows how much Dove truly cares for her students, and shows how the students have impacted her life. Later on in the speech, Dove states, "So instead of advice, I will give you wishes. Don't think of me as a ordinary fairy godmother or a wily genie." This statement establishes a personal relationship between Dove and her students. It informs her students that she will be there whenever they need her, just like a "fairy godmother." Making personal connections with the audience allows Dove to grasp their attention and pay attention closer to watch she is saying.

Throughout the speech, Dove uses her own personal experiences and personal wishes to convey her message. Dove

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● **Important:** Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Question 1 Question 2 Question 3



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

Clearly states each of her wishes to her students in her speech, and puts them in bold letters on paper. Dove states that she wishes her students "hunger," "hard work," and "uncertainty." After stating each of her wishes, Dove elaborates on what she means by those words. The short statements for each wish show that these are Dove's main concerns. Dove also uses personal experiences to convey her message. She summarizes up the main idea of one of her conversations with her dad and tells this to her students. By doing this, she is passing down information that was useful to her in her success. She wants nothing but the best for her students, and she does this by giving out personal information.

Dove connects with her readers on different levels to show that she cares for them and wants them to succeed in whatever it is that they do once they leave school.

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0293548



● Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Question 1 Question 2 Question 3



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

Rita Dove uses a few rhetorical devices during this poem to showcase on how she became and how she wants us the reader to succeed in life as well. She uses the devices tone and ethos to really help hook the audience in. She uses tone so show that she is serious she is asserting her self showing that she generally wants this for her students and she backed up her tone by using ethos to connect with her audience through emotion by speaking on her past and sharing and comparing on how she was in the past but by her giving that 150% her father talked about it shaped who she is as a person for her future. Rita Dove shares this past with the audience and information so that one day they will go 150% and they will be able to "get going" and make a successful life for themselves without having to forcefully ~~get pushed~~ step out of their comfort zones.

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0534727



Question 2

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain grammatical errors.

Overview

Students responding to this question were expected to read a 2016 commencement address given by Rita Dove about wishes she has for her graduating students, and then write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Dove makes to convey her message about what she wishes for her audience of graduating students. Students were expected to respond to the prompt with a thesis that presented a defensible position; provide evidence to support their line of reasoning; explain how the evidence supported their line of reasoning; and use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating their argument.

As per the Course and Exam Description, students were expected to read and understand the rhetorical situation, discuss the speaker’s rhetorical choices for that particular rhetorical situation, explain how the writer/speaker’s rhetorical choices contributed to the purpose of the address, identify and describe their claims, and analyze and select the appropriate evidence to support their claims.

Sample: 2A

Score: 1-4-0

Thesis (0–1) points: 1

Paragraph 1 functions as the defensible thesis: “In her speech, Dove, a renowned poet, employs anecdote, and diction in order to advise college graduates on the key values, such as intellectual curiosity, effort, and bravery that she deems necessary for navigating the world.”

Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 4

The response provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. For example, in paragraph 2 the response explains how “ambiguous diction” operates in Dove’s presentation of wishes that initially appear to be “ill-omens” but in fact describe useful values: “Differentiating the meaning [of spiritual from physiological hunger] allows Dove to explain the importance of possessing a desire to learn and take advantage of ‘follow[ing] what attracts you’ (Dove).”

The response supports its interpretation of the passage using specific rhetorical choices from Dove’s speech, noting that “Dove employs her message of the importance and efficiency of her values through anecdotes” (paragraph 3) and elaborating that these anecdotes illustrate the real-life application of the values Dove wishes for students, e.g., “As the first African-American research chemist, Dove’s father, understood the importance of hard work and holding oneself accountable.”

The response focuses on the importance of specific words and details such as “hunger,” “hard work,” and “uncertainty” to build an argument about the rhetorical choices Dove makes to convey her message: “Through these multi-faceted words, Dove inspires her audience to put a possess a more positive outlook on the challenges” (paragraph 2).

Sophistication (0–1 points): 0

Although it consistently identifies and explains rhetorical choices, the response does not display a particularly complex understanding of the rhetorical situation. It acknowledges the relationship of the speaker with the audience but does so in a generalized way, focusing on how Dove’s choices

Question 2 (continued)

“inspire” listeners or lend her argument “credibility.” Although the response demonstrates effective control of language, it does not demonstrate a consistently persuasive or vivid style.

Sample: 2B

Score: 1-3-0

Thesis (0–1) points: 1

The defensible thesis is found in paragraph 1: “The purpose of the speech was to give Dove a chance to state her wishes for her graduating class. In order to convey her message, Dove makes an appeal to her audience’s emotions, states some of her own personal experiences, and says short sentences specifically stating her wishes.”

Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 3

The response analyzes the ways in which Dove establishes and uses a “personal” address to the graduating students. It develops a line of reasoning about this personal focus using specific words and phrases from the passage to build its argument. For example, the response explains how the phrase “this is personal” establishes a close connection between Dove and the audience and advances Dove’s purpose of bestowing wishes on the students graduating from her own university: “The phrase ‘this is personal’ shows how much Dove truly cares for her students, and shows how the students have impacted her life” (paragraph 2).

The commentary, however, fails to integrate some evidence into the analysis of Dove’s speech. For instance, although the response mentions the specific reference to the fairy godmother, it misunderstands Dove’s use of this figure, making the unsupported claim that she wants students to understand “she will be there whenever they need her, just like a ‘fairy godmother.’” Similarly, the response mentions Dove’s wishes for “hunger,” “hard work,” and “uncertainty” but offers commentary on these wishes that is general and vague: “The short statement for each wish shows that those are Dove’s main concerns” (paragraph 3).

Sophistication (0–1 points): 0

The response does not demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the rhetorical situation, limiting the discussion to Dove’s rhetorical choices and her need to maintain the audience’s attention. Although it discusses Dove’s relationship to her audience, it does so in a somewhat simplistic way, repeating claims about how Dove “makes a personal connection with her audience” and “wants nothing but the best for her students.” The response does not address the passage’s complexities or tensions, nor does it employ a consistently vivid or persuasive style.

Sample: 2C

Score: 1-1-0

Thesis (0–1) points: 1

The response offers a vague but defensible thesis in the first two sentences: “Rita Dove uses a few rhetorical devices during this poem to showcase on how she became and how she wants us the reader to succeed in life as well. She uses the devices tone and ethos to really help hook the audience in.”

Question 2 (continued)

Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 1

The evidence that the response offers consists mostly of general description and is disconnected from the thesis. For example, although the response mentions tone as a rhetorical choice, it does not describe Dove’s tone or explain how she establishes it. The most specific references to Dove’s rhetorical choices do not function to develop the analysis. For example, the response references the “150% her father talked about” and quotes the words “get going,” but this evidence is not explained in a way that supports the argument.

Sophistication (0–1 points): 0

Because it makes only generalized references to Dove’s speech, the response is unable to explain the significance or relevance of Dove’s rhetorical choices in terms of a broader context or identify the purpose of complexities in the speech. Its style is neither vivid nor persuasive.