

2023

AP<sup>®</sup>



---

# AP<sup>®</sup> English Language and Composition

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

### **Inside:**

#### **Free-Response Question 3**

- Scoring Guidelines**
- Student Samples**
- Scoring Commentary**

## Argument Essay

6 points

In a 2018 interview about the importance of collaboration, then United States Representative Carlos Curbelo stated: “If you’re trying to convince someone that they need to get involved in an issue or perhaps change their thinking on an issue, trying to scare them is not always effective and can actually sow resentment.”

Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Curbelo’s claim about persuading others is valid.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
- Provide evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p><b>Row A</b> <b>Thesis</b> <b>(0–1 points)</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b> For any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no defensible thesis.</li> <li>The intended thesis only restates the prompt.</li> <li>The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim.</li> <li>There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt.</li> </ul>	<p><b>1 point</b> Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.</p>
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>		
<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only restate the prompt.</li> <li>Do not take a position, or the position is vague or must be inferred.</li> <li>State an obvious fact rather than making a claim that requires a defense.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respond to the prompt by taking a position on the extent to which Curbelo’s claim about persuading others is valid, rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt. Clearly take a position rather than just stating that there are pros/cons.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Do not take a position</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Sometimes presenting someone with information that frightens them is effective in getting them to see your point of view and sometimes this tactic backfires.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Address the topic of the prompt but are not defensible—it is an obvious fact stated as a claim</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“People can be persuaded by many things.”</i></li> </ul>		<p><b>Examples that earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Present a defensible position that responds to the prompt.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Former U.S. Representative Curbelo correctly points out that scare tactics are not effective when trying to foster collaboration.”</i></li> <li><i>“Although trying to frighten someone into changing their mind might be considered bullying in many instances, there are some situations where the only way to make people see reason is to present them with the unpleasant, and often scary, truth.”</i></li> <li><i>“It’s interesting that Carlos Curbelo points out that trying to scare people into doing what you want can foster resentment, because often the original attempt to scare someone is a result of resentment—resentment that the other person doesn’t think the same way you do—and that is never a good position upon which to develop a collaborative relationship.”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity.</li> <li>The thesis may be anywhere within the response.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>		

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

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<b>Row C</b> <b>Sophistication</b> <b>(0–1 points)</b>	<b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<b>1 point</b> Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.
	<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>	
	<b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attempt to contextualize their argument, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>In a world where . . .</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time . . .</i>”).</li> <li>• Only hint at or suggest other arguments (“<i>While some may argue that . . .</i>” OR “<i>Some people say . . .</i>”).</li> <li>• Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the argument.</li> </ul>	<b>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:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Crafting a nuanced argument by consistently identifying and exploring complexities or tensions.</li> <li>2. Articulating the implications or limitations of an argument (either the student’s argument or an argument related to the prompt) by situating it within a broader context.</li> <li>3. Making effective rhetorical choices that consistently strengthen the force and impact of the student’s argument.</li> <li>4. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.</li> </ol>
	<b>Additional Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	

● **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.

Fear is a powerful motivator that has been used for good and ill for as long as humans have walked the Earth. As a small child you're taught to fear fires, ~~cars~~ lightning, and cars when you cross the street as a safety measure. ~~But~~ However, using fear as a motivator or reasoning ~~to~~ in attempting to change minds or incite positive change rarely works. Attempting to persuade others through fear is rarely effective, and can even sow resentment, inhibiting positive change from occurring.

When I was younger, ~~fear was~~ my parents <sup>unsuccessfully</sup> attempted to scare me into ~~not going outside~~ obeying them with threats of privileges, ~~time~~ being taken away or ~~plain~~ just being shut in my room. ~~These often~~ It didn't work. If anything, their trying to scare me into doing "the right thing" only made me more determined to do the opposite. Any positive changes I could have made to be safer as a child were fought against solely because I didn't like being scared into doing things. I did indeed resent my parents for trying to control me through fear, and that kept any of the good they were attempting to enact from taking root. If reasoning and explanations were given when what I perceived as completely unfair and ~~and~~ unnecessary ~~rules~~ rules were told to me, perhaps I would have been more receptive. Instead, the fear instilled in me turned to anger and resentment towards the people who tried to change my mind, namely my parents.

~~The lack of success that using fear as~~ The use of fear as a motivator was also proven to be unsuccessful in the Cold War.

Page 7

Use a pen with black or dark blue ink only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

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.

between the United States and the Soviet Union, which began at the close of World War Two. Upon discovering that the United States had nuclear weapons, the Soviets stole the secrets of the technology and made their own in response. This thievery and creation of the most powerful weapons known to man at the time was driven by fear. The fear of nuclear war and massive destruction brought about a huge spike in the production of the nuclear weapons that had incited the problem. And in addition to fear of death from nukes that most Americans experienced in this time, there was also suspicion and resentment towards anything perceived as "Red" or Communist. The worry that the Soviets would kill Americans with nuclear weapons morphed into resentment, which was another motivating factor behind the increased numbers of nuclear warheads in America. It was not until the 1960s that a slight compromise was reached and levels of fear decreased, which led to even more cooperation in the 1990s, ~~and~~ when the number of nuclear weapons was reduced and controlled. This positive change and involvement in the issue that nuclear weapons created was not brought about by fear, but by a wish for a better future and willingness to cooperate with others in working towards ~~the~~ a common goal.

While fear is often seen as an amazing motivator that drives people ~~to reach solutions and to~~ allows people to be persuaded easier and faster, this is simply not the case. The use of fear to persuade others rarely allows for real positive change and persuasion to occur. Most often it causes the opposite, as seen

Page 8

Use a pen with black or dark blue ink only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

0044478



● **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.

in personal experience and in global affairs, especially regarding the Cold War.

Use a pen with black or dark blue ink only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.



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.

While trying to support your own argument, using scare tactics may ~~prove~~ prove to be beneficial. Although it allows your thoughts to be manipulated in a less positive way than some might deserve.

Sometimes scaring people into success works whether its for a sport, bad decision, or serious real-life issues. Take the sport of volleyball, no matter how many times a player could be told to hit cross court instead of down the line, if they aren't putting in a considerable amount of effort to fix that problem, it won't change. Now add an ultimatum, if you don't hit down the line, you're getting screamed at after practice, staying after to take everything down, and losing your starting position.

By adding incentive, you might notice a change in hearts. Maybe after scolding them, and punishing them their attitude will change and without additional reminders, they'll complete the task. Just like in sports, using fright as a tactic can influence change.

All around the world there are debates of climate change resulting from ~~emissions~~ suppluses of CO<sub>2</sub> being emitted into the atmosphere. Views regarding the affects it'll have on the earth are pretty controversial. Hundreds of people think its a sham and its completely false; others think that without change, it'll be detrimental to the survival of earth along with ~~the~~ mankind. But for the people who refuse to believe it, there is no convincing them until they

Page 6

Use a pen with black or dark blue ink only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

- **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.

see it with their own eyes. The people who fail to care for the earth might only be able to be convinced if they fear for what is coming, <sup>because</sup> ~~but~~ without that fear of messing up, we wouldn't be able to hold anybody to certain standards. If someone is failing to see the bigger picture, the only thing that may effect them may be them fearing for their own well-being & future.

The way I see it, using fear as a tactic to get what you want can be useful and be resorted to if nothing else seems to work. Although it may be unenjoyable for some of the participating partners, it most likely will provide successful results.

Page 7

Use a pen with black or dark blue ink only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

● 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.

Collaborations are a great way to get different perspectives as well as multitude of ideas. Collaboration can be a fun experience for many ~~people~~ however, it can often lead to conflict. Due to there being many opinions and ideas, people tend to forget that their own ~~opinion~~ thinking isn't the only option which lead to issues. Even though there may be a difference in opinion, attempting to score on individual can lead to more conflict and resentment. is not an effective method and can cause further issues.

Collaborative work requires individuals to be open ~~wide~~ minded in order to avoid forcing ~~on~~ their own opinions on someone. A vast majority of people who collaborated, gather multiple ideas in order to accomplish something greater than what the individual could've done by themselves. One of the biggest ~~stress~~ ~~case~~ examples are animators. Animators ~~are~~ for shows, cartoons, etc, are required to collaborate with multiple people to make their projects come to life. ~~Every~~ Every person on the team usually have different experiences and different ideas which need to be established in order to progress. Many animators quit due to them being forced into a singular idea. In collaborations ideas are meant to be heard which can't be accomplished when a singular person is in charge of forcing their opinion on others. Another example being the ~~medical~~ <sup>engineering</sup> field. The ~~medical~~ ~~field~~ ~~is~~ ~~also~~ ~~known~~ ~~as~~ ~~an~~ ~~engineering~~ ~~field~~ requires multitude of ideas to be shared across in order to resolve an issue.

Page 7

Use a pen with black or dark blue ink only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

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.

Collaboration ~~can~~ can also ~~reduce~~ reduce heavily ~~of~~ effect work flow as well as reduce motivation of others if there is no cooperation between everyone. Another example being the engineering field, which requires ~~at~~ heavy amounts of collaborative work. They tackle multiple aspects of a singular issue that ~~every~~ multiple people have input on. Everyone's work is ~~not~~ considered ~~in~~ order find easier ways to fix the issue. Since this field requires ~~not~~ ~~to~~ listen people to listen to each other, if one person tries to overpower the workflow gets disrupted. The ~~very~~ small conflict can lead to bigger problems such as not being able to resolve the issue, slower work, no other inputs, etc. The forceful behaviour reduces the progression in work and delays issue that would be solved with collaborative work since the workers resent.

~~Though~~ Both examples ~~also~~ demonstrate the

Page 8

Use a pen with black or dark blue ink only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

0418889



### Question 3

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

#### Overview

Students responding to this question were expected to read a quote about persuading others from a 2018 interview with Carlos Curbelo and then write an essay that argued their position on the extent to which Curbelo’s claim about persuading others is valid. 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 be able to select evidence to develop and refine their claims, use appropriate approaches of organization and reasoning to support their argument, and make stylistic choices that advance the argument.

#### Sample: 3A

**Score: 1-4-1**

#### Thesis (0–1) points: 1

The response concedes that fear can be a valuable motivator before presenting its defensible thesis in paragraph 1: “However, using fear as a motivator or reasoning in attempting to change minds or incite positive change rarely works. Attempting to persuade others through fear is rarely effective, and can even sow resentment, inhibiting positive change from occurring.”

#### Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 4

The response supports its claims with evidence drawn from the student’s own life (paragraph 2) and the history of nuclear proliferation during the Cold War (paragraph 3). Both main claims are developed using specific details. In paragraph 2, the response explains how the student’s parents encouraged doing “the right thing” using fear of consequences. Their efforts had the opposite of the intended effect: “It didn’t work. If anything, their trying to scare me ... only made me more determined.” In paragraph 3, the fear-driven development of nuclear weapons is shown to have a destructive rather than a protective result: “The fear of nuclear war and massive destruction brought about a huge spike in the production of the nuclear weapons that had incited the problem.”

The explanations of the evidence are clear, as seen in paragraph 2’s discussion of the importance of “reasoning and explanations.” Paragraph 3 delves into not only the immediate impact of “fear of death from nukes” but also the “suspicion and resentment” that resulted, contrasting that result with the “slight compromise” and decreased “levels of fear” in the 1960s, which in turn “led to even more cooperation in the 1990s.” In both examples, the response consistently explains how the chosen evidence contributes to the argument. A clear line of reasoning links the two examples to the main claim about ways that fear can be an “unsuccessful” motivator.

#### Sophistication (0–1 points): 1

While the response does not situate the argument within a broader context, the style is vivid and persuasive. Paragraph 2 provides an example of the response’s persuasive style: “If reasoning and explanations were given when what I perceived as completely unfair and unnecessary rules were told to me, perhaps I would have been more receptive.” Paragraph 3 provides another example, while

**Question 3 (continued)**

also identifying a complexity in the historical situation under discussion: “The fear of nuclear war and massive destruction brought about a huge spike in the production of the nuclear weapons that had incited the problem.” The response explores the complexities of how fear inhibits cooperation. Paragraph 3 moves from how fear leads to resentment, leading to more fear, and then explores how this cycle can be stopped and a different one started: “slight compromise” then leads to “more cooperation.” The paragraph then accounts for why this is: “a wish for a better future and a willingness to cooperate with others in working towards a common goal.”

**Sample: 3B****Score: 1-3-0****Thesis (0–1 points): 1**

Paragraph 1 as a whole functions as the defensible thesis: “While trying to support your own argument, using scare tactics may prove to be beneficial. Although it allows your thoughts to be manipulated in a less positive way than some might desire.”

**Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 3**

In paragraphs 2 and 3, the response provides sufficient evidence to support its argument. The example in paragraph 2 is hypothetical but specific, presenting the possibility of “getting screamed @ after practice, staying after to take everything down, and losing your starting position” as fear-based motivators for an athlete. The evidence in paragraph 3 about “CO<sub>2</sub> being emitted into the atmosphere” also supports the claim about the potential effectiveness of scare tactics.

The commentary about “failing to see the bigger picture” in paragraph 3 supports the line of reasoning, explaining that “[t]he people who fail to care for the earth might only be able to be convinced if they fear for what is coming, because without that fear of messing up, we wouldn’t be able to hold anybody to certain standards.” The sports example in paragraph 2 is not as uniformly and thoroughly developed. For example, the commentary about the sports example does not integrate the evidence to support the claim: “Just like in sports, using fright as a tactic can influence change.”

**Sophistication (0–1): 0**

While the response has a clear focus that fear can be an appropriate tactic to “be resorted to if nothing else seems to work” (paragraph 4), it does not demonstrate a consistently persuasive or vivid style. It does not explore complexities or tensions about the topic. Despite using examples that are both personal and worldly, the response also does not situate the argument itself within a broader context.

**Sample: 3C****Score: 1-1-0****Thesis (0–1 points): 1**

The response includes a defensible thesis is at the end of paragraph 1: “Even though there may be a difference in opinion, attempting to scare an individual is not an effective method and can cause further issues.”

### **Question 3 (continued)**

#### **Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 1**

The response makes several assertions about collaboration; for example, in paragraph 3 it notes, “Collaboration can also heavily effect work flow as well as reduce motivation of others if there is no cooperation between everyone.” However, it does not explain how the views expressed or the evidence for them relates to the thesis. The evidence itself is mostly general with broad generalities about “animators” and the “engineering field.”

#### **Sophistication (0–1 points): 0**

There is no attempt to explore complexities and tensions, and the response does not discuss the implications or limitations of the argument. It mentions a “difference of opinion” in the introduction, but this is merely a phrase and not indicative of any consistent sophistication of thought. The style is not particularly vivid or persuasive.