

## AP English Language

### 2020 Free-Response Scoring Guidelines (applied to 2018 questions)

#### Question 2: Rhetorical Analysis

6 points

In 1997, then United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright gave the commencement speech to the graduating class of Mount Holyoke College, a women’s college in Massachusetts.

Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Albright makes to convey her message that perseverance can make a difference.

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Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row A Thesis (0-1 points)</p> <p><b>1.A</b></p> <p><b>4.B</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b></p> <p>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></p> <p>Responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices.</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>The intended thesis only restates the prompt.</li> <li>The intended thesis fails to address the rhetorical choices the writer makes.</li> <li>The intended thesis simply describes or repeats the text rather than making a claim that requires a defense.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Restates the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Madeleine Albright reads the commencement letter to the graduating class.” [Sample E]</li> <li>“Albright uses rhetorical strategies in her speech.”</li> </ul> <p><b>Makes a claim, but does not address the writer’s rhetorical choices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“...her speech give [sic] clear evidence that war is coming to an end.” [Sample C]</li> </ul> <p><b>Repeats provided information from the passage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“In paragraphs 15-21 it talks about how they can do what they set their mind to just the children graduating.” [Sample C]</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The thesis responds to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt <u>and</u> clearly articulates a defensible thesis about the rhetorical choices the writer makes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“By contrasting hypotheticals and reality, providing examples and personal anecdote, and strong repetition of the word ‘persevere’, Albright successfully conveys her message to these graduates that they must continue the fight for rights in the face of opposition and that they will succeed.” [Sample H]</li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The thesis may appear anywhere within the essay.</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>		

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<p><b>Row B Evidence AND Commentary</b></p> <p><b>0-4 points</b></p> <p><b>1.A</b></p> <p><b>2.A</b></p> <p><b>4.A</b></p> <p><b>6.A</b></p> <p><b>6.B</b></p> <p><b>6.C</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b></p> <p>Simply restates thesis (if present).</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Repeats provided information.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Provides examples that are generally irrelevant and/or incoherent.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b></p> <p>Summarizes the text without reference to a thesis.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Provides non-specific references to the text.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Provides references to the text that are vaguely relevant.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Provides little or no commentary.</p>	<p><b>2 points</b></p> <p>Makes textual references (direct quotes or paraphrases) that are relevant to the thesis.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Provides commentary; however, it repeats, oversimplifies, or misinterprets the cited information or evidence.</p>	<p><b>3 points</b></p> <p>Makes textual references (direct quotes or paraphrases) that are relevant to the thesis.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Provides commentary that explains the relationship between evidence and the thesis; however, commentary is uneven, limited, or incomplete.</p>	<p><b>4 points</b></p> <p>Makes textual references (direct quotes or paraphrases) that are relevant to the thesis.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Provides well-developed commentary that consistently and explicitly explains the relationship between the evidence and the thesis.</p>
	<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>				
	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are incoherent and do not address the prompt.</li> <li>May offer just opinion with little or no evidence provided.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 1 point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are predominantly restatements of ideas in the text (no analysis). <i>[Sample E and Sample B]</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide commentary that links the evidence to the thesis but suggests misunderstanding of the passage or misrepresentation of the rhetorical choices made. <i>[Sample G]</i></li> <li>Provide evidence and commentary that are unconvincing (makes assertions or assumptions that are not really supported by the text). <i>[Sample D]</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 3 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide commentary that is developed and insightful in places but there are occasional lapses into description or minor inaccuracies. <i>[Sample A]</i></li> <li>Provide commentary that is clear but there are times when the link between the textual evidence and the thesis may be strained.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 4 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide commentary that engages the details of the text to draw conclusions about rhetorical choices. <i>[Sample F]</i></li> <li>Integrate evidence from the text throughout to support the student's analysis. <i>[Sample H]</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <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>				

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<p>Row C Sophistication (0-1 points)</p>	<p><b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for 1 point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b> Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.</p>
<p><b>2.A</b> <b>4.C</b> <b>6.B</b> <b>8.A</b> <b>8.B</b> <b>8.C</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b></p>	
	<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attempt to contextualize the text, but such attempts consist of predominantly sweeping generalizations (“<i>In a world where...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time...</i>”).</li> <li>Only hint or suggest other arguments (“<i>While some may argue that...</i>” OR “<i>Some people say...</i>”).</li> <li>Examine individual rhetorical choices but do not examine the relationships among different choices throughout the text. <a href="#">[Sample A and Sample D]</a></li> <li>Oversimplify complexities in the text.</li> <li>Use complicated or complex sentences or language that are ineffective in that they do not enhance their analysis.</li> </ul>	<p><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></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crafting a thesis that demands nuanced consideration of textual evidence to prove – and then successfully proves it.</li> <li>Explaining the significance or relevance of the text’s purpose within a broader context. <a href="#">[Sample H and Sample F]</a></li> <li>Engaging concession, rebuttal, and/or refutation of other arguments relating to the thesis.</li> <li>Recognizing and accounting for contradictions or complexities within the text. <a href="#">[Sample H and Sample F]</a></li> <li>Making effective rhetorical choices that strengthen the force and impact of the student’s argument. <a href="#">[Sample H]</a></li> <li>Utilizing a prose style that is especially vivid, persuasive, convincing, or appropriate to the student’s argument.</li> </ol>
	<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This point should be awarded only if the demonstration of sophistication or complex understanding is part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.</li> </ul>	