

Question 2

Suggested time—40 minutes

(This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

Simu Liu is an actor who has starred in television shows and movies, including *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*. His 2022 memoir, *We Were Dreamers: An Immigrant Superhero Origin Story*, describes his experiences as a Chinese immigrant in Canada. Liu’s parents emigrated to Canada from China when Liu was a baby, leaving him with his grandparents. In the following excerpt from Liu’s memoir, the family is getting the four-year-old Liu ready to reunite with his father and travel to Canada himself. Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Liu makes to convey his message about the experience of preparing to emigrate from China.

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.

In the summer of 1993 I noticed that my English flash card lessons were starting to pick up, along with talk that my departure date to Canada was drawing even nearer.

5 I didn’t like that one bit.

My whole family—my yéye, nǎinai, gūgu, gūfū,¹ even my cousin JingJing—spoke of this “Canada” as if it were some sort of idyllic paradise, a place of abundant snacks and endless affection.

10 “You can eat whatever you want,” Nǎinai would say, as if I didn’t already have pretty regular access to all of my favorites on Héxìnglù.²

“You will finally reunite with your parents,” my gūgu added reassuringly, as if I didn’t already have
15 five amazing people around me who loved me.

Looking back, it felt kind of cult-y, like gospel from the Church of Canadology that I was supposed to just accept. I played along, even though I was still rough on the exact terms of this proposition. Sure, I
20 welcomed the thought of meeting more members of my family . . . but I had no idea that said new family members would come at the cost of everyone that I knew and loved.

So, with about as much agency as any
25 four-year-old possessed, I kept on, ever the obedient child, dutifully memorizing my English flash cards.
苹果 (píngguo)—Apple. 猫 (māo)—Cat. 香蕉

(xiāngjiāo)—Banana. 爸爸妈妈 (bàbamāma)
—Parents, whom I would meet in the winter.

30 An air of excitement permeated our household in the days leading up to my father’s arrival in late December. Word had come to us that Bàba³ would fly over to pick me up and escort me back to Canada, while Māma would meet us at the airport once we
35 landed in Toronto. If my grandparents were dreading letting me go (they were), they went to great lengths not to show it. We made a big WELCOME BACK sign in giant letters and hung it on our door. I wore my nicest clothes on the day, an outfit of absolute fire
40 consisting of a collared rugby shirt with blue and purple stripes, a pair of brown overalls with yellow polka dots and a vest that looked like a burlap sack. That’s right, I was pattern clashing way before it was cool.

45 My gūgu and gūfū came over and we prepared a feast that filled our little round table: white mushrooms with sliced pork, large tail-on shrimp, bean curd, soy-sauce ribs and Russian-style red sausage—my father’s favorite, apparently.

50 The food is starting to get cold when we hear a little knock on our door. I perk up anxiously as my yéye answers, opening the door to reveal a scrawny, square-faced man with bowl-cut hair wearing a big cozy sweater along with the bleary gaze of exhaustion

55 that comes after an eighteen-hour train ride from Beijing. This man who resembles an Asian Eric Forman from *That '70s Show* is my bàba, the man who I had waited my entire four-and-a-half-year life to reunite with.

60 This is the man who is going to bring me to the promised land of Canada.

“Máomao!”⁴ It’s me!”

I freeze.

I had imagined this moment in my head many
65 times, as I’m sure my father had. I wanted to run to him, embracing him enthusiastically and without any reservations, as any child would run to their own father—but I just . . . *can’t*. Everything about this man is foreign to me, from his voice to his smell. I had
70 only seen his face in photographs, only heard recordings of his disembodied voice. He feels almost like a celebrity, someone I recognize from somewhere, but who is himself unknown and unknowable.

75 I scurry to my nǎinai’s side nervously. I’m sure my

father was a little disappointed, but he respected my space, taking only a small step toward me.

“Do you know who I am?”

I ponder this for a moment.

80 “You . . . you are Zhenning Liu.”⁵

Everyone around me bursts out laughing. The ice is broken, and I laugh along, even though I don’t get the joke. “Zhenning Liu” is exactly who this man is to me; not “Dad,” not “Father,” not “Bàba” . . . but a

85 stranger, an acquaintance at best.

Slowly, over the next few days, it dawns on me that this stranger is going to take me away from my family, my home and everything that I have ever known.

¹ grandfather, grandmother, aunt, uncle

² Hexing Street

³ Father

⁴ Chinese nickname for a small child

⁵ the father’s full name

Begin your response to this question at the top of a new page in the separate Free Response booklet and fill in the appropriate circle at the top of each page to indicate the question number.

Question 3

Suggested time—40 minutes

(This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

In a 2019 interview, award-winning poet and memoirist Jimmy Santiago Baca asserted: “In America we value possessions. We would much rather talk about a new car than talk about a story that happened between grandfather and me. We’d much rather get on the computer and play video games and enact some cataclysmic¹ epic² than to talk about the epics in our own lives.”

Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Baca’s claim about the value of possessions is valid.

¹ destructive on a large scale

² a narrative or story of grand proportions

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.

Begin your response to this question at the top of a new page in the separate Free Response booklet and fill in the appropriate circle at the top of each page to indicate the question number.

Rhetorical Analysis**6 points**

Simu Liu is an actor who has starred in television shows and movies, including *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*. His 2022 memoir, *We Were Dreamers: An Immigrant Superhero Origin Story*, describes his experiences as a Chinese immigrant in Canada. Liu's parents emigrated to Canada from China when Liu was a baby, leaving him with his grandparents. In the following excerpt from Liu's memoir, the family is getting the four-year-old Liu ready to reunite with his father and travel to Canada himself. Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Liu makes to convey his message about the experience of preparing to emigrate from China.

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	
Row A Thesis (0–1 points)	0 points For any of the following: <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. 	1 point Responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: <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. 	Responses that earn this point: <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 Liu makes to convey his message about the experience of preparing to emigrate from China.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “When he was a baby, Simu Liu’s parents left him to emigrate from China to Canada.” Make a claim but do not address the writer’s rhetorical choices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “In his memoir, Simu Liu conveys the difficulties of being uprooted from one country to emigrate to another.” Repeat provided information from the passage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “When he was preparing for his emigration to Canada, four-year-old Simu Liu had to learn many new things, including a new language.” 	Examples that earn this point: Present a defensible thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Simu Liu uses humor, descriptive language, and narration to convey his mixed feelings about emigrating to a different country.” “In his memoir, Liu shifts between the innocence of a four-year-old child and the wisdom of his adult self to describe his experiences meeting his father again and preparing to move to Canada.” “Simu Liu was, like many child immigrants, not given a choice in his own future when his parents decided to emigrate to a different country. Through the specific narrative examples he chooses to discuss in this excerpt, Liu conveys the hesitance, unwillingness, and confusion he felt during his own experience as a child immigrant.”
Additional Notes: <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				
Row B Evidence AND Commentary (0–4 points)	0 points Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.	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.	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.	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.	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.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes				
	Typical responses that earn 0 points: <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. 	Typical responses that earn 1 point: <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. 	Typical responses that earn 2 points: <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. 	Typical responses that earn 3 points: <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. 	Typical responses that earn 4 points: <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.
Additional Notes: <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"> Explaining the significance or relevance of the writer’s rhetorical choices (given the rhetorical situation). Explaining a purpose or function of the passage’s complexities or tensions. 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. 	