

## Question 2

Suggested time—40 minutes

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

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.

I am extremely delighted to be here today, at the very institution where I have been teaching for the past twenty-seven years.

Line Although I have given commencement speeches  
5 before, this one is different; this is personal.

The job of a commencement speaker—I googled it, so it must be true!—is to dispense “life advice.” That seems the very opposite of Percy Bysshe Shelley’s<sup>1</sup> definition of the poet as “a nightingale who sits in  
10 darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds.” So I will not give you advice. The last thing you want to hear is advice—because in order to be effective, advice must be specific—and that, obviously, is impossible in this setting.

15 So instead of advice, I will give you wishes. Just think of me as a contrary fairy godmother or a wily genie.

**I wish you Hunger.**

Of course, I don’t mean physiological want, but a  
20 continued spiritual and intellectual appetite, a hunger to know more, do more, feel more. When I told my graduate poetry writing class that I was giving this speech, I asked them what they wished they had heard at their baccalaureate exercises, and one young  
25 woman responded with a list of, as she put it, “some things . . . I wish I could have heard, if I’d had sense enough to listen.”

1. Life is short.

2. Don’t put yourself in a box.

30 3. There’s a reason certain people, places, books, ideas, etc. make our ears stand up; always follow what attracts you.

And number 4, which to me is the kicker:

4. Passions are hard to come by.

35 When you entered this university, you wanted to eat the world, and all everyone else wanted you to do was to get good grades. And though your dreams may have been more nebulous<sup>2</sup> then than they are now, they were no less intense. So keep that hunger; nurse  
40 it. Stay curious, want it all while it lasts.

**I wish you Hard Work.**

By that I don’t mean back-breaking labor, not the drudgery of the treadmill, but an appreciation for the work that comes before the big show—getting ready,  
45 honing your tools. Observation, research, practice—the actress Lupita Nyong’o gives herself homework whenever she has an audition. The classical flautist James Galway says: “You can sight-read better if you know your scales and  
50 arpeggios.” When my father sat me down for the “You’re-going-out-into-the-world” talk, his message was this: Always be 150% prepared! At 150% you’ll be ready for anything—even if you’re not chosen for a job or position although you’re the better qualified  
55 candidate. As the first African-American research chemist to break the color barrier in the tire and

### Question 3

**Suggested time—40 minutes**

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

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<sup>1</sup> resentment.”

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

<sup>1</sup> spread

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.

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**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**

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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	
<b>Row A</b> <b>Thesis</b> <b>(0–1 points)</b>	<b>0 points</b> For any of the following: <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>	<b>1 point</b> Responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices.
	<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>	
	<b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only restate the prompt.</li> <li>Fail to address the rhetorical choices the writer of the passage makes.</li> <li>Describe or repeat the passage rather than making a claim that requires a defense.</li> </ul> <b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b> <b>Restate the prompt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Former poet laureate Rita Dove, a professor of English at the University of Virginia, gave the commencement speech there in 2016.”</i></li> </ul> <b>Make a claim but do not address the writer’s rhetorical choices</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Dove considers this particular commencement speech to the graduating class at the University of Virginia to be ‘personal’ because she teaches there.”</i></li> </ul> <b>Repeat provided information from the passage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><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></li> </ul>	<b>Responses that earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul> <b>Examples that earn this point:</b> <b>Present a defensible thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Rita Dove uses allusions, personal examples, and a friendly tone to convey her message to her audience of new graduates.”</i></li> <li><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></li> <li><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></li> </ul>
	<b>Additional Notes:</b> <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>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.</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				
Row B Evidence AND Commentary (0–4 points)	<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 student’s 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. AND Explains how at least one rhetorical choice in the passage contributes to the writer’s argument, purpose, or message.	<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. AND Explains how multiple rhetorical choices in the passage contribute to the writer’s argument, purpose, or message.
	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 textual references or references that are irrelevant.</li> </ul>	<b>Typical responses that earn 1 point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tend to focus on summary or description of a passage rather than specific details or techniques.</li> <li>Mention rhetorical choices with little or no explanation.</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 words and details from the passage 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 words and details from the passage 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> <li>Explain how the writer’s use of rhetorical choices contributes to the student’s interpretation of the passage.</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> <li>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.</li> </ul>					