

2015 AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Question 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

On the tenth anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., labor union organizer and civil rights leader Cesar Chavez published an article in the magazine of a religious organization devoted to helping those in need. Read the following excerpt from the article carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze the rhetorical choices Chavez makes to develop his argument about nonviolent resistance.

Line Dr. King's entire life was an example of power that
nonviolence brings to bear in the real world. It is an
example that inspired much of the philosophy and
strategy of the farm workers' movement. This
5 observance of Dr. King's death gives us the best
possible opportunity to recall the principles with
which our struggle has grown and matured.

Our conviction is that human life is a very special
possession given by God to man and that no one has
10 the right to take it for any reason or for any cause,
however just it may be.

We are also convinced that nonviolence is more
powerful than violence. Nonviolence supports you if
you have a just and moral cause. Nonviolence
15 provides the opportunity to stay on the offensive, and
that is of crucial importance to win any contest.

If we resort to violence then one of two things will
happen: either the violence will be escalated and there
will be many injuries and perhaps deaths on both
20 sides, or there will be total demoralization of the
workers.

Nonviolence has exactly the opposite effect. If, for
every violent act committed against us, we respond
with nonviolence, we attract people's support. We can
25 gather the support of millions who have a conscience
and would rather see a nonviolent resolution to
problems. We are convinced that when people are
faced with a direct appeal from the poor struggling
nonviolently against great odds, they will react
30 positively. The American people and people
everywhere still yearn for justice. It is to that
yearning that we appeal.

But if we are committed to nonviolence only as a
strategy or tactic, then if it fails our only alternative is
35 to turn to violence. So we must balance the strategy
with a clear understanding of what we are doing.
However important the struggle is and however much
misery, poverty and exploitation exist, we know that
it cannot be more important than one human life. We
40 work on the theory that men and women who are truly
concerned about people are nonviolent by nature.
These people become violent when the deep concern
they have for people is frustrated and when they are
faced with seemingly insurmountable odds.

45 We advocate militant nonviolence as our means of
achieving justice for our people, but we are not blind
to the feelings of frustration, impatience and anger

which seethe inside every farm worker. The burdens
of generations of poverty and powerlessness lie heavy
50 in the fields of America. If we fail, there are those
who will see violence as the shortcut to change.

It is precisely to overcome these frustrations that
we have involved masses of people in their own
struggle throughout the movement. Freedom is
55 best experienced through participation and self-
determination, and free men and women instinctively
prefer democratic change to any other means.

Thus, demonstrations and marches, strikes and
boycotts are not only weapons against the growers,
60 but our way of avoiding the senseless violence that
brings no honor to any class or community. The
boycott, as Gandhi taught, is the most nearly perfect
instrument of nonviolent change, allowing masses of
people to participate actively in a cause.

65 When victory comes through violence, it is a
victory with strings attached. If we beat the growers at
the expense of violence, victory would come at the
expense of injury and perhaps death. Such a thing
would have a tremendous impact on us. We would
70 lose regard for human beings. Then the struggle
would become a mechanical thing. When you lose
your sense of life and justice, you lose your strength.

The greater the oppression, the more leverage
nonviolence holds. Violence does not work in the
75 long run and if it is temporarily successful, it replaces
one violent form of power with another just as
violent. People suffer from violence.

Examine history. Who gets killed in the case of
violent revolution? The poor, the workers. The people
80 of the land are the ones who give their bodies and
don't really gain that much for it. We believe it is too
big a price to pay for not getting anything. Those who
espouse violence exploit people. To call men to arms
with many promises, to ask them to give up their lives
85 for a cause and then not produce for them afterwards,
is the most vicious type of oppression.

We know that most likely we are not going to do
anything else the rest of our lives except build our
union. For us there is nowhere else to go. Although
90 we would like to see victory come soon, we are
willing to wait. In this sense, time is our ally. We
learned many years ago that the rich may have
money, but the poor have time.

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Question 3

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

An anthropologist studying first-year students at a university in the United States writes that friendly phrases like “How are you?,” “Nice to meet you,” and “Let’s get in touch” communicate politeness rather than literal intent. What, if anything, is the value or function of such polite speech?

In a well-written essay, develop your position on the value or function of polite speech in a culture or community with which you are familiar. Use appropriate evidence from your reading, experience, or observations to support your argument.

STOP

END OF EXAM

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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2015 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 2

The essay's score should reflect the essay's quality as a whole. Remember that students had only 40 minutes to read and write; the essay, therefore, is not a finished product and should not be judged by standards appropriate for an out-of-class assignment. Evaluate the essay as a draft, making certain to reward students for what they do well.

All essays, even those scored 8 or 9, may contain occasional lapses in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. Such features should enter into your holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. In no case should you give a score higher than a 2 to a paper with errors in grammar and mechanics that persistently interfere with your understanding of meaning.

9 – Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for the score of 8 and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their argument, thorough in their development, or impressive in their control of language.

8 – Effective

Essays earning a score of 8 **effectively** analyze* the rhetorical choices Chavez makes to develop his argument about nonviolent resistance. They develop their analysis with evidence and explanations that are appropriate and convincing, referring to the passage explicitly or implicitly. The prose demonstrates a consistent ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not necessarily flawless.

7 – Essays earning a score of 7 meet the criteria for the score of 6 but provide more complete explanation, more thorough development, or a more mature prose style.

6 – Adequate

Essays earning a score of 6 **adequately** analyze the rhetorical choices Chavez makes to develop his argument about nonviolent resistance. They develop their analysis with evidence and explanations that are appropriate and sufficient, referring to the passage explicitly or implicitly. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

5 – Essays earning a score of 5 analyze the rhetorical choices Chavez makes to develop his argument about nonviolent resistance. The evidence or explanations used may be uneven, inconsistent, or limited. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the writer's ideas.

4 – Inadequate

Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately** analyze the rhetorical choices Chavez makes to develop his argument about nonviolent resistance. The student may misunderstand the passage, misrepresent the strategies Chavez uses, or analyze these strategies insufficiently. The evidence or explanations used may be inappropriate, insufficient, or unconvincing. The prose generally conveys the writer's ideas but may be inconsistent in controlling the elements of effective writing.

AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

2015 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 2 (continued)

3 – Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but demonstrate less success in analyzing the rhetorical choices Chavez makes to develop his argument about nonviolent resistance. They are less perceptive in their understanding of the passage or Chavez’s strategies, or the explanations or examples may be particularly limited or simplistic. The essays may show less maturity in their control of writing.

2 – Little Success

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in analyzing the rhetorical choices Chavez makes to develop his argument about nonviolent resistance. The student may misunderstand the prompt, misread the passage, fail to analyze the strategies Chavez uses, or substitute a simpler task by responding to the prompt tangentially with unrelated, inaccurate, or inappropriate explanation. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as grammatical problems, a lack of development or organization, or a lack of control.

1 – Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but are undeveloped, especially simplistic in their explanation, or weak in their control of language.

0 – Indicates an off-topic response, one that merely repeats the prompt, an entirely crossed-out response, a drawing, or a response in a language other than English.

— Indicates an entirely blank response.

* For the purposes of scoring, analysis means explaining the rhetorical choices an author makes in an attempt to achieve a particular effect or purpose.