

## 2015 AP<sup>®</sup> 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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## 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.

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**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.

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## 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.

## Sample 2A

The 60's was the height of the civil rights movement. After King's assassination, there were many calls for a violent response to the tragic tragedy that had struck them. Cesar Chavez pleaded with the people to help them see that the best way, the only way (1 of 4) to achieve meaningful and significant change is through nonviolent actions. His use of striking diction, juxtapositions, and appeals to the fundamental beliefs of his readers leaves his noted audience with little doubt as to the proper course of action.

Chavez, less than 10 words into his request, has already tied "nonviolence" to "power"; this, followed by his claims of "nonviolence provides the opportunity to stay on the offensive," gives his readers the impression that nonviolence is innately connected with power and importance. He goes on to say that those who are truly concerned about the people will not stray from the path of nonviolence, giving his readers no choice but to agree if they want to consider themselves good people. His deliberate contrasts of words such as "freedom" and "democracy" to harsher, underlying terms such as "vicious type of aggression" and "no honor" to describe violence convince his audience that violence is a hard thing while nonviolence and peaceful resistance embody the virtues of America and citizens everywhere. Although he considers possible protests of "we are not blind to feelings of frustration," he emphasizes "balance" and patience through his powerful word choices. This comparison between a "nearly perfect instrument" of change juxtaposed with "those who espouse violence exploit people" serves the purpose of shaming readers who advocate for violence and strengthen support for nonviolent resistance. Chavez's coercive diction and juxtaposition delineates the pros of nonviolence and cons of violence, thereby strengthening support for his cause.

Chavez also juxtaposes the two movements while contrasting historical allusions to give more credibility to his argument while portraying peaceful protest in a favorable light to gain support. Chavez uses Gandhi, a famous and highly respected advocate of nonviolence, to allude to the success peace can bring since Gandhi managed to win India back from an empire. By directly following that example up with one of a violent movement where poor and helpless people are killed, he portrays the nonviolent movement as highly effective and successful. To further win the support of his readers, Chavez asserts that millions stand behind the cause of nonviolence, implying that nonviolence is more successful because they "attract people's support," as opposed to demoralization and death. By using historical examples and obvious contrasts, Chavez manages to portray peaceful protests in a highly favorable light, encouraging many readers to support this cause—one that seems to be successful, safe, and supported by many.

Chavez also makes full use of the morals of his readers when convincing them to give him their support. Published in a religious magazine, Chavez's article appeals to readers' sense of religious duty by invoking God. By advocating that God has mandated that it is not something that can be taken away, he sways many of the deeply religious to his side. He also appeals to readers' sense of humanity and virtue, portraying nonviolence as something for those who don't want to exploit the weak or poor and for those who sincerely care about people. To this audience, morality will not let them be a part of a "vicious type of oppression" or have victory come at the "expense of injury... and death" or even "lose regard for human beings." By depicting violence as deplorable and vile, he convinces those with even a shred of decency or humanity that nonviolence is the best and most moral way to bring change.

Chavez not only uses powerful contrast and sound diction to portray his cause favorably but also cleverly appeals to feed his audience's sense of decency and religion to leave them with the idea that nonviolence is the only truly successful and moral way to achieve their goals.

## Sample 2B

The civil rights movement was one that changed American society drastically. It is studied in every American history class across the country, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is a household name. Many credit the success of the CRM to Dr. King's use of nonviolence. Cesar Chavez expresses his unwavering support of Dr. King's method of nonviolence through logical support and contrast in his article published in a religious magazine.

Throughout his article, he supports his claim that "Nonviolence is more powerful than violence" (12-13) with a strong argument. Chavez uses the idea that nonviolence will "attract people's support" (24), to promote nonviolence. Anyone looking to elicit change wants just that, people on their side. By proving that nonviolence results in gaining support with evidence such as America's "conscience" (25) and their "yearning for justice" (31), Chavez convinces his audience, and any activists or social reformers, that nonviolence is beneficial to their cause. Chavez even refers to history to strengthen his argument, encouraging his readers to learn from the past, "Who gets killed in the case of violent revolution? The poor, the workers." (78-79). In most cases, the people who are after change are the minority, the oppressed, the "poor." Chavez's use of this example dissuades the people who are considering violence to achieve their goal from ever attempting it. When looking at the consequences of violence in history, he convinces his audience that nonviolence is the right choice.

Within each of Chavez's pieces of evidence, he uses another powerful tool: contrast. The overall organization of his article follows a certain format; he first supports nonviolence and then follows that support with a hypothetical "if." For example, directly after his paragraph praising the boycott, he has the "if": "If we beat the growers, at the expense of violence, the victory would come at the expense of injury and death" (66-68). The result is similar to that of when he used history as evidence; the readers have this continued comparison in their minds as they read: nonviolence - good results, violence - bad results. He maintains the comparison through diction as well, describing nonviolent protests as "powerful" and the protestors as having a "just and moral cause." Meanwhile, violence is described as "senseless," "temporary," "demoralizing." All strong and negative words when describing effort to bring change. No activist wants their revolution and its results to be "temporarily successful" (15), which defeats the purpose of revolting, or senseless which implies that there is no reason behind it. By perpetuating this constant contrast between nonviolence and violence, and correlating the terms with successful and pointless, Chavez leads his readers to weigh the options and choose what he believes so strongly to be the right one in nonviolence.

Cesar Chavez's vehement support of the nonviolent approach is made clear through his logical reasons, ethos, and his well-developed use of contrast between good and bad. According to Chavez, it's not hard or even a choice. Nonviolence is the only way to go.

## Sample 2C

In his magazine article, labor union organizer and civil rights leader Cesar Chavez wrote of the importance of nonviolent means to further the movement for racial justice. On the tenth anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, Chavez employed persuasive alliteration, moving pathos appeals, decisive syntax, and authoritative ethos to convey his message. Chavez's appeal reached out to an audience of African-Americans working for justice and equality through a religious magazine. His use of diction, pathos, syntax, and ethos effectively delivered this article. Throughout his writing, Cesar Chavez contrasted the diction he chose when writing of nonviolent and violent resistance. Violent approaches were coupled with "pogrom," "deaths," "vicious," and "oppression." On the other hand, Martin Luther King's approach of nonviolence was matched with "example," "power," "justice," and "freedom." The diction used (2 of 3) persuades the reader to see an aura of light and positivity surrounding the nonviolent approach, in deep contrast with violence and its consequences. Chavez's persuasive diction developed positivity around nonviolence, making this article much more effective.

Cesar Chavez delved into rhetoric in developing his pathos appeals. He wrote of the importance of an individual act in lines 37-39, likening it to the struggle for justice altogether. Knowing that an individual life has such a strong significance as the struggle, readers are overcome with a sense of duty and motivation. Chavez also wrote, utilizing "we" and "our" pronouns, placing both himself and the reader as part of the same cause. This appeals again to the reader's importance, promoting emotional involvement. Furthermore, Chavez wrote on the tenth anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s death, an emotional day for all involved in civil rights. His choice of timing appeals to the emotions of readers and the call to further the nonviolent means King (3 of 3) advocated for. The author's use of pathos motivates and engages his readers emotionally.

Chavez, later in his essay, effectively utilized short syntax to create and present a decisive reality surrounding violent resistance. "People suffer from violence" in line ?? is a truth that does not leave room for rebuttal or disagreement. Chavez tells the reader to "examine history" - which illustrates that the class of his readers is the class that is hurt by violence. This short, decisive syntax strengthens his argument against violent resistance, leaving no room to ignore the plain, haunting facts he presents.

Lastly, Chavez appeals to ethos through authority. His article is published in a religious organization magazine, making his appeal to God powerful among his readers. He appeals authoritatively to both Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Gandhi, both world-recognized leaders and figureheads of successful nonviolent protest. Chavez's ethical appeals are effective in alluding to moral and authoritative motivations to rebel nonviolently.

# AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

## 2015 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 2

#### Overview

The “Analysis” prompt was intended to test students’ abilities to articulate their understanding of a short, argumentative text as an intentional “speech act” — that is, not merely as words on the page but as words in action, words intended to have a social impact. This year’s text was an excerpt from a magazine article by Cesar Chavez detailing how nonviolence works not simply as a strategy but as a moral principle of the farm workers’ movement. The prompt supplied contextual information about the occasion of the article (the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.), the identity of the author (Cesar Chavez, a labor union organizer and civil rights leader), and the publication venue (the magazine of a religious organization devoted to helping the poor). From this information students had to infer the original audience and something of the rhetorical purpose of Chavez’s “argument about nonviolent resistance.” From their reading of the text, students had to understand the particularities and the overarching point of Chavez’s argument, discern its logic and appeals, and further infer the intentionality behind it. This year’s analysis question directed students’ attention not to “rhetorical devices” or even “rhetorical strategies” but to “rhetorical choices” made by Chavez. This terminology was selected to emphasize the primacy of authorial agency and communicative purpose over the implementation of formal tropes in the text.

#### Sample: 2A

**Score: 8**

This essay effectively identifies and analyzes three of Cesar Chavez’s rhetorical choices — striking diction, juxtaposition, and appeals to reader’s fundamental moral beliefs — to argue that “nonviolence is the best and most moral way to bring change.” Providing convincing evidence and analysis (for example, “Chavez uses Ghandi [*sic*], a famous and highly respected advocate of nonviolence, to allude to the success peace can bring since Ghandi [*sic*] managed to win India back from an empire”), the essay builds its case through a well-developed structure, moving from the analysis of how Chavez’s diction works (“less than 10 words into his request, [Chavez] has already tied ‘nonviolence’ to ‘power’”) to end with a broader point about how Chavez appeals to the audience’s beliefs (“He also appeals to readers’ sense of humanity and virtue, portraying nonviolence as something for those who dont [*sic*] want to exploit the weak or poor”). Although not flawless (sometimes the student overstates the case: “By depicting violence as deplorable and vile, he convinces those with even a shred of decency or humanity”), the essay clearly demonstrates its control over a wide range of the elements of effective writing. For its well-developed rhetorical analysis and effective prose style, this essay earned a score of 8.

#### Sample: 2B

**Score: 6**

This essay adequately argues that Cesar Chavez “expresses his unwavering support of Dr. King’s method of nonviolence through logical support and contrast.” The essay analyzes how Chavez develops his argument with logic (nonviolence attracts support while history shows that violence results in the further oppression of the poor, the workers). Then the essay turns to consider “another powerful tool: contrast,” observing that the “overall organization of [Chavez’s] article follows [*sic*] a certain format; he first supports nonviolence and then follows that support with a hypothetical ‘if.’” This claim is supported with appropriate and sufficient explanation: “‘If we webeat [*sic*] the growers at the expense of violence, victory would come at the expense of injury and . . . death.’ . . . The readers have this continued comparison in their minds as they read, nonviolence — good results, violence — bad results.” The essay concludes by quickly summarizing its two main points, contending, “According to Chavez, it’s not even a choice. Nonviolence is the only way to go.” Despite its rather rushed conclusion and occasional lapses, this essay earned a score of 6 for its adequate rhetorical analysis and generally clear prose.

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**2015 SCORING COMMENTARY**

**Question 2 (continued)**

**Sample: 2C**

**Score: 3**

This essay inadequately analyzes the rhetorical choices, identified as “persuasive diction, moving pathological appeals, decisive short syntax, and authoritative ethos,” that Cesar Chavez employs. The student misreads the passage (which begins by pointing out that Dr. King inspired the farm workers’ movement led by Chavez) to be an appeal “reach[ing] out to an audience of African-Americans working for justice and equality.” The student also incorrectly mislabels Chavez’s aim of “promoting emotional involvement” in his readers as “pathological.” Although the student understands Chavez is making an appeal to pathos here, the essay’s analysis of this rhetorical strategy is insufficiently explained and at moments simplistic: “Knowing that an individual life has such a strong significance as the struggle, readers are overcome with a sense of duty and motivation.” Similarly, sweeping claims — such as “[h]is short, decisive syntax strengthen [*sic*] his argument against violent resistance, leaving no room to ignore the plain, haunting facts he presents” — are inadequately explained and supported. Although the essay’s control of writing is more typical of essays earning a higher score, it demonstrates a less perceptive understanding and analysis of the passage than essays scored a 4, and therefore it earned a score of 3.