

## Question 2

Suggested time—40 minutes.

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

The passage below is the opening to a speech made in 1960 by American journalist and politician Clare Boothe Luce to journalists at the Women’s National Press Club. In this speech, Luce went on to criticize the tendency of the American press to sacrifice journalistic integrity in favor of the perceived public demand for sensationalist stories. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-developed essay, analyze *how* Luce uses this introduction to prepare the audience for her message. Support your analysis of her rhetoric with specific references to the text.

Line I am happy and flattered to be a guest of honor on  
this always exciting and challenging occasion. But  
looking over this audience tonight, I am less happy  
5 than you might think and more challenged than you  
could know. I stand here at this rostrum invited to  
throw rocks at you. You have asked *me* to tell *you*  
what’s wrong with *you*—the American press. The  
subject not only is of great national significance but  
also has, one should say, infinite possibilities—and  
10 infinite perils to the rock thrower.

For the banquet speaker who criticizes the  
weaknesses and pretensions, or exposes the follies  
and sins, of his listeners—even at their invitation—  
does not generally evoke an enthusiastic—no less  
15 a friendly—response. The delicate art of giving  
an audience hell is always one best left to the  
Billy Grahams and the Bishop Sheens.\*

But you are an audience of journalists. There is no  
audience anywhere who should be more bored—  
20 indeed, more revolted—by a speaker who tried to  
fawn on it, butter it up, exaggerate its virtues, play  
down its faults, and who would more quickly see  
through any attempt to do so. I ask you only to  
remember that I am not a volunteer for this subject  
25 tonight. You asked for it!

For what is good journalism all about? On a  
working, finite level it is the effort to achieve  
illuminating candor in print and to strip away cant.  
It is the effort to do this not only in matters of state,  
30 diplomacy, and politics but also in every smaller  
aspect of life that touches the public interest or  
engages proper public curiosity. It is the effort to  
explain everything from a summit conference to why

the moon looks larger coming over the horizon than it  
35 does when it has fully risen in the heavens. It is the  
effort, too, to describe the lives of men—and women  
—big and small, close at hand or thousands of miles  
away, familiar in their behavior or unfamiliar in  
their idiosyncrasies. It is—to use the big word—the  
40 pursuit of and the effort to state the truth.

No audience knows better than an audience of  
journalists that the pursuit of the truth, and the  
articulation of it, is the most delicate, hazardous,  
exacting, and *inexact* of tasks. Consequently, no  
45 audience is more forgiving (I hope) to the speaker  
who fails or stumbles in his own pursuit of it. The  
only failure this audience could never excuse in any  
speaker would be the failure to try to tell the truth, as  
he sees it, about his subject.

50 In my perilous but earnest effort to do so here  
tonight, I must begin by saying that if there is much  
that is wrong with the American press, there is also  
much that is right with it.

I know, then, that you will bear with me, much as it  
55 may go against your professional grain, if I ask you to  
accept some of the good with the bad—even though it  
may not make such good copy for your newspapers.

For the plain fact is that the U. S. daily press today  
is not inspiringly good; it is just far and away the best  
60 press in the world.

\* Billy Graham, an American Christian evangelist, and Fulton John Sheen, an American Catholic archbishop, both became renowned for their religious oratory. Their speeches were widely broadcast on radio and television.

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# AP English Language and Composition

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

### Inside:

- ✓ Free Response Question 2
- ✓ Scoring Guideline
- ✓ Student Samples
- ✓ Scoring Commentary

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## 2017 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Question 2

**General Directions:** This scoring guide is designed so that the same performance expectations are applied to all student responses. It will be useful for most of the essays, but if it seems inappropriate for a specific essay, assistance should be sought from the Table Leader. The Table Leader should always be shown books that seem to have no response or that contain responses that seem unrelated to the question. A score of 0 or — should not be assigned without this consultation.

The essay's score should reflect an evaluation of the essay as a whole. Students had only 40 minutes to read and write; the essay, therefore, is not a finished product and should not be judged according to standards appropriate for an out-of-class assignment. The essay should be evaluated as a draft, and students should be rewarded for what they do well. The evaluation should focus on the evidence and explanations that the student uses to support the response; students should not be penalized for taking a particular perspective.

All essays, even those scored 8 or 9, may contain occasional lapses in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. Such features should enter into the holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. In no case should a score higher than a 2 be given to an essay with errors in grammar and mechanics that persistently interfere with 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\* *how* Luce uses this introduction to prepare the audience for her message. 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 *how* Luce uses this introduction to prepare the audience for her message. 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 *how* Luce uses this introduction to prepare the audience for her message. The evidence and explanations used to develop their analysis may be uneven, inconsistent, or limited. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the student's ideas.

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## 2017 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Question 2 (continued)

#### 4 – Inadequate

Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately** analyze *how* Luce uses this introduction to prepare the audience for her message. These essays may misunderstand the passage, misrepresent the strategies Luce uses, or analyze these strategies insufficiently. The evidence and explanations used to develop their analysis may be inappropriate, insufficient, or unconvincing. The prose generally conveys the student's ideas but may be inconsistent in controlling the elements of effective writing.

**3** – Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but demonstrate less success in analyzing *how* Luce uses this introduction to prepare the audience for her message. They are less perceptive in their understanding of the passage or Luce's strategies, or the evidence and explanations used to develop their analysis may be particularly limited or simplistic. The essays may show less maturity in control of writing.

#### 2 – Little Success

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in analyzing *how* Luce uses this introduction to prepare the audience for her message. The student may misunderstand the prompt, misread the passage, fail to analyze the strategies Luce uses, or substitute a simpler task by responding to the prompt tangentially with unrelated or inaccurate 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 speech given by Clare Boothe Luce to the Women's National Press Club was controversial and even condemning of her audience. However, Luce pulls it off by gently preparing the audience for the criticism: she employs the fact that they invited her there to speak, a strong consideration for their feelings, praises of their profession, and a clear plea for open-mindedness.

She opens the speech with a paradox about being happy and challenged; first saying she is "flattered" and honored, then she flips her

original statement saying she is "less happy than you may think" (lines 3-4). Right off the bat, Luce gives her audience signs that her speech is not going to be 100 percent positive. But then she makes sure to remind them that they have asked for her opinion on what is wrong with the American press. Within her first paragraph, Luce makes her intentions clear, before even stating her argument, and she confirms that they're aware that they asked for this criticism.

In the second paragraph, Luce uses self-deprecation to show her audience the difficult situation she is in. She acknowledges her own position which "exposes the follies and sins of (her) listeners" (12-13). Luce gives them a slight idea of the criticism that is to come by comparing herself to an arbitrary "banquet speaker" who shares the same difficult task. Next, Luce employs some humor by saying that she is not the best candidate for "the delicate art of giving an audience hell," but rather that perhaps public figures like Billy Graham and Bishop Sheen would succeed at it. Her lighthearted and self-deprecating approach makes the audience more likely to accept her claims, or at least hear her out.

As Luce continues her speech, she again reminds them of her invitation and then prepares them for harsh words by complimenting their careers and their standards of writing. She warns them that it is not to be sugar-coated because they are "an audience of journalists" and they would all "see through any attempt to do so" (18-23). Her praise of their intelligence automatically pleases the audience and makes them more willing to listen to the argument.

Through the final sections of her introduction, Luce carefully plants the definition of journalism: the pursuit of and the effort to state the truth"(40). While this statement pertains to her overall argument that journalists do not always "state the truth," she does not outright accuse them of this. Instead, she merely introduces a commonly shared opinion on journalism. By waiting to argue it further, Luce gets her audience on board, agreeing that truthfulness and honesty are their primary concerns. If the audience agrees with this statement, then she will have already won half the battle in showing them journalism's faults.

Luce is creative, careful, and aware when presenting her opening statements. She prepares the audience well by appealing to their feelings, being considerate, and through a plea for open-mindedness.

## sample 2B

Clare Boothe Luce crafts the introduction of her speech to the female journalists at the Women's National Press Club in 1960 in a very calculated manner. Luce subjects not only her audience to criticism but herself, all the while reminding the journalists that it is on their request that she is delivering the speech.

Luce first acknowledges that by delivering her critique, she will be subjected to criticism herself, for she comments, "for the banquet speaker who criticizes the weaknesses and pretensions, or exposes the follies and sins, of his listeners, even of movie civilization, does not generally evoke an enthusiastic nor a friendly response." Luce emphasizes the difficulty of her position, and in doing so, warns the audience of the criticism that is coming and to keep their immediate backlash in check.

After sharing the difficulty of delivering a controversial speech, Luce cleverly proceeds to place the responsibility on the audience. She pointedly reminds the audience, "...I am not a volunteer for this subject tonight. You asked for it!" This way, when the audience takes offense to her message, they can only blame themselves, for they are the reason for her presence. Luce further sets up the journalists for her incoming attacks by reminding them of the basic values of their occupation. She says that, "There is no audience anywhere who should be more bored, indeed more revolted, by a speaker who tried to flatter it, butter it up, exaggerate its virtues, play down its faults, and who would not quickly see through any attempt to do so." Luce compliments these journalists on their valiant pursuit of the cold hard truth, and that is exactly what she intends to deliver.

Luce finishes her introduction with a compliment to the U.S. press, which indicates the high regard in which she holds the profession of journalism. This way, Luce does not present herself entirely as an enemy to her audience. Instead, she ensures that the audience is conscious that they asked for the coming criticism, and though she does not necessarily want to, Luce will comply and deliver them their coveted truth. Due to her ingenious delivery, the audience is prepared to listen openly to Luce's critique and attempt to set aside their initial heated reactions with the notion that she is delivering the truth on their behalf.

## sample 2C

Clare Boothe Luce seems to be a passionate journalist who wants the world to hear the truth and for the press to tell it. Luce uses persuasive rhetoric to influence her listeners to be honest with the American people.

Luce starts her speech by telling the audience she is honored to be there, as many do before a speech, in order to tell the audience she wants to talk to them and that she is ready to give her points. Luce then says, "I am less happy than you might think and more challenged than you could know!" Saying this lets us know that she is about to point out a weakness or a flaw that is bothering her. She says that she is a rock thrower to the press, referencing in the late B.C.s and early A.D.s how adulterers and sinners would be shamed and beaten with rocks being thrown at them, this makes a metaphor for how she is about to reveal and shame the press's weaknesses.

Luce says that there is no audience who should be more revolted at a speaker buttering them up because as journalists they should want the truth instead of too kind praise. She says that the press's job is to correctly inform the people whether it be about a summit conference or why the moon looks larger coming over the horizon than it does when it has fully risen. Doing this shows her audience that they are truth seekers and they should want to tell the less informed citizens the truth and the important events happening.

Throughout all the negatives she says about the press, she stops from completely draining their spirits and says that with much that is wrong with the American press, there is also much that is right with it. She says that it is understandable that they may not want to listen to her but encourages them to stick around and listen. Luce asks them to accept the good and bad, giving the journalists a balance and even though it may not make a good copy for the newspaper, they should be honest with the people.

Luce uses well-spoken rhetoric to influence all listening to be more honest writers. With her clever uses, she conveys that they should do their job the way it was meant to be done.

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## 2017 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 2

#### Overview

Question 2, the rhetorical analysis question, asked students to explain the choices made by the writer or speaker of the passage provided. Though it is not considered an “argument question,” it asked students to take a position on what choices the writer or speaker makes. The question’s intent was to see how well students understand the rhetorical situation of the passage’s writer or speaker and how these choices address this situation. In other words, the question asked that students understand the purpose of the writer’s or speaker’s text, who the audience of this text is, what the relationship is between that audience and the writer/speaker, and what the audience’s attitude might be toward the writer’s/speaker’s purpose. With this understanding, the passage then required students to articulate how the rhetor’s choices address those complex relationships. The 2017 Question 2 passage was Clare Boothe Luce’s introduction to her 1960 speech given at the Women’s National Press Club. The passage offered students abundant opportunities to analyze *how* Luce uses the introduction to her speech to, as the task stated, “prepare the audience for her message.” The passage and task, which reflect the language of the Course Description in terms of the study and teaching of rhetorical analysis, challenged students to think about how Luce managed her difficult task (of being asked to speak about problems with the press) with her audience of fellow journalists, the very people she would be criticizing.

#### Sample: 2A

##### Score: 8

This essay effectively analyzes *how* Luce uses the introduction of her speech to prepare the audience for her message. The essay develops an effective analysis with evidence and explanations that include a convincing explanation of the rhetorical context. The opening paragraph presents a series of choices that Luce makes to prepare the audience: “she employs the fact that they invited her there to speak, a strong consideration for their feelings, praises of their profession, and a clear plea for open mindedness.” The second paragraph effectively explains Luce’s “paradox about being happy and challenged” and convincingly analyzes how Luce “makes her intentions clear, before even stating her argument.” The third paragraph presents an effective analysis of how Luce’s “self-deprication” [*sic*] and use of humor make the audience “more likely to accept her claims.” The penultimate (fifth) paragraph presents a convincing and appropriate analysis of journalists’ shared concern for “truthfulness and honesty.” Additionally, this paragraph explains how Luce invokes journalists’ duty to state the truth to prepare the audience for her criticism. Despite occasional flaws, the essay consistently demonstrates control of the elements of effective writing.

#### Sample: 2B

##### Score: 6

This essay adequately analyzes *how* Luce uses the introduction of her speech to prepare the audience for her message. The second paragraph notes that Luce “emphasizes the difficulty of her position” and offers sufficient evidence and explanation to support this point. The third paragraph sufficiently explains how Luce, after “stating the difficulty of delivering a controversial speech,” navigates her difficult rhetorical situation by “cleverly proceed[ing] to place the responsibility on the audience” for her presence as an invited speaker and by emphasizing journalists’ crucial role as truth-tellers (e.g., “reminding them of the basic values of their occupation”). Throughout, the student correctly identifies Luce’s rhetorical choices (e.g., “Luce finishes her introduction with a compliment to the U.S. press”) and supports examples with adequate discussion and appropriate explanation (e.g., “This way, Luce does not present herself entirely as an enemy to her audience”). The prose contains some lapses in diction and syntax but is generally clear.



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**2017 SCORING COMMENTARY**

**Question 2 (continued)**

**Sample: 2C**

**Score: 4**

This essay inadequately analyzes *how* Luce uses the introduction of her speech to prepare the audience for her message, starting with a vague, terse opening paragraph (Luce “seems to be a passionate journalist who . . . uses persuasive rhetoric”). In the second paragraph, the first example of Luce’s words (i.e., “I am less happy than you might think”) is misrepresented as Luce’s intention “to point out a weakness or flaw that is bothering her.” The paragraph then offers an unconvincing explanation for Luce’s “rock thrower” analogy as “a metaphor for how she is about to reveal and shame the presses [*sic*] weaknesses”). The third and fourth paragraphs consist mostly of vague, insufficient paraphrases of Luce’s speech. Overall, the essay inadequately represents Luce’s strategies, whether by misrepresenting them or by failing to sufficiently analyze them. The prose mostly conveys the student’s ideas but does not consistently control the elements of writing.