

2019 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.)

In 1930 Mohandas “Mahatma” Gandhi led a nonviolent march in India protesting Britain’s colonial monopoly on and taxation of an essential resource: salt. The Salt March, as it came to be known, was a triggering moment for the larger civil disobedience movement that eventually won India independence from Britain in 1947. Shortly before the Salt March, Gandhi had written to Viceroy Lord Irwin, the representative of the British crown in India. The passage below is the conclusion of that letter. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze the rhetorical choices Gandhi makes to present his case to Lord Irwin.

I know that in embarking on non-violence, I shall be running what might fairly be termed a mad risk. But the victories of truth have never been won without risks, often of the gravest character.

5 Conversion of a nation that has consciously or unconsciously preyed upon another, far more numerous, far more ancient, and no less cultured than itself, is worth any amount of risk.

I have deliberately used the word conversion. For my ambition is no less than to convert the British people through non-violence, and thus to make them see the wrong they have done to India. I do not seek to harm your people. I want to serve them even as I want to serve my own. I believe that I have always served them.

10 I served them up to 1919, blindly. But when my eyes were opened and I conceived non-co-operation, the object still was to serve them. I employed the same weapon that I have, in all humility, successfully used against the dearest members of my family. If I have equal love for your people with mine, it will not long remain hidden. It will be acknowledged by them, even as the members of my family acknowledged, after they had tried me for several years. If the people join me, as I expect they will, the sufferings they will undergo, unless the British nation sooner retraces its steps, will be enough to melt the stoniest hearts.

25 The plan through civil disobedience will be to combat such evils as I have sampled out. If we want to sever the British connection it is because of such evils. When they are removed, the path becomes easy. Then the way to friendly negotiation will be open. If the British commerce with India is purified of greed, you will have no difficulty in recognizing our independence. I invite you then to pave the way for immediate removal of those evils, and thus open a way for a real conference between equals, interested only in promoting the common good of mankind through voluntary fellowship and in arranging terms of mutual help and commerce equally suited to both.

30 You have unnecessarily laid stress upon communal problems that unhappily affect this land. Important

though they undoubtedly are for the consideration of any scheme of Government they have little bearing on the greater problems which are above communities and which affect them all equally. But if you cannot see your way to deal with these evils and my letter makes no appeal to your heart, on the eleventh day of this month, I shall proceed with such co-workers of the Ashram¹ as I can take, to disregard the provisions of the salt laws. I regard this tax to be the most iniquitous of all from the poor man’s standpoint. As the independence movement is essentially for the poorest in the land, the beginning will be made with this evil. The wonder is that we have submitted to the cruel monopoly for so long. It is, I know, open to you to frustrate my design by arresting me. I hope that there will be tens of thousands ready, in a disciplined manner, to take up the work after me, and, in the act of disobeying the Salt Act², to lay themselves open to the penalties of a law that should never have disfigured the statute book.

I have no desire to cause you unnecessary embarrassment, or any at all, so far as I can help. If you think that there is any substance in my letter, and if you will care to discuss matters with me, and if to that end you would like me to postpone publication of this letter, I shall gladly refrain on receipt of a telegram to that effect soon after this reaches you.

70 You will, however, do me the favour not to deflect me from my course, unless you can see your way to conform to the substance of this letter.

This letter is not in any way intended as a threat, but is a simple and sacred duty, peremptory on a civil resister. Therefore, I am having it specially delivered by a young English friend who believes in the Indian cause and is a full believer in non-violence and whom Providence seems to have sent to me, as it were, for the very purpose.

¹ A spiritual retreat or monastery for a community of Hindus

² The India Salt Act (1882) enforced the British colonial government’s monopoly on the collection, manufacture, and sale of salt in India.

AP[®] English Language and Composition

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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Free Response Question 2

- ☒ **Scoring Guideline**
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2019 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 read, but if it seems inappropriate for a specific essay, assistance should be sought from the Table Leader. The Table Leader should always be shown booklets 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 a paper with errors in grammar and mechanics that persistently interfere with 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 Gandhi makes to present his case to Lord Irwin. 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 Gandhi makes to present his case to Lord Irwin. 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 Gandhi makes to present his case to Lord Irwin. 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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2019 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 2 (continued)

4 – Inadequate

Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately** analyze the rhetorical choices Gandhi makes to present his case to Lord Irwin. These essays may misunderstand the passage, misrepresent the choices Gandhi makes, or analyze these choices 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 the rhetorical choices Gandhi makes to present his case to Lord Irwin. They are less perceptive in their understanding of the passage or Gandhi's choices, 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 the rhetorical choices Gandhi makes to present his case to Lord Irwin. The student may misunderstand the prompt, misread the passage, fail to analyze the choices Gandhi makes, 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

When Mohandas Gandhi led the Salt March as a nonviolent protest, it triggered not only the widespread use of nonviolent tactics to push for Indian independence but also a worldwide focus on nonviolence in such protests as Martin Luther King's civil rights movement and American students' anti-war demonstrations. In setting such a precedent for nonviolent tactics that nevertheless achieved revolutionary success, Gandhi needed to strike a firm but conciliatory tone in his rhetoric so as not to undermine peaceful actions with inflammatory words. His rhetoric, therefore, is skillfully used when justifying his movement to British Viceroy Lord Irwin. Gandhi skillfully uses an emphasis on "servitude" to affirm his desire for mutual benefit, repeated if-then logical constructions to present a coolly logical argument, and focus on making key concessionary statements to build a stronger negotiating relationship.

Gandhi's repeated use of the word "serve" carries an unexpected meaning in a letter intended to present a case for disobedience, the opposite of servitude; it therefore boosts Gandhi's ethos by affirming a desire for mutual benefit and selflessness. Gandhi first uses "serve" to demonstrate that he wishes "to serve [your British] people" even as he "wants to serve [his] own." This directly contrasts with the claim that Gandhi has great "ambition" no less than to "confront" the British public opinion. Therefore, Gandhi's use of servitude creates a juxtaposition of sweeping, ambitious aims and humble tactics. If he seeks to still "serve" the British despite wanting to "confront" them, his reader must see this seeming paradox as an indication that Gandhi seeks benefit for both the British and Indians. This serves to both grab the reader's attention as they attempt to tease out the paradox as well as boosting credibility for Gandhi as not an irrational revolutionary but as a caring figure pushing for what he believes is best for every party. When Gandhi continues to use this diction, saying "I believe I have always served them [his people]," he provides a further appeal to his own authority. "Up to 1919," he says, he had a literal service perspective on how to help, or "serve," the British. The fact that he sees himself as no longer "blind" yet still "serving" underscores how Gandhi has approached British relationships to India from multiple perspectives, proving he is an expert with experience. This convinces readers to acknowledge the credibility of Gandhi as someone seeking change.

Gandhi then articulates his reasoning in repeated if-then statements. The use of the if-then characterizes deductive reasoning, often considered more scientific and credible than induction, anecdotes, or assumptions. Gandhi therefore uses these constructions to emphasize an appeal to logic - if his argument follows logically from the circumstances in India, his reader ought to believe he is right and justified. He says, "if we want to sever the British connection, it is because of such evils that he plans to 'combat.'" Gandhi uses this to argue that the Indians have not acted unreasonably but instead are reacting to inciting "evils" by the British. Therefore, if his readers agree there are some "evils" in how the British have acted, they should agree with Gandhi's movement. Furthermore, Gandhi says that only "if you cannot see your way to deal with these evils... I shall proceed." By providing a plan with provisions by which Viceroy Irwin could prevent Gandhi's disobedience, he casts Irwin as the one in the wrong if he knows he could prevent the Salt March and opposes it but does not act. Gandhi therefore appears well-reasoned and ideologically consistent. Gandhi finally argues that "if the British connection with India is purified of greed, you will have no difficulty recognizing our independence." This forces the British reader to examine their potential "greed" as part of the premise of this logical construction. Gandhi also uses this to lay out a clear path and plan, guiding the reader through his logic to support independence.

Finally, he makes key concessions to present himself as conciliatory and calm. Gandhi anticipates British counterclaims and actions, conceding "it is... open to you [Irwin] to frustrate my design by arresting me." By conceding that nonviolence may not succeed in a direct confrontation with British

imperial strength and authority, Gandhi points out that he has carefully seen potential problems with his tactics. This allows him to draw British leaders like Irwin, who believe in British strength, into agreement before Gandhi states that others will render his arrest inconsequential for the movement, portraying the British opposition as unnecessary or unhelpful to the British cause. Gandhi then says he is open to "discussion" or "postponing publication of this letter" and is making conciliatory efforts like "special delivery by a young English friend." These concessions to Irwin's preferences or prejudices prove that Gandhi has reasoned out his argument and is also willing to negotiate while remaining committed to his cause. It boosts his ethos as an implicit challenge that urges the British to be similarly willing to compromise. Overall, Gandhi's rhetorical choices of a motif of "servitude," logical if-then statements, and concessionary tone serve to boost his image as a reasoned, idealistic but realistic, and committed leader of his movement.

Sample 2B

When the treatment of the black man within the United States became so abhorrent, so disturbing to the everyday security and pursuit of happiness for those individuals, Martin Luther King took a stand as a leader, and with the support of many, initiated change. Although this stand was in the name of civil rights, the same narrative can be applied to the one thing that everyone has sitting in their kitchen: salt. The right for salt to be free of taxation by Britain's colonial rule is what Mohandas Gandhi led his followers for in the Salt March in 1930. In an array he wrote to Viceroy Lord Irwin shortly before the march, Gandhi effectively garners a strong appeal of ethos, pathos, and logos through the use of strong diction and rhetorical devices in offering a plea to Britain to set India independent and work together for the common good of mankind.

Beginning with the key conclusion of his letter, Gandhi immediately uses vocabulary such as "gravest" to describe the character India will maintain in their firm nonviolent fight for independence. Along with this, Gandhi carefully states, "I do not seek to harm your people. I have always served them." In these statements of India's character and his own, Gandhi effectively uses an ethos appeal to establish the credibility of both the power and initiative of this independence movement in freeing themselves from Britain, while also maintaining that India has done no harm or negatively impacted Britain in any manner.

Nearing the middle of the conclusion of his letter, Gandhi employs an appeal to logos in attempting to reason with the British crown representative. Gandhi argues that aspects of Indian society must be free of British restriction by saying that when British commerce with India is "purified of greed," "friendly" negotiation can occur. Gandhi subtly insults the involvement of Britain here and then follows it with a direct challenge to all of Britain to do the logical, right thing in removing British "evils" and, "open a way for real conference between equals." Diction such as "equals" and "purified," as well as others Gandhi adds such as "fellowship" and "common good," assert India as a positive presence in the subtext of Gandhi's attempt to gain sympathy from Britain for the stress they have placed on Indian society.

As he looks to end his conclusion to his letter, Gandhi transitions from a challenging, accusatory tone to that more of a friendly, agreeable conversation. However, before providing his concluding statements, Gandhi uses an appeal to pathos in arguing that India has been subject to Britain's "cruel monopoly" for far too long and warns that thousands of his supporters are ready to civilly, lay themselves open to the penalties of disobeying the Salt Act. After these final warnings, Gandhi continues his use of pathos in taking a friendly tone to close his letter, using statements such as stating a lack of a desire to cause Britain "unnecessary embarrassment" and ways "I can help." By taking a friendly tone, Gandhi paints the picture of being an approachable, agreeable opponent that Britain would note.

Gandhi takes a risk in leading the fight for India's independence. However, this risk is one calculated and wholeheartedly approached by Gandhi in both his Salt March and in his letter. Gandhi makes an astounding use of pathos, logos, and ethos in trying to change the beliefs of a nation who had been abusing Indian society for far too long.

Sample 1C

Gandhi's letter discusses his commitment to fighting against British colonial monopoly and taxation on salt through non-violent means. He believes that by addressing the evils perpetrated by the British, there's a chance for genuine negotiation and change. Gandhi is prepared to march with his co-workers at the Ashram and defy the salt laws. He is confident that thousands will join in civil disobedience against the Salt Act, fighting for justice. Gandhi's resolve is steadfast; he intends to continue the struggle until his voice is heard and his goals are achieved, regardless of whether his letter is disregarded or discussed.

AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

2019 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 2

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

This year's rhetorical analysis question asked students to identify and evaluate the rhetorical choices made by Mohandas "Mahatma" Gandhi in 1930 as he composed a letter to Lord Irwin, the representative of the British crown in India. The prompt explains that the letter was written in the context of a nonviolent march in India protesting Britain's colonial monopoly on salt. As in past years, this year's prompt asked students to consider the rhetorical situation a speaker faces and to analyze the choices that the speaker makes in order to elicit appropriate or desirable responses from an audience.

This prompt was accessible for most students who typically knew who Gandhi was and were at least marginally familiar with his movement to win India's independence from Great Britain. As one student wrote, "We all knew and loved Gandhi!"

Within their responses to this, as to any, rhetorical analysis question, students were expected to explain the choices the rhetor (Gandhi) made in his particular situation for his particular audience and how these choices worked. To understand a rhetor's choices and how they work, a student must first consider the rhetor's relationship to the audience, as well as how this relationship necessitates both what this specific rhetor should include — and exclude — in the speech to this specific audience. Additionally, a student must consider how the rhetor arranges the speech for the particular audience in the specific circumstances of the speech. While elements of style certainly merit consideration, they are not the first ingredient on which rhetors focus when developing strategies to persuade audiences: Style is the third canon of rhetoric, not the first or even the second.

In other words, to do well, students needed to understand the purpose of Gandhi's speech, what the relationship must have been between Gandhi and Lord Irwin, what Irwin's attitude toward Gandhi's message might have been, and how Gandhi's specific rhetoric choices worked to make his audience more responsive to his purpose.

Sample: 2A

Score: 9

This effective essay is especially sophisticated in its argument about the rhetorical choices Gandhi made when presenting his case to Lord Irwin. The evidence and explanations are especially thorough in their development, and the student demonstrates an impressive control of language throughout the essay. In particular, in the second paragraph, the student offers a thoroughly developed analysis of Gandhi's use of the word "serve": "Gandhi's repeated use of the word 'serve' carries an unexpected meaning in a letter intended to present a case for disobedience, the opposite of servitude; it therefore boosts Gandhi's ethos by affirming a desire for mutual benefit and selflessness." The student offers analyses of additional terms and language choices, concluding the paragraph with Gandhi's assertion of no longer being "blind" but still "serving" as evidence of his "multiple perspectives" and "credibility ... as someone seeking change." The balance of the essay provides a number of well-supported analyses for Gandhi's rhetorical choices: for example, the "if-then" statements that characterize deductive reasoning, the offering of "a plan with provisions by which Viceroy Irwin could prevent Gandhi's disobedience," and the discussion of the letter forcing "the British reader to examine their potential 'greed.'" The essay concludes as especially sophisticated as it began with an equally impressive control of language.

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Question 2 (continued)

Sample: 2B

Score: 5

This essay opens with a promising discussion of the plight of “the black man” and the struggle for “everyday security and pursuit of happiness” taken on by Martin Luther King, Jr. but the connection between that historic movement and “the right for salt to be free of taxation” demonstrates an unevenness that continues throughout the essay. The second paragraph offers an analysis of the term “gravest” in which the student misunderstands Gandhi’s use (“to describe the character India will maintain in their nonviolent fight for independence”). It then makes an assertion that “Gandhi uses an ethos appeal to establish the credibility” of the independence movement but does not provide adequate support for the assertion, leaving the paragraph both uneven and limited. In the next paragraph, the student asserts that “Gandhi sneakily insults” Britain and then challenges them to do “the logical, right thing,” which does show potential for adequate analysis. However, the student does not develop the claim further but instead goes on to discuss diction, demonstrating more unevenness and limited development. There are several moments in the essay where the analysis approaches adequacy, as it identifies rhetorical choices that have the potential for explanation and development. However, the explanations and evidence are never fully developed, so this response remains uneven and limited.

Sample: 2C

Score: 1

There is a lot of content in this essay, but the response fails to offer any analysis of Gandhi’s rhetorical choices. The student instead substitutes the simpler task of offering a brief summary of the content of Gandhi’s letter. Each sentence is merely a declarative sentence about what the student believes are Gandhi’s intents in the letter (e.g., “Gandhi wouldn’t have any trouble to march alongside the co-workers of Ashram and disregard the Salt laws”). Despite its length, this essay is undeveloped, especially simplistic, and weak in its control of writing (e.g., “Gandhi choses to take as many risks as she can to make Britan’s colonial monopoly and taxation give salt”).