

2010 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.)

Benjamin Banneker, the son of former slaves, was a farmer, astronomer, mathematician, surveyor, and author. In 1791 he wrote to Thomas Jefferson, framer of the Declaration of Independence and secretary of state to President George Washington. Read the following excerpt from the letter and write an essay that analyzes how Banneker uses rhetorical strategies to argue against slavery.

Line Sir, suffer¹ me to recall to your mind that time in
which the arms and tyranny of the British Crown were
exerted with every powerful effort in order to reduce
you to a State of Servitude, look back I entreat you on
5 the variety of dangers to which you were exposed;
reflect on that time in which every human aid
appeared unavailable, and in which even hope and
fortitude wore the aspect of inability to the conflict
and you cannot but be led to a serious and grateful
10 sense of your miraculous and providential
preservation; you cannot but acknowledge that the
present freedom and tranquility which you enjoy you
have mercifully received and that it is the peculiar
blessing of Heaven.

15 This sir, was a time in which you clearly saw into
the injustice of a state of slavery and in which you had
just apprehensions of the horrors of its condition, it
was now, sir, that your abhorrence thereof was so
excited, that you publicly held forth this true and
20 valuable doctrine, which is worthy to be recorded and
remembered in all succeeding ages. "We hold these
truths to be self-evident, that all men are created
equal, and that they are endowed by their creator with
certain unalienable rights, that among these are life,
25 liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Here, sir, was a time in which your tender feelings
for yourselves had engaged you thus to declare, you
were then impressed with proper ideas of the great

30 valuation of liberty and the free possession of those
blessings to which you were entitled by nature; but,
sir, how pitiable is it to reflect that although you were
so fully convinced of the benevolence of the Father of
mankind and of his equal and impartial distribution of
35 those rights and privileges which he had conferred
upon them, that you should at the same time
counteract his mercies in detaining by fraud and
violence so numerous a part of my brethren under
groaning captivity and cruel oppression, that you
40 should at the same time be found guilty of that most
criminal act which you professedly detested in others
with respect to yourselves.

Sir, I suppose that your knowledge of the situation
of my brethren is too extensive to need a recital here;
neither shall I presume to prescribe methods by
45 which they may be relieved, otherwise than by
recommending to you and all others to wean
yourselves from those narrow prejudices which you
have imbibed with respect to them and as Job²
proposed to his friends, "put your souls in their souls
50 stead," thus shall your hearts be enlarged with
kindness and benevolence towards them, and thus
shall you need neither the direction of myself or
others, in what manner to proceed herein.

² In the Bible, Job is a righteous man who endures much suffering.

¹ allow

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2010 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 2

The score should reflect a judgment of 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 the holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. In no case may an essay with many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics be scored higher than a 2.

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- 9 Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for a 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 Banneker uses rhetorical strategies to argue against slavery. 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 a 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 Banneker uses rhetorical strategies to argue against slavery. 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 Banneker uses rhetorical strategies to argue against slavery. 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 student's ideas.

4 Inadequate

Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately** analyze how Banneker uses rhetorical strategies to argue against slavery. These essays may misunderstand the passage, misrepresent the strategies Banneker uses or analyze these strategies inaccurately. The evidence or explanations used may be inappropriate, insufficient or less convincing. The prose generally conveys the student's ideas but may be less consistent in controlling the elements of effective writing.

* For the purposes of scoring, *analysis* refers to identifying features of a text and explaining how the author uses these to develop the meaning or to achieve a particular effect or purpose.

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Question 2 (continued)

- 3** Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for a score of 4 but demonstrate less success in analyzing Banneker's use of rhetorical strategies to argue against slavery. They are less perceptive in their understanding of the passage or Banneker's strategies, or the explanation or examples 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 Banneker uses rhetorical strategies to argue against slavery. These essays may misunderstand the prompt, misread the passage, fail to analyze the strategies Banneker 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 a score of 2 but are undeveloped, especially simplistic in their explanation or weak in their control of language.
- 0** Indicates an on-topic response that receives no credit, such as one that merely repeats the prompt.
- Indicates a blank response or one that is completely off topic.

2

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

2A
(1 of 3)

Anti-Slavery

Whether we like to think about it or not slavery is associated with our country's history. There have been several opinions on its constitutional fairness but never the less it happened and eradicating it from this nation was a struggle. During this struggle Benjamin Banneker took a huge step and wrote Thomas Jefferson about his negative feelings on the issue of slavery in which he implemented several religious appeals, repetition, and an array of emotional diction.

Banneker makes several religious appeals ~~that contribute to his anti-slavery stance~~ that attack Jefferson's pro-slavery stance. He states that while Jefferson is "fully convinced of the benevolence of the Father" to all mankind, he ~~also~~ "counteracts his mercies" by condoning ~~and~~ slavery to continue. This skilled religious appeal ~~serves~~ serves a dual purpose, the first of which binds Banneker and Jefferson under a common God. This serves to show Jefferson that Banneker have a mutual religious understanding. But while the aforementioned quote ties the two men together it also scorns Jefferson. Banneker chooses to attack Jefferson under the eyes of God so that he can maintain a polite air while also reprimanding Jefferson. The reprimanding carries so much more weight because it is not the son of former slaves passing judgement but rather a religious follower ~~illustrating~~ illustrating Jefferson's sins.

In accordance with maintaining that polite disposition,



Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

2 2A
(2 of 3)

Banneker continually refers to Jefferson as "Sir." Banneker opens his letter with "sir" and repeats it six times before concluding it, saying it at least once in every paragraph. This serves to show that while Banneker does not condone Jefferson's practices he still has the utmost respect for him and the position he holds. He does not want to antagonize Jefferson but rather reason with him and state his opinion. Continually repeating "sir" shows Jefferson that he is a dignified person which destroys the possible notion that race makes people inferior. It also serves as a concession and makes it hard for Jefferson to become enraged when Banneker is continually ~~striking~~ stroking Jefferson's ego and showing him the utmost respect.

Banneker also ~~uses harsh words~~ utilizes emotional diction in his argument against slavery. He refers to slavery as "gratuitous captivity" and "cruel oppression" as well as speaking of its "injustice." All of these words were specifically chosen to represent the plight of the slave as well as depicting the horrendous life they must endure daily. The harsh words are made personal when he states that they affect "[his] brethren." Now the slaves in question are not just ~~figures~~ figures in the distance but are ~~people~~ people with feelings and connections to other people. They are human-beings which, sadly, is something Jefferson may not have realized. Banneker



2

Write in the box the number of the question
on this page as it is designated in the exam.

Answering

2A
(3 of 3)

vividly depicts what Jefferson's actions are doing to real
life people which is intended to instill some much needed
guilt as well as calling for a radical and instrumental change

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Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

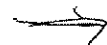
2 2B
(1 of 2)

Benjamin Banneker uses many ~~the~~ rhetorical strategies to argue against slavery. One important strategy he used was to ~~relate~~ ^{relate} ~~an~~ ^{an} ~~anecdote~~ ^{anecdote}, the time in which "the tyranny of the British Crown" ruled America to "a state of slavery" in ~~the~~ his first two paragraphs. Since "the injustice of a state of slavery" is what Banneker is ultimately arguing for, he uses this ~~terminology~~ ^{terminology} to logically appeal to Jefferson.

Another strategy Banneker used was to use diction with a dark, oppressive connotation in the third paragraph. He uses phrases such as, "counteract his mercies ~~by~~ ^{by} indenting by fraud and violence," "grooming captivity ~~and~~ ^{and} cruel oppression," ^{and} "criminal act which you professedly ~~also~~ ^{also} detested" to place blame on Jefferson and show how wrong slavery ~~and~~ ^{and} unequal treatment of humans really is. This ~~strategy~~ ^{strategy} was used to convince Jefferson of his wrongful ideas and actions.

~~Banneker~~ ^{Banneker} uses ~~used~~ understatement in the first sentence of the fourth paragraph as another rhetorical strategy. He states, "Sir, I suppose that your knowledge of the situation of my brethren is too extensive to need a recital here..." This statement purposefully makes readers think about the awful situations that slaves endure as a result of the institution without outright stating ~~the~~ those situations and making a big deal out of it. ~~By using~~ ^{By using} this rhetorical strategy, ~~Banneker~~ ^{Banneker} has placed an emphasis on the ~~situations of slaves~~ ^{awful situations of} the slaves, which emotionally appeals to readers.

Banneker uses hyperbole ~~in~~ at the end of his first ~~par~~ paragraph to emphasize just how wonderful it is to have freedoms in America. He states, "you cannot but acknowledge that the present freedom ... which you enjoy you have



2

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering
on this page as it is designated in the exam.

2B
(2 of 2)

mercifully received and that is the peculiar blessing of Heaven." Of course our freedoms in America are due to the documents written by our founding fathers, not due to "Heaven." ~~But~~ ~~the~~ ~~this~~ hyperbole emphasizes the fact that it is a blessing to have freedoms, and therefore ~~these~~ ^{those} blessings should be passed on to current slaves.

Banneker also uses logical appeal to argue against slavery. Rather than using sources that are not reputable, ~~use~~ ~~uses~~ ~~2 sources~~ very important and reputable sources: the ~~the~~ Declaration of Independence (ironically written by Jefferson himself) and the Bible. The use of these important sources and only these sources helps ^{Banneker} logically appeal to his audience and convince ~~them~~ them that slavery is bad.

These rhetorical strategies used throughout Banneker's letter help logically and emotionally appeal to Jefferson ~~to help convince~~ ^{and ~~show~~} help show how awful slavery really is.

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2

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

2C
(1 of 2)

In Benjamin Banneker's letter to Thomas Jefferson, he uses alliteration and parallelism to convey his message. The use of rhetorical strategies in the letter ~~and~~ is to try to persuade Thomas Jefferson to make action against slavery. Through alliteration and ~~Benjamin~~ parallelism Benjamin tries to gain the reader's attention.

Benjamin uses alliteration in the essay by frequently addressing the person the letter is directed to as "sir". For the beginning of each paragraph "sir" is used and is then followed by a phrase said about the person being addressed. The frequent use of this sentence structure captures the reader's focus and then leads them to the overall message of each paragraph.

Similar to alliteration, Benjamin also uses parallelism to make his letter stand out more. Each paragraph is formatted similarly in order to create a unique style for the literature piece. After each introductory sentence in the paragraphs Benjamin will address the



Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

2 2C
(2 of 2)

intended reader in the sentences, in a way to convince that person to take action and follow the writer's advice. Through the use of parallelism ~~the~~ Benjamin is able to create an ideal format for his persuasive letter.

In conclusion, the rhetorical strategies used in the letter are used to pull the reader in and convince them of the message provided. Benjamin clearly states his opinion and even addresses the person he's writing too. By doing so Benjamin tries to write the most persuasive essay he can in order to go up against slavery.

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AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

2010 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 2

Overview

This question examined students' ability to engage in close reading and rhetorical analysis of a piece of nonfiction prose — that is, their ability to explain the meaning, purpose and effect of a passage and the rhetorical strategies the author employed to convey meaning, achieve purpose and create an effect. In particular, students were asked to read and analyze an excerpt of a letter written to Thomas Jefferson in 1791 by Benjamin Banneker, the son of former slaves and a successful farmer, astronomer, mathematician, surveyor and author. Students were directed to “write an essay that analyzes how Banneker uses rhetorical strategies to argue against slavery.”

Sample: 2A

Score: 8

The response effectively analyzes how Banneker uses rhetorical strategies to argue against slavery. It presents a specific introduction with clear intent: “During this struggle Benjamin Banneker took a huge step and wrote Thomas Jefferson about his negative feelings on the issue of slavery in which he implemented several religious appeals, repetition, and an array of emotional diction.” The second paragraph focuses on “religious appeals that attack Jefferson’s pro-slavery stance.” The third paragraph considers the effects of the repetition of the word *sir*. The fourth paragraph discusses the effects of Banneker’s “emotional diction.” The analysis is developed with evidence and explanations that are appropriate and convincing, and the student refers explicitly to the passage throughout the essay. The response effectively concludes: “Banneker vividly depicts what Jefferson’s actions are doing to real life people which is intended to instil [*sic*] some much needed guilt as well as calling for a radical and instrumental change.” Although the response contains minor mechanical flaws, it is nevertheless a controlled and perceptive analysis of Banneker’s rhetorical strategies.

Sample: 2B

Score: 5

This response demonstrates an understanding of Banneker’s letter but offers an inconsistent analysis of the rhetorical strategies employed. The essay focuses on devices more than meaning, and it is organized in terms of devices. The third paragraph begins with an unclear claim about understatement but then presents a quotation and adequately comments on the text: “This statement purposefully makes readers think about the awful situations that slaves endure as a result of the institution without outright stating those situations and making a big deal out of it.” In the fifth paragraph the response recognizes Banneker’s use of “important and reputable sources: the Declaration of Independence . . . and the Bible” to present the logical appeal. However, the analysis in the fourth paragraph of Banneker’s use of hyperbole is less convincing: “Of course our freedoms in America are due to the documents written by our founding fathers, not due to ‘Heaven.’” With uneven evidence and explanations, the response is developed minimally but is nevertheless sufficient and usually conveys the student’s ideas.

Sample: 2C

Score: 2

The response demonstrates little success in analyzing how Banneker uses rhetorical strategies to argue against slavery. It identifies two rhetorical devices — alliteration and parallelism — but fails to analyze the rhetorical strategies Banneker uses. For example, the response inaccurately explains that “Benjamin uses alliteration in the essay by frequently addressing the person the letter is directed to as ‘sir.’” Although the student mentions Banneker’s purpose, the essay lacks sufficient evidence, explanation and development.