Persuasive DRQ: Pick only one of these three essay prompts.

1. In The Spectator for December 15, 1711, Joseph Addison wrote:

“If the talent of ridicule were employed to laugh men out of vice and folly, it might be of some use in the world; but instead of this, we find that it is generally made use of to laugh men out of virtue and good sense, by attacking everything that is solemn and serious, decent and praiseworthy in human life.”

Position: Defend, Negate, or Qualify

Evidence: Observation, Experience, or Reading

2. The first chapter of Ecclesiastes, a book in the Bible, concludes with these words:

“For in much wisdom is much grief, and increase of knowledge is increase of sorrow.”

Position: Defend, Challenge, or Qualify

Evidence: Observation, Experience, or Reading

3. H.L. Mencken wrote in 1924:

“It is almost as safe to assume that the artist of any dignity is against his country, i.e., against the environment in which God has placed him, as it is to assume that his country is against the artist. The special quality which makes an artist of him might also be defined, indeed, as an extraordinary capacity for irritation, a pathological sensitiveness to environmental pricks and stings. He differs from the rest of us because he reacts sharply and in an uncommon manner to phenomena which leave the rest of us unmoved, or, at most, merely annoy us vaguely. He is, in brief, a more delicate fellow than we are, and hence less fitted to enjoy himself under the conditions of life which he and we must face alike. Therefore, he takes to artistic endeavor, which is at once a criticism of life and an attempt to escape from life.”

“So much for the theory of it. The more the facts are studied, the more they bear it out. In those fields of art, at all events, which concern themselves with ideas as well as with sensations it is almost impossible to find any trace of an artist who is not actively hostile to his environment, and thus an indifferent patriot.”

Position: Defend, Challenge, or Qualify

Evidence: Specific Writers, Composers, or other Artist

Persuasive DRQ: Pick only one of these three essay prompts. State your thesis and bullet specific evidence.

1. In The Spectator for December 15, 1711, Joseph Addison wrote:

“If the talent of ridicule were employed to laugh men out of vice and folly, it might be of some use in the world; but instead of this, we find that it is generally made use of to laugh men out of virtue and good sense, by attacking everything that is solemn and serious, decent and praiseworthy in human life.”

Position: Defend, Negate, or Qualify

Evidence: Observation, Experience, or Reading

2. The first chapter of Ecclesiastes, a book in the Bible, concludes with these words:

“For in much wisdom is much grief, and increase of knowledge is increase of sorrow.”

Position: Defend, Challenge, or Qualify

Evidence: Observation, Experience, or Reading

3. H.L. Mencken wrote in 1924:

“It is almost as safe to assume that the artist of any dignity is against his country, i.e., against the environment in which God has placed him, as it is to assume that his country is against the artist. The special quality which makes an artist of him might also be defined, indeed, as an extraordinary capacity for irritation, a pathological sensitiveness to environmental pricks and stings. He differs from the rest of us because he reacts sharply and in an uncommon manner to phenomena which leave the rest of us unmoved, or, at most, merely annoy us vaguely. He is, in brief, a more delicate fellow than we are, and hence less fitted to enjoy himself under the conditions of life which he and we must face alike. Therefore, he takes to artistic endeavor, which is at once a criticism of life and an attempt to escape from life.”

“So much for the theory of it. The more the facts are studied, the more they bear it out. In those fields of art, at all events, which concern themselves with ideas as well as with sensations it is almost impossible to find any trace of an artist who is not actively hostile to his environment, and thus an indifferent patriot.”

Position: Defend, Challenge, or Qualify

Evidence: Specific Writers, Composers, or other Artist