

AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

2013 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 2

Overview

Question 2, the analysis question, provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their practical understanding of rhetorical analysis. Like the synthesis question, the analysis question requires students to integrate reading and writing skills. Rhetorical reading entails comprehending both the **meaning** and **purpose** of an author's **argument** and its intended **audience(s)**, and students are asked to demonstrate rhetorical comprehension of a text by explaining how the author's rhetorical decisions promote or hinder successful accomplishment of the purpose. In short, rhetorical analysis means explaining not only **what** writers are saying but also **why** and **how** they are saying it.

This year's analysis question featured a passage from Richard Louv's *Last Child in the Woods* that sounds an alarm about the increasing separation between humans and the natural world. The passage opens by mentioning advances in genetic engineering that increase nature's potential as a medium for corporate advertising. Louv then recounts an anecdote in which a car salesman pressures one of his friends to equip her vehicle with a backseat video screen and asks, "Why do so many people no longer consider the physical world worth watching?" In answer to this question, he presents a nostalgic account of the car trips of yesteryear when "children's early understanding of how cities and nature fit together was gained from the backseat," and he imagines a collective "we" telling "our" grandchildren "We actually *looked out the car window.*"

This year's analysis asked students to discern an *implicit* argument directed to audiences far less immediate and concrete than Kennedy's message and audiences in last year's prompt. Louv's "we" is a generational descriptor, separating his primary audience from the generation of readers represented by students taking the exam, a generation for whom backseat video screens have become commonplace. This year's students were therefore positioned as eavesdroppers on a conversation conducted by their elders about young people's changed relationship to the natural world. Louv conveys his message indirectly, by describing a brave new world in which butterfly wings can be designed to carry corporate logos and in which children cannot imagine entertaining themselves by looking out the car window, much less interacting directly with nature.

Sample: 2A

Score: 8

In the opening paragraph of the essay, the student identifies a clear understanding of Richard Louv's argument that "man's connection with nature is sparse ... a sad truth that continues to progress in severity." While the essay presents a rather formulaic approach to analyzing the rhetorical strategies Louv uses to develop his argument, each paragraph presents a full explanation of how each of the strategies (anecdote, hypothetical example, and imagery) serves to advance Louv's argument. In the second paragraph, the student insightfully analyzes how Louv's "accessible anecdote" of the friend's purchase of an SUV "leads the reader to experience the same annoyance the customer must have felt" and intentionally shows that the "salesman's attitude towards dependence on technology is one that is nearly universal in today's society." Despite the rather choppy transition between these discrete paragraphs, the student provides a convincing analysis of how Louv's presentation of the hypothetical "grandchildren" example illustrates the "shocking realism" that calls the reader's attention to the "immediacy of the issue and the pace at which the issue is progressing." The student develops the analysis further by noting how the shift to a nostalgic tone illustrates Louv's desire to communicate the danger that could occur "if the separation between people and nature is not bridged." The student's poignant observation that Louv's imagery creates "a sense of wistful loss that brings the issue home on a personal level to anyone who has ever gazed out a car window as a child" is particularly effective in analyzing how Louv's rhetorical choices are designed to illicit a particular effect and develop a particular purpose. The essay earned an 8 for its overall convincing explanations and its consistent ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing.

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

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2A
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constant need for ~~the~~ technology and his
disapproval ~~of~~ that ~~opinion~~ opinion.

To ~~add~~ continue building off the in-car entertainment anecdote, Louv raises a hypothetical example to help him show his disdain towards the idea. He proposes that ~~we~~ "we'll someday tell our grandchildren" that there was a time when kids "looked out the car window" instead of playing on phones or watching back seat television. The key to the effectiveness of this hypothetical example is that it is frighteningly realistic. ~~Even today~~ Even today, our grandparents tell us about a childhood without TV or internet, so certainly Louv's ~~idea~~ hypothesis could prove to be true. The ~~in~~ shocking ~~and~~ realism of this hypothetical example makes the reader realize the ~~importance~~ immediacy of the issue and the pace at which the issue is progressing, ~~thus~~ effectively causing alarm at the separation between man and nature and possibly creating more hypothetical examples in the reader's mind.

Lastly, ~~and perhaps~~ Louv uses the devices of abstract and concrete imagery to ~~convey~~ ~~his~~ his claim of the separation of man and nature.

Perhaps his most effective device, Louv's imagery paints a scene that is virtually ~~so~~ unable to

