

AP<sup>®</sup>

 CollegeBoard

# 2020 Exam **Sample Question**

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AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
AND COMPOSITION

## 2020 Exam Sample Question 1

(Source: AP English Language Course and Exam Description)

**Allotted time: 45 minutes (plus 5 minutes to submit)**

In May 2012 former United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who was the first African American woman to hold that position, gave a commencement speech to the graduating class of Southern Methodist University, a private university in Dallas, Texas.

The full speech, and a transcript are available on the Southern Methodist University website (<https://www.smu.edu/News/2012/commencement-Condoleezza-Rice-speech>). The relevant passage for analysis begins with the sentence “What do I mean by human progress?” and ends with the sentence “You see, things that seem impossible often seem inevitable in retrospect.”

Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Rice makes to convey her message to her audience.

**In your response you should do the following:**

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the rhetorical situation.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.