
AP[®] English Language and Composition

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

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Free-Response Question 2

- ☒ **Scoring Guidelines**
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Rhetorical Analysis**6 points**

Reshma Saujani is an attorney, author, and activist who founded Girls Who Code, an organization that works to advance opportunities for girls and women to find careers in the technology sector. The following passage is excerpted from Saujani’s contribution to *American Like Me: Reflections on Life Between Cultures*, a 2018 anthology of essays by prominent Americans with backgrounds in multiple cultures. The excerpt begins after Saujani discusses founding a multicultural student organization at her high school. Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Saujani makes to convey her message about the nature of bravery.

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.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Thesis (0–1 points)	0 points For any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no defensible thesis. The intended thesis only restates the prompt. The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt. 	1 point Responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only restate the prompt. Fail to address the rhetorical choices the writer of the passage makes. Describe or repeat the passage rather than making a claim that requires a defense. 	Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt <u>and</u> clearly articulate a defensible thesis about the rhetorical choices Saujani makes to convey her message about the nature of bravery.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Reshma Saujani, who founded the organization Girls Who Code, wrote about bravery in the anthology <i>American Like Me: Reflections on Life Between Cultures</i>.” Make a claim but do not address the writer’s rhetorical choices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “In her essay, Saujani talks about her parents’ bravery after they immigrated to the United States.” Repeat provided information from the passage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Saujani’s parents chose to Americanize their names in order to assimilate into American culture, thereby paving the way for their daughter’s authenticity.” 	Examples that earn this point: Present a defensible thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Reshma Saujani uses comparison and contrast, repetition, and evocative imagery to convey what bravery means to her.” “In her essay, Saujani repeats key words and sentence structures to highlight the link between her parents’ choices and those she has made in her career as a politician and non-profit leader.” “In Reshma’s passage she conveys the message that it is better to be brave and take chances even if you fail, so you can stand apart from the crowd and make a change instead of blending in. Saujani is able to convey this message by first describing a time where she was brave but suffered failures and secondly demonstrating how the failures did not set her back from achieving great things.”
Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. The thesis may be anywhere within the response. For a thesis to be defensible, the passage must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn’t do so to earn the thesis point. A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning. 		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
Row B Evidence AND Commentary (0–4 points)	0 points Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.	1 point EVIDENCE: Provides evidence that is mostly general. AND COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student’s argument.	2 points EVIDENCE: Provides some specific, relevant evidence. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.	3 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning. AND Explains how at least one rhetorical choice in the passage contributes to the writer’s argument, purpose, or message.	4 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning. AND Explains how multiple rhetorical choices in the passage contribute to the writer’s argument, purpose, or message.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes				
	Typical responses that earn 0 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are incoherent or do not address the prompt. May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant. 	Typical responses that earn 1 point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tend to focus on summary or description of a passage rather than specific details or techniques. Mention rhetorical choices with little or no explanation. 	Typical responses that earn 2 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities. May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument. May make one point well but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim. Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established. 	Typical responses that earn 3 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage to build an argument. Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim. 	Typical responses that earn 4 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage to build an argument. Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained. Explain how the writer’s use of rhetorical choices contributes to the student’s interpretation of the passage.
Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row. To earn the fourth point in this row, the response may observe multiple instances of the same rhetorical choice if each instance further contributes to the argument, purpose, or message of the passage. 					

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row C Sophistication (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempt to contextualize the text, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>In a world where...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time...</i>”). Only hint at or suggest other arguments (“<i>While some may argue that...</i>” OR “<i>Some people say...</i>”). Examine individual rhetorical choices but do not examine the relationships among different choices throughout the text. Oversimplify complexities in the text. Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance their analysis. 	Responses that earn this point may demonstrate sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation by doing any of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Explaining the significance or relevance of the writer’s rhetorical choices (given the rhetorical situation). Explaining a purpose or function of the passage’s complexities or tensions. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.
	Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference. 	

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Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

as "sacrifices" (line 66). Savjani describes the sacrifices her parents made - giving up "their community, their careers, their language, their own names" (lines 65-66) - as "sacrifices" which are typically costs deducted from a benefit, such as owning a home or earning an income. Savjani appreciates the bravery of her parents to make these sacrifices so that they, and their children, could have a better life. Savjani's parents actions are a prime example of ~~her~~ her definition of bravery - the willingness to ditch conformity for progress.

Savjani uses character types - people or prototypes that represent larger ideas, such as Romeo and Juliet being star-crossed lovers, or Einstein being a genius - such as "Sweet Valley Jessicas" and "Schamburg Reshmas" to further the readers understanding of her view of the nature of bravery. She uses "Sweet Valley Jessicas" (line 21) and "Key-chain Rita" (line 18) to characterize the person society has pressured her to become, the American girl "raised to value perfection over bravery" (lines 21-22).

Meanwhile, she characterizes her brave, bold, individualistic ideal as "Schamburg Reshma" (line 23). Savjani uses these characters to ~~communicate~~ communicate and honor-home one of the main facets of her view of the nature of bravery - a strength intrinsic to one's unique identity in a memorable way.

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Question 1

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

In Roshmi Sanjani's excerpted contribution to *American Like Me: Reflections on Life Between Cultures*, she illustrates bravery through her own experience of running for Congress as a second generation immigrant and ~~Indian~~ Indian woman. Through her employment of her unusual name as a symbol of her bravery and her attribution of her achievements to her parents, Sanjani conveys from a first-person perspective her experience of being brave in order to impact others.

Sanjani highlights her troubles as a minority Indian woman running for a political office starting with her name. She was told to change her name so that its pronunciation would be easier, but she then describes how she chose not to, using her name as a symbol of defiance against the mainstream. Through her language like "I could never turn my back on Roshmi to become a Key-Chain Rita", and "They want to be Sweet Valley Jessicas instead of Schanberg Roshmis", Sanjani uses her name to symbolize her bravery, advancing her viewpoint that "bravery leads to wonderful things".

In addition, Sanjani also gives credit to her parents, who she described as making ~~great~~ sacrifices for her so that she wouldn't have to. She refers back to her name, saying "they changed their name so I wouldn't have to." This helped her narrative by demonstrating her respect and appreciation for her parent's bravery, using it to further propel her argument for the importance of bravery and defiance against mainstream.

Sanjani portrays bravery using her example of running for Congress, illustrating her bravery from her name and her parent's sacrifices.

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

In this passage, Reshma Saujani uses many moves to develop the message. The nature of bravery is so well developed using confident tones, transitions ~~into~~ and ~~connections~~ ^{connections}.

Starting off, Saujani uses a confident tone of voice to develop her theme of bravery. "I bravely" is repeated multiple times throughout the beginning paragraph showing the reader that not only is she confident enough to do these things, she is confident enough to admit that she "bravely lost by a landslide" (line 11). This tone is followed through the entirety of the passage, in the fifth paragraph ^{bravery} is demonstrated again through her confidence, "yes, I did run for office again a few years later. And yes, I lost again" showing the reader "the nature" or the development/origin of bravery and where it comes from.

Another example that Saujani used to develop their message was the transitions from the repetition of "I" or "I bravely" in the first paragraph to "they" in the last; ^{to} ~~this~~ depicts the ways that confidence + bravery are developed. Starting off with her use of "I / I bravely" shows the reader that she has already developed the skills + how they can; but ending on "they" she discusses her parents role in her development.

Lastly, Saujani connects with her audience as a way to build trust. She uses simple, easy to glance over examples to resemble the ^{almost} ~~after~~ ^{constant} ~~and~~ struggle for many ~~young~~ immigrant/ethnic adolescents: ~~the way that she tells~~ ^{she tells}

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Question 1

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A seedling of a story about how she "was told to change [her] name to Rita" and that "[she] could never turn [her] back on Rashma to become a key-chain Rita," which shows her recollection of a childhood incident.

In conclusion, Rashma Sajani uses wonderful choices to develop her message about the nature of bravery. By choosing strong moves like tone, shifts in perspective and developing credibility Sajani developed their message with great success.

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Question 2

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

Overview

The students responding to this question were instructed to read an excerpt from Reshma Saujani’s contribution to *American Like Me: Reflections on Life Between Cultures*, a 2018 anthology of essays by prominent Americans with backgrounds in multiple cultures, and then write an essay that analyzed the rhetorical choices Saujani made to convey the nature of bravery. Students were expected to respond to the prompt with a thesis that analyzed the writer’s rhetorical choices; select and use evidence to support their line of reasoning; explain how the evidence supported their line of reasoning; demonstrate an understanding of the rhetorical situation; and use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating their argument.

As per the Course and Exam Description, students were expected to be able to read and understand the rhetorical situation and address the strategic choices related to that rhetorical situation, explain how the writer/speaker’s rhetorical choices contributed to the purpose of the address, identify and describe their claims, and analyze and select the appropriate evidence to support their claims.

Sample: 2A

Score: 1-4-1

Thesis (0–1 points): 1

The response presents a two-sentence defensible thesis in paragraph 1 arguing that Saujani offers her “interpretation of bravery, which she defines as a strength intrinsic for one’s unique identity, and often exemplifies in one’s willingness to ditch conformity for progress & individualistic expression. Saujani expertly communicates this powerful message through the use of metaphors, repetition, and character types.” The first sentence in the paragraph establishes the emphasis on bravery with a focused assertion about what it means, and the second sentence provides the rhetorical choices.

Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 4

The response provides specific evidence throughout to support its claims. For example, paragraph 2 moves logically from the “muscle” and “steep taxes” metaphors to the discussion of names. The commentary consistently explains how the evidence supports the argument, and the discussion is especially full: “By Using this metaphor to characterize bravery as a muscle—muscles are what allow us to move around, and exact our leverage on other people/objects—Saujani indicates that bravery is a strength, that can be strengthened through use. In other words, you can become more brave by making brave choices. This speaks to Saujani’s growth mindset.” As this commentary highlights, the response clearly explains how the writer’s use of rhetorical choices contributes to the interpretation of the passage. Later in the paragraph, the response analyzes the tax example: “Saujani’s parents actions are a prime example of her definition of bravery—the willingness to ditch conformity for progress.” The commentary thus builds the argument, and even though the discussion at this point is shorter, it is still adequate and clearly explained.

Question 2 (continued)

Sophistication (0–1 points): 1

The commentary explains the function of complexities in the passage and demonstrates sophistication of thought. For example, it explores the nuanced idea present in the muscle metaphor that “you can become more brave by making brave choices” (paragraph 2). From there it develops the idea further as it moves to a discussion of Saujani’s “growth mindset.”

Although the response brings up “the reader, who is likely interested in learning about how a diverse range of people with multicultural backgrounds reflect the American identity,” it does not explain more fully the rhetorical situation. And while it has some strong sentence structures, the response overall does not have a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.

Sample: 2B

Score: 1-3-0

Thesis (0–1 points): 1

The final sentence in paragraph 1 provides a defensible thesis: “Through her employment of her unusual name as a symbol of her bravery and her attribution of her achievements to her parents, Saujani conveys from a first-person perspective her experience of being brave in order to impact others.” The thesis identifies rhetorical choices and makes a statement about the rhetorical purpose.

Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 3

The response provides specific evidence to support claims and develop a line of reasoning. It focuses on the importance of specific words and details with commentary that connects to the primary claim. For example, in paragraph 2, the claim about “using her name as a symbol of defiance against the mainstream” gets supported with evidence and commentary: “Through her language like ‘I could never turn my back on Reshma to become a Key-Chain Rita,’ and ‘They want to be Sweet Valley Jessicas instead of Schaumberg Reshmas,’ Saujani uses her name to symbolize her bravery, advancing her viewpoint that ‘bravery leads to wonderful things.’”

The commentary, however, fails to support all claims fully. In paragraph 3, for instance, the response discusses Reshma’s parents changing their name by stating, “This helped her narrative by demonstrating her respect and appreciation for her parent’s bravery, using it to further propel her argument for the importance of bravery and defiance against mainstream.” This commentary does not fully explain the connection between the bravery her parents demonstrated and her own.

Sophistication (0–1 points): 0

The style is competent but not vivid and persuasive. The response focuses on “illustrating her bravery” and “her parent’s sacrifices” (paragraph 3), but it does not examine the complexities or tensions between these ideas. It attempts to contextualize the argument when it introduces “her experience of being brave in order to impact others” in paragraph 1. However, it does not develop this idea of “others” more fully, resulting in a broad generalization and there is no explanation of the significance of choices for the rhetorical situation.

Question 2 (continued)

Sample: 2C

Score: 1-2-0

Thesis (0–1 points): 1

Paragraph 1 provides a defensible thesis: “In this passage, Reshma Saujani uses many moves to develop the message. The nature of bravery is so well developed using confident tones, transitions and connections.” The first sentence alone is insufficient as a thesis, but it serves as an introduction to the second sentence, which identifies rhetorical choices.

Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points): 2

The response includes some specific evidence, discussing how “‘I bravely’ is repeated” (paragraph 2) and when Reshma “‘bravely lost by a landslide.’” However, the evidence in paragraph 3 is more general.

The response also has some simplistic explanations. For instance, paragraph 2 discusses the “confident tone of voice” that shows the reader “that not only is she confident enough to do these things, she is confident enough to admit that she ‘bravely lost by a landslide’.” The response does not explain this confidence or how it works in service of the argument. Paragraph 4, for example, provides specific evidence about “‘key-chain Rita,’” but the commentary is that it “shows her recollection of a childhood incident,” failing to discuss how it contributes to the message of the passage. As a result, no line of reasoning is established.

Sophistication (0–1 points): 0

The response makes a brief mention of “connect[ing] with her audience” in paragraph 4. However, it does not delve more into the rhetorical situation and how the choices contribute to it. The response mentions “development” in paragraphs 2 and 3 but it does not delve into the complexities or tensions with that development, nor does it examine the relationships among different choices throughout the text.