

2020

AP[®] CollegeBoard

AP[®] English Language and Composition

Scoring Commentaries - Packet 2

Rhetorical Analysis Question - Kennedy

**AP English Language and Composition
Rhetorical Analysis Question (2020)
2020 Scoring Commentaries**

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Sample A

Score: 6/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C1)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned one point for Row A because it clearly articulates a defensible thesis in the final sentence of the introduction: “In this speech, Ronald Reagan uses the appeal to pathos with emotional tones, a common love for one’s country and president, and an admiring tone in order to achieve his goal of raising money to create an endowment to found a new museum in honor of John F. Kennedy.” The small misstep between “fund” and “found” is understandable in a timed writing and does not substantively impact the response’s analysis.

Row B: 4/4

The response earned four points for Row B because it successfully integrates specific textual references to support all claims within the student’s argument. Each paragraph of the response begins with a clear claim, with numerous examples and commentary clearly connecting back to the thesis’s claim that Reagan’s goal is to raise money for the presidential library. In the second paragraph, the response focuses on Reagan’s attempt “to connect emotionally with his audience.” Specific evidence from paragraph 10—Reagan’s reference to the comet—is followed with the explanation that Reagan includes “this sentence to show that [Kennedy] was a person that people were to be in awe of.” Additional textual evidence is provided to show Kennedy’s international appeal. Commentary then explains that this “appeal to emotion proves to be effective for Reagan as it demonstrates to people what affect Kennedy had on the world.” The response then combines this evidence and commentary to assert that the audience would be “more inclined to donate money to an endowment that will make this possible.” The third paragraph follows through with the thesis forecast that “Reagan also appeals to people by using a common love for one’s country and president throughout his speech.” Evidence of Reagan’s reference to Kennedy’s famous inaugural address is followed by persuasive analysis: “This quote [‘ask not’] that Reagan reminds the audience of is a well-known quote from Kennedy, where his patriotism is shown as he is willing to do whatever it takes to serve his country, and reminding the audience that because Kennedy would do whatever he had to do for the United States of America, they must do whatever it takes to build the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.” The paragraph continues to provide evidence and commentary that both support the response’s line of reasoning about Reagan’s use of emotional appeals and tie back to Reagan’s fundraising objective. The fourth paragraph continues this consistent and thorough development by establishing Reagan’s admiration through Kennedy, dealing with the complexity in the passage that Reagan was a political opponent of Kennedy’s. However, evidence of Reagan’s respect for Kennedy’s intelligence and humor is explained through the idea of Kennedy’s preoccupation with “joy.” Again, commentary connects the importance of these rhetorical choices back to the response’s thesis: “This joy that Kennedy brought to people in his lifetime can be brought to people after his death as Reagan wants people to recognize by donating money to keep the library and museum running.”

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Row C: 1/1

The response earned one point for Row C for a nuanced understanding of the rhetorical situation, returning consistently to Reagan’s role as a fundraiser for the cause of Kennedy’s memorial library and museum. This strategy has a cumulative effect of establishing a strong line of reasoning.

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Sample B

Score: 5/6 Points (A1 – B4 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned one point for Row A for its thesis in the final sentence of the introduction:

“President Ronald Reagan employs parallelism and metaphor in his address to similar mourners of John F. Kennedy to create a reverent tone which he uses to pay his tribute to a great man taken too soon.”

Row B: 4/4

The response earned four points for Row B for integrating evidence from throughout the passage to support the analysis. Although the body of the response begins with a rather lengthy discussion of the “rule of three,” the commentary to explain Reagan’s “description of Kennedy’s contradictory qualities” as influencing “his audience into a respectful, mournful state” helps to explain Reagan’s line of reasoning. The third paragraph provides a clear explanation for why Reagan would compare battle and politics, even if built off the assumption that “many of Kennedy’s supporters were not” highly educated. The commentary to explain this does extend Reagan’s line of reasoning, demonstrating “the valor of those who fight on a battle ground and the respect shared between them.” The response then turns to the evidence and commentary of the “direct comparison of Kennedy to a comet...displaying [Reagan’s] reverence obviously to the common people.” In addition, the response addresses the comparison of Kennedy to music, explaining that “Reagan finally reveals his overwhelming respect and reverence for Kennedy by comparing him to a significant part of history which will live on forever,” fully explaining Reagan’s line of reasoning.

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn a point for Row C. While the response offers a good discussion of Reagan’s appreciation for Kennedy, it does not focus on the larger rhetorical situation of Reagan’s speech. The response discusses some key attributes of the speech but does not discuss complexities in a sophisticated manner. The language communicates well, but it is not consistently vivid or persuasive.

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Sample C

Score: 5/6 Points (A1 – B3 – C1)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned one point for developing a clearly defensible thesis, most directly conveyed in the second and third sentences of the introduction: “[Reagan’s] usage of metaphors, contradicting descriptions, and quotations from other pieces help him to coherently describe Kennedy’s complex character as well as his accomplishments as President. Reagan’s purpose in his dedication speech is to pay tribute to the late President in order to remind American citizens of the ideas Kennedy embodied as President.”

Row B: 3/4

The response earned three points for Row B because it includes textual references relevant to the thesis and explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning. The second paragraph advances the claim that Reagan describes Kennedy’s “character and its complexity through the use of many contradicting descriptions.” Specific textual evidence of Reagan’s use of contradictions is provided in the third sentence of the paragraph and then explained through commentary—“By giving insight to Kennedy’s personality and character, Reagan is able to show the American people that he was not just a President, but he was also someone many of them could relate to. This forces the people to see past his actions as President and respect him for what he was besides the title”—to establish a line of reasoning as to why Reagan would make this rhetorical choice. The paragraph continues with a similar explanation about the role of metaphor in the speech. The third paragraph is an example of commentary failing to integrate some evidence, as the explanation that “love of history and poetry” might be something people “share with the late leader” is not as persuasive as earlier use of evidence and commentary.

Row C: 1/1

The response earned one point for Row C as it suggests a nuanced understanding of the rhetorical situation and is able to show sophistication even at its relatively short length. The second paragraph highlights the deliberate rhetorical manipulation of his audience by Reagan, concluding the paragraph by noting the manner in which Reagan “is able to attest to [Kennedy’s] patriotism and relatability as a man, not necessarily as a President.” Even that quoted phrase serves as evidence of a consistent vividness and persuasiveness in the response’s style.

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Sample D

Score: 4/6 Points (A1 – B3 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned one point for Row A, articulating a defensible thesis in the last two sentences of the introduction: “President Ronald Reagan gave a touching speech at the fundraising event to pay tribute to the former president. Reagan used powerful diction, playful anecdotes, and used Kennedy’s credibility to enhance his speech about him.”

Row B: 3/4

The response earned three points for Row B because it includes textual references relevant to the thesis and explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning. In the second paragraph, the response makes claims about Reagan’s “quality language,” arguing that the “lighthearted words the president used created a smile upon the faces of his audience.” The following commentary, that the people in the audience “are more susceptible to listen and contribute to the fundraiser if what they are hearing are pleasant things,” is simplistic, if not inaccurate. There is an additional claim and evidence about the role of metaphor; however, the commentary that Reagan “used his intelligence to help his listener better understand his message” fails to integrate the evidence in support of the thesis. In the third paragraph, the response claims that Reagan “also used high spirited anecdotes to intensify his speech for the JFK fundraiser,” and then provides specific evidence for support. The paragraph finishes with commentary that explains how the evidence contributes to Reagan’s purpose: “Reagan’s incorporation of tales John F. Kennedy’s life helped to bring his speech to an intimate level. Because of this, his audience is more likely to support the presidential library.” The fourth paragraph is more successful in the moments when it does not label the classical appeals. The evidence that “Reagan narrated certain aspects of JFK’s life” is explained with the commentary that as “Reagan describes how positive and charming JFK was the crowd’s hearts are filled with bittersweet emotions.” The paragraph concludes with an explanation of how specific textual evidence from Reagan’s speech shows that JFK was “a man of the people” and therefore “gave credibility to Kennedy,” with the result that the audience would be “more willing to fund a library dedicated to a certified leader.”

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn a point for Row C. The response’s attempts to integrate the rhetorical situation, while fair, are not sophisticated. There is not an attempt to analyze the interaction among Reagan’s different rhetorical choices. While the language is generally clear, it does not have a consistently vivid or persuasive style.

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Sample E

Score: 3/6 Points (A1 – B2 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned one point for Row A. The first paragraph of the response establishes a defensible thesis over the course of several sentences, ending with a general claim about Reagan’s purpose: “The rhetorical devices used by Reagan to achieve his purpose of his speech of paying tribute to John F. Kennedy are Atmosphere, Imagery, and Apostrophe.”

Row B: 2/4

The response earned two points for Row B because it includes some specific relevant evidence and explains how some of the evidence relates to the thesis. The second paragraph begins with a claim that Reagan “uses the rhetorical device atmosphere to achieve the purpose of his speech.” While the response does correctly identify Reagan’s move to address Kennedy the man as opposed to the library, the response struggles to connect the quoted textual evidence to the claim. However, the commentary for this paragraph does explain that “Reagan uses this atmosphere to get his audience to feel what he is feeling while also creating a tone to help his audience remember the man who stands for this library.” While simplistic, it is not inaccurate. In the third paragraph, a claim about Reagan’s use of imagery precedes quoted evidence from the passage. However, the explanation of the comet disappearing is too literal, leading to a simplistic explanation that does not strengthen the argument: “President Ronald Reagan used Imagery to achieve his purpose of his speech by putting a picture in his audience’s head of the man JFK was.”

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn a point for Row C. While the response does attempt to discuss the relevance of the rhetorical situation, it does not do so consistently throughout the response. No complexities or tensions from the passage are addressed, and while the language of the response is basically clear, the style is not consistently vivid or persuasive.

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Sample F

Score: 2/6 Points (A1 – B1 – C0)

Row A: 1/1

The response earned one point for Row A for the final sentence of the introduction: “Reagan uses a paradox and an analogy to show Kennedy’s value.”

Row B: 1/4

The response earned one point for Row B. The second paragraph includes evidence and a claim when observing that Reagan “says ‘He was self-deprecating, yet proud.’ This is a paradox.” The remainder of the paragraph substitutes summary of the evidence and content from the passage but does not explain how the use of contradictions shows Kennedy’s value. The third paragraph repeats the pattern of the second, offering specific evidence from the text, but the claim about why Reagan uses an analogy suggests a misreading of the passage when it asserts that “we did not take the time to appreciate who he was, until he was gone.”

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn a point for Row C. While recognizing this is a speech, the response does not engage with the rhetorical situation of the fundraising event. It does acknowledge some of the complexities Reagan identifies, but the lack of commentary limits the sophistication of the analysis. And while clear, the response is not consistently vivid or persuasive in style.

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Sample G

Score: 1/6 Points (A0 – B1 – C0)

Row A: 0/1

The response did not earn the point for Row A. The first sentence of the response does identify rhetorical strategies: “In the speech that Reagan made he uses Anaphora and Analogy in it.” The second sentence does have a claim—“The use of these devices makes the writing more interesting”—but it does not respond to the prompt because it does not address Reagan’s purpose of paying tribute to JFK.

Row B: 1/4

The response earned one point for Row B because it includes references to the text that are vaguely relevant and provide little to no commentary. In the second paragraph, the response makes a claim about the use of anaphora and does provide specific textual evidence. The attempt at commentary is initially summary, and the final sentence of the paragraph is unable to link the rhetorical term to purpose, instead offering the oversimplification that “[u]sing yet repeatedly makes a better understanding on how Anaphora is used to honor Kennedy in his speech.” The third paragraph proceeds similarly, with the commentary observing that “[u]sing Analogy makes the story of Kennedy more lively.”

Row C: 0/1

The response did not earn a point for Row C because it does not demonstrate sophistication of thought. While the response does touch on a complexity in the contradictions quoted in the second paragraph, the commentary cited above does not reveal a sophisticated understanding of specific rhetorical choices.