

## Question 2: Rhetorical Analysis

6 points

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/commenceme> [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.

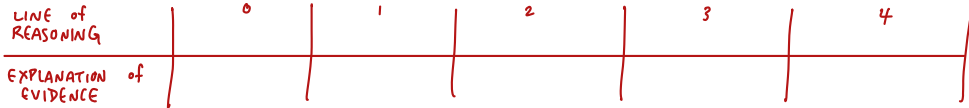
In your response you should do the following:

- 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.

Q2 Rhetorical Analysis – CED Sample Questions

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row A</p> <p><b>Thesis</b></p> <p>(0-1 points)</p> <p><b>1.A</b></p> <p><b>4.B</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b></p> <p>For any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no defensible thesis.</li> <li>The intended thesis only restates the prompt.</li> <li>The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim.</li> <li>There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt.</li> </ul>	<p><b>1 point</b></p> <p>Responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices.</p>
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>		
<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only restate the prompt.</li> <li>Fail to address the rhetorical choices the writer of the passage makes.</li> <li>Describe or repeat the passage rather than making a claim that requires a defense.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respond to the prompt rather than restate or rephrase the prompt <u>and</u> clearly articulate a defensible thesis about the rhetorical choices Rice makes to convey her message.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Restate the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“In her speech to Southern Methodist University, she successfully uses different rhetorical strategies to convey her point to the audience.”</i></li> <li><i>“Rice uses several effective rhetorical strategies in her speech.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Make a claim, but do not address the writer’s rhetorical choices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Rice makes a sophisticated speech to her audience in an attempt to encourage them.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Repeat provided information from the passage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“In certain parts of her speech, Condoleeza Rice’s hits on the key points of segregation and how it divides our nation.”</i></li> </ul>		<p><b>Examples that earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Present a defensible thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Rice’s main point was to get the message across that regardless of our differences, we are all capable of anything. She did this successfully in her speech by relating to the audience and talking about key figures in history, though she could’ve made it even stronger by integrating more personal experiences/stories.”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity.</li> <li>The thesis may be anywhere within the response.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>		

evidence    0. any RESTATEMENT IRRELEVANT    1. some GENERAL (mostly)    2. some SPECIFIC    3. some SPECIFIC \* supports all claims    4. some SPECIFIC \* supports all claims



Q2 Rhetorical Analysis – CED Sample Questions

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria					
<p><b>Row B</b></p> <p><b>Evidence AND Commentary (0-4 points)</b></p> <p><b>1.A</b></p> <p><b>2.A</b></p> <p><b>4.A</b></p> <p><b>6.A</b></p> <p><b>6.B</b></p> <p><b>6.C</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b></p> <p>Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b></p> <p><b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides evidence that is mostly general.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>COMMENTARY:</b> Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student’s argument.</p>	<p><b>2 points</b></p> <p><b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides some specific relevant evidence.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>COMMENTARY:</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>3 points</b></p> <p><b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>COMMENTARY:</b> Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Explains how at least one rhetorical choice in the passage contributes to the writer’s argument, purpose, or message.</p>	<p><b>4 points</b></p> <p><b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>COMMENTARY:</b> Consistently explains <b>how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</b></p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Explains how multiple rhetorical choices in the passage contribute to the writer’s argument, purpose, or message.</p>	
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>						
<p><b>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are incoherent or do not address the prompt.</li> <li>May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 1 point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tend to focus on summary or description of a passage rather than specific details or techniques.</li> <li>Mention rhetorical choices with little or no explanation.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities.</li> <li>May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument.</li> <li>May make one point well, but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim.</li> <li>Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 3 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uniformly offer evidence to support claims.</li> <li>Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage to build an argument.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 4 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uniformly offer evidence to support claims.</li> <li>Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage to build an argument.</li> <li>Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained.</li> <li>Explain how the writer’s use of rhetorical choices contributes to the student’s interpretation of the passage.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>						

Q2 Rhetorical Analysis – CED Sample Questions

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row C</p> <p><b>Sophistication</b></p> <p><b>(0-1 points)</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b></p> <p>Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b></p> <p>Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.</p>
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>		
<p><b>2.A</b></p> <p><b>4.C</b></p> <p><b>6.B</b></p> <p><b>8.A</b></p> <p><b>8.B</b></p> <p><b>8.C</b></p>	<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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>”).</li> <li>• Only hint at or suggest other arguments (“<i>While some may argue that...</i>” OR “<i>Some people say...</i>”).</li> <li>• Examine individual rhetorical choices but do not examine the relationships among different choices throughout the text.</li> <li>• Oversimplify complexities in the text.</li> <li>• Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the analysis.</li> </ul>	<p><b>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:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explaining the significance or relevance of the writer’s rhetorical choices (given the rhetorical situation).</li> <li>2. Explaining a purpose or function of the passage’s complexities or tensions.</li> <li>3. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.</li> </ul>		