

AP English Language and Composition
Free Response Question

Question 2

Frederick Douglass was born into slavery, the son of an African-American woman and a white slaveholder. His dramatic autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave, Written by Himself*, was published in 1845 and led to him becoming one of the most powerful and eloquent orators of the abolitionist movement. Throughout the *Narrative*, Douglass recounts the injustices he and other slaves faced while enslaved. Write an essay in which you analyze the rhetorical choices Douglass makes in order to convey to the reader his message about the institution of slavery.

AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE & COMPOSITION

The Narrative of Frederick Douglass Essay

DRAFT #1 DUE DATE: _____

POINTS: _____

FINAL ESSAY DUE DATE: _____

POINTS: _____

Directions:

You will **analyze the rhetoric** of *The Narrative of Frederick Douglass*, specifically its **rhetorical appeals** (logos, pathos, ethos) and the **rhetorical devices** (tone, diction, syntax, and other significant devices) that are used to persuade the audience that slavery should be abolished. The length of this essay should be 3-4 pages.

Frederick Douglass was a former slave who became a renowned public speaker, politician, educator, and anti-slavery advocate during the 19th century. He traveled throughout America and abroad, sharing his stories about and views on the slave system with abolitionists. In 1845, he published his autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, a text widely read and praised by abolitionists of the time.

Essay Prompt: How does Frederick Douglass make an effective argument against slavery? Analyze his use of rhetorical appeals and rhetorical devices to explain how he persuades his readers that slavery should be eliminated.

Make sure you include a thesis that answers the actual prompt. As you write your essay and analyze the text, keep in mind how Douglass's support for his argument contributes to his **purpose**.

Remember:

- This essay is not about whether or not you agree with Douglass, or whether or not slavery is wrong. This essay is about Douglass's argument, and how he creates a strong, persuasive text using a variety of techniques and strategies.
- Do not simply summarize the events and ideas in the book!
- Think of the events in Douglass's *Narrative* as intentionally and consciously chosen to support his argument.

Mechanics to remember:

- Avoid using personal pronouns (I, you)
- Avoid vague words (thing, stuff, etc.)
- Avoid using slang (a lot, hafta, should of, hecka, cool, gotta, pretty much, like, sorta, just, actually, etc.)
- Do not use contractions (don't, shouldn't, it's, etc.)
- Your essay [rough and final] must be typed, double-spaced, in 12 point Times New Roman font, with one-inch margins (all margins).

BASIC RHETORICAL ANALYSIS ESSAY STRUCTURE

PLEASE NOTE: YOUR ANALYSIS DOES NOT NEED TO FOLLOW THE FIVE-PARAGRAPH MODEL (AND I STRONGLY ENCOURAGE YOU NOT TO FOLLOW THIS MODEL!)

INTRODUCTION (1-2 paragraphs)	Thesis statement, preview of your overall essay
WHAT? (1-2 paragraphs)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the main idea of the chapter. What is the subject matter of the chapter? 2. Identify the author's purpose in writing this chapter (hint: it is likely related to the author's overall purpose in writing the text).
HOW? (2-5 paragraphs)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Identify the tone of the chapter. Use your tone formula. This requires you to ask yourself (which you should have already, in order to identify Q1, above): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What is the subject matter of the chapter? b. What is the author's attitude toward the subject matter? c. How does the author's tone enhance, develop, or match the <u>subject matter</u>? (i.e., What is the function of the tone?) You will need to add some more information about the content in order to thoroughly address this question. 4. Identify the diction and syntax the author uses. Use your diction and syntax formulae. Remember to discuss what the function of the author's diction and syntax is. (You can't time travel, but you are human, just as the author was, and you can take an educated guess about why he chose the words and structured his sentences the way he did.) 5. Identify additional rhetorical devices (parallelism, imagery, personification, anaphora, antimetabole, antithesis, repetition, etc.) and/or rhetorical appeals (logos, pathos, ethos) you find. Remember to discuss what the function of these devices is.
WHY? (1-2 paragraphs)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Conclude your essay with a discussion of the effects of all RDs on the content. Why do you think the author presented the content in the manner that he did? Again, you can't time travel, but you can take an educated guess based on your shared humanity with the author.
CONCLUSION (combine your conclusion with your "Why?" paragraph(s))	Brief restatement of your main insights, analysis in your essay; brief restatement of your thesis statement