

## 2015 Free Response Samples

### Question 1

The conflict regarding the utilization of honor codes can be seen in any school system, from elementary schools to college. Some argue that honor codes are ineffective in reducing cheating in schools, but statistically, that is not the case. While some argue that honor codes should not be implemented for reasons such as ineffectiveness of the code and the creation of a “big brother”-esque environment, honor codes should in fact be implemented because they promote a healthy academic environment, they statistically lower the percentage of academic dishonesty in schools, and they are adaptable to fit any school environment.

Firstly, one might think that honor codes will create a totalitarian sort of school environment. This idea can be seen in Aaron Bacall’s comic, which satirically states that “a spy cam can greatly improve the honor code” (Bacall). While this is a reasonable assumption, it doesn’t hold up when put to the test. For example, in an article by Donald McCabe and Gary Pavela, they point out that “many schools with honor code allow students to take their exams without proctors present, relying on peer monitoring to control cheating” (McCabe and Pavela). They go on to say that a peer culture develops on honor code campuses that just makes cheating socially unacceptable. This proves that an honor code system can be implemented without excessive monitoring of students.

Secondly, some say that an honor code would do little to actually reduce cheating. This idea can be seen in the responses of students at Lawrence Academy in Alyssa Vangelli’s article, stating that they did “not see it as their responsibility” when asked to report cheating (Vangelli). Another example is the Harvard students in Jennifer Dirmeyer and Alexander Cartwright’s article on honor codes, who “are skeptical that signing a piece of paper will suddenly cause a cheater to change their ways” (Dirmeyer and Cartwright). While these are valid assumptions, it can be seen later in Dirmeyer and Cartwright’s article that a strictly enforced honor code run by students reduces the likeliness of someone cheating due to punishment ranging from suspension to expulsion in addition to the social disapproval attached to cheating in honor code schools (Dirmeyer and Cartwright). Furthermore, to return to McCabe and Pavela’s article, “the highest levels of cheating are usually found at colleges that have not engaged their students in active dialogue on the issue of academic dishonesty” (McCabe and Pavela). Due to these factors, the implementation of some form of the honor code system is proven to reduce cheating.

Furthermore, one might say that a too strict or too lenient honor code would not be especially effective when they attend school. However, as can be seen in Vangelli’s article, honor codes can be changed to accommodate the students. For example, the students at Lawrence Academy thought that the original pledge of honor system being applied to every piece of work was too excessive, so it was changed so that students only had to sign a pledge of honesty once each term (Vangelli). This is further supported by Dirmeyer and Cartwright’s experience with Hampden-Sydney College where there is a honor code punishment system, but the professors are able to be outside of the room during exams, because the peer-influenced system is in play (Cartwright and Dirmeyer). These two examples show that the honor code system is flexible and can be effective in many different environments.

In conclusion, honor codes should be implemented in all schools because they foster honest academic environments, they are proven to reduce levels of cheating when put into practice, and the codes are adaptable to fit any environment. There are many who oppose the honor code system for various reasons but when looked at in a larger scope, the honor code system is effective far more often than not.

### Question 2 (B)

The Civil Rights Movement (CRM) was one that changed American society drastically. It is studied in every American History class across the country, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is a household name. Many credit the success of the CRM to Dr. King’s use of nonviolence. Cesar Chavez expresses his unwavering support of Dr. King’s method of nonviolence through logical support and contrast in his article published in a religious magazine.

Throughout his article, he supports his claim that “nonviolence is more powerful than violence” with a strong argument. Chavez uses the idea that nonviolence will “attract people’s support” to promote nonviolence. Anyone looking to elicit change wants just that people on their side. By proving that nonviolence results in gaining support with evidence such as America’s “conscience” and their “yearn[ing] for justice.” Chavez convinces his audience, and any activists or social reformers, that nonviolence is beneficial to any cause. Chavez even refers to history to strengthen his argument, encouraging his readers to learn from the past, “Who gets killed in the case of violent revolution? The poor, the workers.” In most cases the people who are after change are the minority, the oppressed, the “poor.” Chavez’s use of this example dissuades the people who are considering violence to achieve their goal from ever attempting it. When looking at the consequences of violence in history, he convinces his audience that nonviolence is the right choice.

Within each of Chavez’s pieces of evidence, he uses another powerful tool: contrast. The overall organization of his article follows a certain format; he first supports nonviolence and then follows that support with a hypothetical “if.” For example, directly after his paragraph praising the boycott, he has the “if, “If we beat the

growers at the expense of violence, victory would come at the expense of injury and... death." The result is similar to that of when he used history as evidence. The readers have this continued comparison in their minds as they read; nonviolence-good results, violence-bad results. He maintains the comparison through diction as well describing nonviolent protests as "powerful" and the protesters as having a "just and moral cause." Meanwhile, violence is described as "senseless," temporary and demoralizing. All strong and negative words when describing effort to bring change. No activist wants their revolution and its results to be "temporarily successful," which defeats the purpose of revolting, or senseless which implies that there is no reason behind it. By perpetuating this constant contrast between nonviolence and violence, and correlating the terms with successful and pointless, Chavez leads his readers to weigh the options and choose what he believes so strongly to be the right one: nonviolence.

Chavez's vehement support of the nonviolent approach is made clear through his logical, well developed reasons, and his use of contrast between good and bad. According to Chavez, it's not even a choice. Nonviolence is the only way to go.

### **Question 3**

Being polite is considered an unspoken edict in order to be accepted in our first world culture that relies on societal niceties in order to function. Those part of such a community use polite speech to faintly imply intent but as the anthropologist concluded, these phrases are used to communicate politeness rather than the literal meaning of the sentences. This is because although these are unnecessary in accomplishing whatever one sets out to do directly, they are the trappings that make others more receptive to one's own purpose, whether they are superiors, juries, or even the general public. Polite speech is what enables those who use it to obtain what they want in a society free from the pressures other than the simple desire to do something. Polite speech lends respectability to proceedings.

For example, polite speech is an expectation in an environment like school. It is a tacit rule to speak as such when students address teachers or other administrators, and probable that without its implementations, students' words, and by extension, requests or queries, would be disregarded. Polite speech conveys not only a serious intent, but also ensures a subservience that students must display to assure their superiors that they are the ones in control. It is used thus when titles like "ma'am" must be used as addresses, to imply mastery, and when phrases like "please," and "may I" are thrown in to lend an impression of supplication to simple requests. Human nature to assert power over those who ought to follow until they are capable of fulfilling their roles in a community has resulted in polite speech being the indication that respect must be conferred to those higher up in order for one to be taken seriously.

A common platform for polite speech is also when important personages such as politicians conduct ceremonies and must make celebratory addresses. These people know that their words will be broadcast to the general population. Since their continued influence relies on the goodwill of the people, polite speech is used in order to give the impression that their words are official and justified. It separates them from the lower population who use colloquialisms in their informal speech, and places these people as higher up on the ladder of authority, to impress upon their subordinates that they ought to be followed. Throughout history formal language has been associated with those in power, and thus those in power continue to use it as the way to signify that they possess the capability to retain that power, and are fit for the position to lead. Being polite shows that they don't need to resort to baser tendencies to accomplish goals, and provides a veneer of respectability to their affairs.

Lastly, polite speech makes frequent appearances in the language of those working in service to the law, such as judges, lawyers, clerks, court officers, and other officials present during legal proceedings. As with the example mentioned previously, polite speech adds a sense of elevated respectability to proceedings. In venues where legal cases are being tried, polite speech also is utilized to make it seem as though the decisions made are right and completely justified. Because politeness is associated with propriety and thus ethical correctness, when it is used in official decisions it gives those affected, such as juries, accused, and witnesses the closure that the ruling was fair and just. It is meant to be confirmation for those listening that it is likely unquestionable that justice was served. This once again is a product of the human need to be supported in their decisions. Human nature can be subjected to doubt in all cases, but the polite speech used is able to confer a sense of resolution so that people feel secure about the rulings. After all, if they sound so correct, the rational reaction is that it is similarly correct in meaning.

Therefore, it can be seen that although polite speech like regular communication may display intent, instead it in fact is used to relate politeness to the receiver. This connotes subservience, respectability, and ethical rightness to the audience for it, and so functions as a method to persuade those receiving the words to the side of the speaker. The usage of polite speech preys on human susceptibility to ethos and pathos in order to influence them to trust and support the speaker, and therefore it is evident that polite speech is much more than empty words.

## Question 2 (A)

The 60's were the height of the Civil Rights Movement. After King's assassination, there were many calls for a violent response to the tragedy that had struck them. Cesar Chavez pleads with the people to help them see that the best way, the only way to achieve meaningful and significant change is through nonviolent actions. His use of striking diction, juxtapositions, and appeals to fundamental beliefs of his readers leave his audience with little doubt as to the proper course of action.

Chavez, less than 10 words into his request, has already tied "nonviolence" to "power;" this followed by his claims of "nonviolence provides the opportunity to stay on the offensive" gives his readers the impression that nonviolence is innately connected with power and importance. He goes on to say that those who are truly "concerned" about the people will not stray from the path of nonviolence, giving his readers no choice but to agree if they want to consider themselves good people. His deliberate contrasts of words such as "freedom" and "democracy" to harsher, unforgiving terms such as "vicious type of oppression" and "no honor" to describe violence evinces to his audience that violence is a horrid thing while nonviolence and peaceful resistance embodies the virtues of America and citizens everywhere. Although he considers possible protests "we are not blind to feelings of frustration" he emphasizes "balance" and patience through his powerful word choices. His comparisons between a "nearly perfect instrument" of change juxtaposed with "those who espouse violence exploit people" serve the purpose of showing readers who advocate for violence and strengthen support for nonviolent resistance. Chavez's coercive diction and juxtaposition delineates the process of nonviolence and cons of violence, strengthening support for his cause.

Chavez also juxtaposes the two movements while contrasting historical allusions to give more credibility to his argument while portraying peaceful protest for a favorable light to gain support. Chavez uses Ghandi, a famous and highly respected advocate of nonviolence, to allude to the success people can bring since Ghandi managed to win India back from an empire. By directly following that example up with one of a violent movement where poor and helpless people are killed, he portrays the nonviolent movement as highly effective and successful. To further win the support of his readers, Chavez asserts that millions stand behind the cause of nonviolence, implying that nonviolence is more successful because they "attract people's support" as opposed to demoralization and death. By using historical examples and obvious contrasts, Chavez manages to portray peaceful protests in a highly favorable light, encouraging many readers to support his cause—one that seems to be successful, safe, and supported by many.

Chavez also makes full use of the morals of his readers when convincing them to gift him their support. Published in a religious magazine, Chavez's article appeals to readers' sense of religious deity by invoking God. By advocating that God has mandated that life is not something that can be taken away, he sways many of the deeply religious to his side. He also appeals to readers' sense of humanity and virtue, portraying nonviolence as something for those who don't want to exploit the weak or poor, and for those who truly care about people. His audience's morality will not let them be part of a "vicious type of oppression" or have victory come at the "expense of injury... and death" or even "lose regard for human beings." By depicting violence as deplorable and vile, he convinces those with even a shred of decency or humanity that nonviolence is the best and most moral way to bring change.

Chavez not only uses powerful contrast and moving diction to portray his cause favorably, but also – cleverly- appeals to his audience's sense of decency and religion to leave them with the idea that nonviolence is the only truly successful and moral way to achieve their goals.

## Scoring Commentary

### Question 1

This essay adequately argues that honor codes "should be implemented in all schools because they foster honest academic environments, they are proven to reduce levels of cheating when put into practice, and the codes are adaptable to fit any environment." Recognizing that some might dispute the effectiveness of honor codes and "the creation of a 'big brother'-esque environment," the essay refutes the skeptics' arguments by pointing out that schools with honor codes are able to rely on peer-monitoring of exams (Source F) and to reduce the likelihood of cheating through punishment and social disapproval (Source C). This line of argument is developed by synthesizing appropriate and sufficient evidence from the sources. However, at times, the essay makes a more general claim than the sources support, demonstrating an adequate but not effective argument. For example, the essay concludes by arguing that *all* schools should implement honor codes without considering the nuances of the issue. Nevertheless, the essay demonstrates a more thorough development and more mature prose style than an essay scored 6, so it earned a score of 7.

## **Question 2**

**A**

This essay effectively identifies and analyzes three of Chavez’s rhetorical choices – striking diction, juxtaposition, and appeals to reader’s fundamental moral beliefs—to argue that “nonviolence is the best and most moral way to bring change.” Providing convincing evidence and analysis (for example, “Chavez uses Ghandi [*sic*], a famous and highly respected advocate of nonviolence, to allude to the success peace can bring since Ghandi [*sic*] managed to win India back from an empire”), the essay builds its case through a well-developed structure, moving from the analysis of how Chavez’s diction works (“less than 10 words into his request [Chavez] has already tied ‘nonviolence’ to ‘power’”) to end with a broader point about how Chavez appeals to the audience’s beliefs (“He also appeals to readers’ sense of humanity and virtue, portraying nonviolence as something for those who don’t want to exploit the weak or poor”). Although not flawless (sometimes the student overstates the case: “By depicting violence as deplorable and vile, he convinces those with even a shred of decency or humanity”), the essay clearly demonstrates its control over a wide range of the elements of effective writing. For its well-developed rhetorical analysis and effective prose style, this essay earned a score of 8.

**B**

This essay adequately argues that Chavez “expresses his unwavering support of Dr. King’s method of nonviolence through logical support and contrast.” The essay analyzes how Chavez develops his argument with logic (nonviolence attracts support while history shows that violence results in the further oppression of the poor, the workers). Then the essay turns to consider “another powerful tool: contrast,” observing that the “overall organization of [Chavez’s] article follows a certain format; he first supports nonviolence and then follows that support with a hypothetical ‘if.’” This claim is supported with appropriate and sufficient explanation: “If we beat the growers at the expense of violence, victory would come at the expense of injury and... death.’ ... The readers have this continued comparison in their minds as they read, nonviolence—good results, violence—bad results.” The essay concludes by quickly summarizing its two main points, contending, “According to Chavez, it’s not even a choice. Nonviolence is the only way to go.” Despite its rather rushed conclusion and occasional lapses, this essay earned a score of 6 for its adequate rhetorical analysis and generally clear prose.

## **Question 3**

This essay effectively argues that “polite speech is much more than empty words.” Using three well-developed examples, the essay convincingly demonstrates that polite speech in schools, official ceremonies, and in the legal system communicates more than “the literal meaning of the sentences.” In the example of students and teachers or administrators, the essay claims that “[p]olite speech conveys not only a serious intent but also ensures a subservience that students must display to assure their superiors that they are the ones in control.” This claim is supported by appropriate evidence and explanation: “titles like ‘ma’am’ must be used as addresses, to imply mastery, and... phrases like ‘please,’ and ‘may I’ are thrown in to lend an impression of supplication to simple requests.” Similarly, the essay demonstrates that, in official contexts, “formal language has been associated with those in power and thus those in power continue to use it as the way to signify that they... are fit for the position to lead.” In the final example, the essay examines how in legal contexts, polite speech is used “to confer a sense of resolution so that people feel secure about the rulings.” The essay is especially coherent, its argument well-developed, and its prose demonstrates a consistent ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing; for these qualities, the essay earned a score of 8.