

2018 Sample Student Responses

Question 1, Essay B

In theory, the government's power of eminent domain is beneficial to everyone. Enabling government to take private property and transfer it to other private interests... to promote "economic development." To establish "federal parts, preserves, historic sites, and monuments," and to build other infrastructure, eminent domain appears to be a vital tool in furthering and bettering people and their quality of life. (Source C) (Source A). In practice, eminent domain has not only proved to be disappointing in its result, but also harmful to the individuals it directly displaces, Whether its unfair compensation, failure to benefit the local economy, and even forcing people into worse positions than before, eminent domain has caused more harm than good overall.

A key to the use of eminent domain is the "just compensation" for taken private property (Source A). Yet often a time, those affected are not provided with such as Source F details, Richard Stebetton was offered a mere "\$9,249 for a... strip of his property," when a "jury decided... that the land...[was] worth \$32,000 in actuality. That's about a 300% increase from offered value to real value! If landowners aren't properly compensated, then the fundamental execution of eminent domain fails.

In addition, eminent domain has been repeatedly used on the offering of "false promises" (Source B). For example, pitzer had offered to build a plant in New London in the last decade. The process would drive out surrounding homeowners, as those in favor argued the results of the plant would " provide appreciable benefits to the community" such as " new jobs and tax revenue" (Source B). However, the plant was abandoned in 2009, meaning the homeowners had been driven out for nothing, their properties taken for nothing, and the project yielding absolutely nothing. Similar was the 1981 poletown case, which had "displayed some 4,000 people and... businesses, and schools" destroyed, actually damaging the local economy. (Source C). Such examples illustrate that without absolute certainty, the promises made to justify eminent domain frequently fall short, and individuals suffer the consequences of actions that they couldn't control. Under this system, eminent domain is unjustifiable.

Ultimately, the reality of eminent domain's impact on individuals, local economies is demoralizing, and shown it's more unpredictable than helpful.

1B, Score of 6: *This essay adequately develops the claim that "eminent domain has caused more hard the [sic] good overall." The student uses sufficient sources to support their claim. In the second paragraph, the response presents an adequate discussion of "just compensation" that appropriately uses source F to support the student's claim (e.g., "If landowners aren't properly compensated, then the fundamental execution of eminent domain fails"). Moreover, the third paragraph provides an adequate explanation of "false promises" and uses sources B and D to sufficiently support the argument. There are lapses in diction and syntax, but the prose is generally clear.*

Question 2, Essay A

In her commencement speech to the graduating class of Mount Holyoke College, the Secretary of State Madeline Albright asserts that women expand their horizons beyond the chains of societal norms to change and impact the world mainly by relying on powerful anaphora and

Albright masterfully employs anaphoras to emphasize and reinforce her overarching message. Describing the hardships women in history endured, Albright voices "Each has suffered blows, but each has proceeded with courage. Each has persevered. The repetition of "each has" at the beginning of each phrase serves to emphasize the universal experience of adversities and obstacles. Albright utilizes the momentum generated by these monosyllabic words to allow her audience to focus and hone in on "suffered... but [with] courage has persevered." This phrase essentially encapsulates Albright's main

message that despite all obstacles meticulously placed by the world, courageous women have time and time again overcome them in order to realize their own aspirations for change. Moreover, Albright continues this message by repeating “if you aim high enough.” Similar to the common adage “aim for the stars,” Albright seeks to broaden the horizon for her audience – to dare them to venture and brace the unknown. Albright clearly understands that progress and concrete results become reality only when aspirations and desires are met with an equal magnitude of tenacity and determination. By wielding anaphoras as a beacon to unite women in the crusade to challenge the world, Albright effectively conveys her motivation for her message.

In conjunction with her use of striking anaphoras, Albright also employs bold diction to further her message. In describing the current standings, Albright reveals that “some suggest [women to] sit sedately down. Instead, women everywhere – whether bumping against a glass ceiling or rising from the dirt floor... spread the word that we are ready to claim our rightful place as full citizens.” Albright claims that women defy the societal expectation of being “sedated,” numb to their own feelings and desires. Rather than lying around helpless and immobile, Albright invokes words that convey mobility such as “bumping” and “rising” and traveling high, waiting for the critical moment to engulf and wash away the shackles of societal norms that once bound women. In addition, Albright continues her use of such diction in her final paragraph when she asserts “every barrier to justice brought down by your determination will ennoble your own life.” Instead of remaining in the “sedated” state, Albright urges her audience to “ennoble” their lives – that to incite change; they must rid themselves of the damsel-in-distress mentality. She argues that by donning a knight’s armor of determination, women can in order to manifest a noble goal, take direct actions for herself. By using such critical language, Albright strives to instill determination and harden the resolute minds of her audience. In the face of any hardships, Albright hopes her speech comprised of powerful anaphoras and bold diction will inspire and motivate a new generation of women to “explode outward the boundaries of what is achievable on this earth.”

2A, Score of 8: *The opening paragraph of this essay effectively introduces the rhetorical situation, although it is not flawless. The body paragraphs develop the analysis with substantial evidence and explanations, which effectively link Albright’s choice (anaphora and “bold diction”) to the speech’s intended message. The second paragraph, for example, explains how particular phrases in Albright’s speech encapsulate her “main message that despite all obstacles meticulously placed by the world, courageous women have time and time again overcome them in order to realize their own aspirations for change.” The third paragraph likewise effectively explains the speech’s deployment of a wide range of “bold diction” and skillfully weaves short quotations into the student’s own sentences. The last two sentences of the third paragraph, although not separated by a paragraph break, function as an effective conclusion. This essay is not flawless; a more complete opening paragraph and some more clearly defined paragraph breaks would help. However, it effectively analyzes the choices Albright makes to convey her message and does so with prose that controls a wide range of the elements of effective writing.*

Question 2, Response B

In 1997, Secretary of State Madeline Albright gave a well-written, motivational speech to a women’s college in Massachusetts. Albright was able to successfully employ different rhetorical devices, each of which helped Albright convey her message to the audience. Throughout the essay, the most effective devices employed were parallel structure, allusions and metaphors.

Throughout the essay, the use of parallel structure creates a sense of unity and pride in the audience. For example, “we could be satisfied with that... we could relax... we could turn our backs now and risk renewed war... we could stop there.” The use of “we could” at the beginning of these sentences

show the United States could stop what they are doing and let whatever happens happen, but instead are continuing to lead the world toward peace and equality.

The author employs the use of allusions to give examples of the places around the world that changing partly due to the influence and leadership of the United States. "The fighting in Bosnia has stopped... In Burundi I have seen women taking the lead in efforts to avoid the fate of neighboring Rwanda... In Guatemala,... And in Burnia,..." The use of these allusions shows that audience the global-scale effects the United States efforts are having. The allusions also motivate the audience to continue to seek peace, prosperity, and equality around the world.

The author incorporates a few significant metaphors into her speech which have significant effects. "... and explode outward the boundaries of what is achievable on this earth." This metaphor draws a comparison between the audience's actions and the boundaries of what is thought as achievable to take on global problems head-on and to not be intimidated by what others consider possible. The metaphor shows the reader that even the smallest actions can bring about large amounts of change.

This speech, which was read to a women's college in Massachusetts successfully employs the use of metaphors, parallel structure, and allusions to motivate the audience, push them towards greatness, and show how the smallest of actions can change the world.

2B, Score of 5: *This essay shows a grasp of the rhetorical situation and offers a mostly adequate explanation of it. However, it needs more – and clearer – analysis; e.g., the limited analysis of "metaphors" that somehow applies to "the audience's actions." This essay also misrepresents at least one of Albright's strategies as an essay scored a 4 might do: i.e., in the third paragraph, Albright's references to Bosnia, Buruni, et al., are not "allusions." The prose generally conveys the student's ideas but does not rise to the clarity of that in an essay scored a 6.*

Question 3, Response A

The unknown is a concept of crippling anxiety of May. There is fear in the unfamiliar, the possibility of failure, of danger, of embarrassment. In a contrasting way, author Anne Morrow Lindbergh describes the "disappointed and surprises" of the unfamiliar, the failures and the unexpected moments that are "the most fulfilling. In this sense, she is absolutely correct. The exploration of the unknown has led to unprecedented scientific development, cultural development, and personal development alike.

The principles of science are synonymous with exploration of the unknown. President John F. Kennedy is famously quoted as saying that the US would land on the moon "not because it is easy, but because it is hard. "In the face of public uncertainty, Kennedy set out to explore one of the biggest unknowns of modern humanity. Outer space. Obviously, the moon landing was successful, and the subsequent technological development benefitted all aspects of society. Billions were allocated in research finding, and as a result, humanity escaped its sphere of knowledge greatly. Yet, this is not a recent phenomenon. One of the most famous scientists in history Galileo Galilei, chose to explore and challenge commonly held truth, He was ridiculed for claiming that the Earth revolved around the Sun, yet it was his desire to enter into the unfamiliar that led to the scientific advances by the US under Kennedy so many centuries later. Scientists throughout history- Kepler, Brahe, Boyle, Tyson, Hawking, Charles, Graus and more- made their names by engaging with the unknown, and humanity will forever be indebted to them for their tenacity.

Yet, this trend is not limited to the realm of science. Theorists of music know of the many "eras" of music, from medieval to classical to romantic. The most notable example of an exploration into the unknown is found in the baroque period, under the compositions of Johann Sebastian Bach. Bach is one of the few composers who can claim to have created his own era of music, and he did this by exploring the possibilities of a chamber orchestra. He, by exploring new territory in music, changed the face of

string and orchestral music, employing elements of fugue and countermelody that can be found frequently in subsequent eras and even in the pop music of today. Like scientists, musicians are known for being barrier-breakers. Listening to a performance of Dmitri Shostakovich's 12th String Quartet (written in the 20th century, which is considered "modern" by musicians) will demonstrate how musicians are continuing to explore the limitless possibilities of sound. By breaking the constraints of cultural norms and exploring the unknown, composers have brought lasting cultural development to fruition.

Finally, an exploration of the unfamiliar is a powerful tool of personal development, in addition to the scientific and cultural benefits. This is best demonstrated by the life and legacy of Transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau. Thoreau famously spent a period of his life living in seclusion on the banks of Walden Pond in the northern United States. Like Bach and Shostakovich, Thoreau helped to establish a new genre in his craft. Thoreau, along with others like Ralph Waldo Emerson, created the transcendentalist movement, now studied by millions of scholars and students across the world. While his exploration of new ideas in literature is certainly notable, it is the context of his writing that is most important in the context of the theme of the unknown. Thoreau wrote Walden to summarize his thoughts and experiences throughout the time he spent on the pond of the same name. Reading Walden gives a clear impression of Thoreau as a dynamic character, one who develops and alters himself. Thanks to the knowledge he obtains. It is clear that after his experience on the pond, Thoreau has changed for the better: he is more introspective; he has come to realizations about the world. Thus, Thoreau's decision to leave society and live in the unfamiliar wilderness led to his own personal improvement in a grand way.

When Lindbergh writes of the unknown being "enriching," she severely understates the true benefits of exploration. The unknown is more than "enriching." It is a demonstration of the humanity, a reflection of a true desire to understand the world, and a crucial point of living in a changing world. The unknown has allowed the human race to develop, improve, and augment itself scientifically, culturally, and personally, and for those causes, it is clearly incredibly valuable.

3A, Score of 9: *This essay is especially sophisticated in its argument and particularly impressive in its control of language. The response employs overwhelmingly convincing evidence, calling on the likes of JFK, Galileo, as well as a list of ground-breaking scientists at the end of the second paragraph. The seamless transitions from the scientific to the musical and ultimately the literary are offered with appropriate and convincing explanations and extensive development. This essay presents an ideal example of a five-paragraph essay done more than effectively, as evidenced in the last line: "The unknown has allowed the human race to develop, improve, and augment itself scientifically, culturally, and personally, and for those causes, it is clearly incredibly valuable."*

Question 3, Response B

Many children hesitate to swim in natural bodies of water, composed to an artificial swimming pool. Artificial swimming pools have a flat bottom surface that is easy to see. Lakes, ponds, and oceans harbor many more interesting features that are more difficult to identify. Society has a very difficult time trying new/unknown things. Lindbergh correctly identifies the human hesitation to exploring the unknown, alongside the results of exploring the unknown.

Lindbergh effectively correlates the term "unknown" with new things or things humans are not aware of. She then states that humans tend to stay away from things that are unknown. Children cannot see the bottom of a lake or sea due to the lack of transparency with the water. Because it is difficult to see the bottom surface, people develop natural fears. This is also true for many common parables. In

the story of Jonah, an evangelist disobeyed God's orders to preach at a specific city. This was due to the fact that Jonah feared the people of said city because he had never been there before. As a result, Jonah began traveling to a city he did have recent experiences with, and suffered consequences. This fear for the unknown causes people to stay away from unknown things.

Lindbergh is also correct when it comes to the evidence of the unknown. This is due to the surprise of discovering what the unknown actually is. Natural bodies of water are home to many plants, animals, natural formations, and other unusual features. If hesitant children developed the courage to explore under the surface, they would discover new species and other interesting things. Trying new foods can bring about a change in the way a person thinks about food and other cultures. Exploring the unknown provides opportunities for surprise and enlightenment.

Things that are unknown also come with a sense of fear, alongside opportunities for enlightenment. The definition of progress in any society in trying a new unknown strategy for success and determining whether it should be used or avoided. A society will make progress when they find a strategy that works and continues to use it. Then, choosing the unknown is a necessity.

3B, Score of 5: *This essay attempts to use the concept of children preferring swimming in a pool as opposed to in a natural body of water as a metaphor for the fear of exploring the unknown. The student speaks of "human hesitation" to explore the depths of lakes and oceans that "harbor... interesting features, that are more difficult to identify." Carrying this metaphor forward, the response notes that "humans tend to stay away from things that are unknown" due to fear. It builds on this evidence by offering the Biblical story of Jonah and drawing on his fear, but the evidence used is uneven and limited (e.g., "As a result, Jonah began traveling to a city he did have recent experience with, and suffered consequences"). In another instance of discussing fear, the essay alludes to "[t]rying new foods" but does not develop that thought beyond one sentence. Overall, the limited nature of the response resulted in it earning a score of 5.*