

2010 AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Question 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

Benjamin Banneker, the son of former slaves, was a farmer, astronomer, mathematician, surveyor, and author. In 1791 he wrote to Thomas Jefferson, framer of the Declaration of Independence and secretary of state to President George Washington. Read the following excerpt from the letter and write an essay that analyzes how Banneker uses rhetorical strategies to argue against slavery.

Line
5 Sir, suffer¹ me to recall to your mind that time in which the arms and tyranny of the British Crown were exerted with every powerful effort in order to reduce you to a State of Servitude, look back I entreat you on the variety of dangers to which you were exposed; reflect on that time in which every human aid appeared unavailable, and in which even hope and fortitude wore the aspect of inability to the conflict and you cannot but be led to a serious and grateful sense of your miraculous and providential preservation; you cannot but acknowledge that the present freedom and tranquility which you enjoy you have mercifully received and that it is the peculiar blessing of Heaven.

15 This sir, was a time in which you clearly saw into the injustice of a state of slavery and in which you had just apprehensions of the horrors of its condition, it was now, sir, that your abhorrence thereof was so excited, that you publickly held forth this true and valuable doctrine, which is worthy to be recorded and remembered in all succeeding ages. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

25 Here, sir, was a time in which your tender feelings for yourselves had engaged you thus to declare, you were then impressed with proper ideas of the great

30 valuation of liberty and the free possession of those blessings to which you were entitled by nature; but, sir, how pitiable is it to reflect that although you were so fully convinced of the benevolence of the Father of mankind and of his equal and impartial distribution of those rights and privileges which he had conferred upon them, that you should at the same time counteract his mercies in detaining by fraud and violence so numerous a part of my brethren under groaning captivity and cruel oppression, that you should at the same time be found guilty of that most criminal act which you professedly detested in others with respect to yourselves.

35 Sir, I suppose that your knowledge of the situation of my brethren is too extensive to need a recital here; neither shall I presume to prescribe methods by which they may be relieved, otherwise than by recommending to you and all others to wean yourselves from those narrow prejudices which you have imbibed with respect to them and as Job² proposed to his friends, “put your souls in their souls stead,” thus shall your hearts be enlarged with kindness and benevolence towards them, and thus shall you need neither the direction of myself or others, in what manner to proceed herein.

² In the Bible, Job is a righteous man who endures much suffering.

¹ allow

2010 Banneker

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

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Anti-Slavery

Whether we like to think about it or not slavery is associated with our country's history. There have been several opinions on its constitutional fairness but never the less it happened and idealizing it from this nation was a struggle. During this struggle Benjamin Banneker took a huge step and wrote Thomas Jefferson about his negative feelings on the issue of slavery in which he implemented several religious appeals, repetition and an array of emotional diction.

Banneker makes several religious appeals ~~that~~ that attack Jefferson's pro-slavery stance. He states that while Jefferson is "fully convinced of the benevolence of the Father" to all mankind he ~~is~~ "condemns his mercy" by condoning ~~the~~ slavery to continue. This skilled religious appeal ~~also~~ serves a dual purpose. The first of which Banneker and Jefferson under a common God. This serves to show Jefferson that Banneker have a mutual religious understanding. But while the aforementioned quote ties the two men together it also stings Jefferson. Banneker dares to attack Jefferson under the eyes of God so that he can maintain a polite air while also reprimanding Jefferson. The reprimanding comes with more weight because it is not the son of former slaves passing judgement but rather a religious follower ~~and~~ illustrating Jefferson's sins.

In accordance with maintaining their polite disposition.

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

2
2A
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Banneker continually refers to Jefferson as "Sir." Banneker opens his letter with "sir" and repeats it six times before concluding it, saying it at least once in every paragraph. This serves to show that while Banneker does not condemn Jefferson's practices he still has the utmost respect for him and the position he holds. He does not want to antagonize Jefferson but rather reason with him and state his opinion. Continually repeating "sir" about Jefferson that he is a dignified person which destroys the possible notion that race makes people inferior. It also serves as a concession and makes it hard for Jefferson to become enraged when Banneker is continually ~~stating~~ stating Jefferson's ego and shaming him the utmost respect.

Banneker also ~~utilizes~~ utilizes emotional diction in his argument against slavery. He refers to slavery as "grazing captivity" and "small oppression" as well as speaking of it as "injurious." All of this words were specifically chosen to represent the plight of the slave as well as depicting the horrendous life they must endure daily. The harsh words are made personal when he states that they affect "Ours brethren." Now the slaves is questioned are not just ~~the~~ people with feelings and connections to other people they are human beings which adds it something Jefferson may not have realized. Banneker vividly depicts what Jefferson's actions are doing to real life people which is intended to instill some much needed guilt as well as calling for a radical and instrumental change.

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Score $\frac{11}{TCE S}$