

# RHETORICAL ANALYSIS ESSAY GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT NOTES

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*“Without continual growth and progress, such words as  
improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning.”*

*--Benjamin Franklin*

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## **DEFENSIBLE THESIS -- (DEFINED SPECIFICALLY BELOW)**

Responses that EARN this point:

**Respond to the prompt rather than restate or rephrase the prompt and clearly articulate a defensible thesis about the rhetorical choices the writer makes.**

Additional Notes:

- The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity.
- The thesis may be anywhere within the response.
- For a thesis to be defensible, the passage must include at least minimal evidence that could be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point.

## **DEFENSIBLE THESIS-- NOTES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

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## **USE OF EVIDENCE & COMMENTARY-- (DEFINED SPECIFICALLY BELOW)**

- EVIDENCE
  - Specific, directly pulled from the text in “ ” and paraphrased sections
  - Related to the claim put forth in the thesis
  - Supports a line of reasoning
- COMMENTARY
  - Explains the relevance of the evidence given thoroughly
  - Connects the evidence to the thesis and main point the writer is proving
  - Explains how the evidence supports a pattern or line of reasoning in the text

## **USE OF EVIDENCE & COMMENTARY-- NOTES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

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## **SOPHISTICATION -- (DEFINED SPECIFICALLY BELOW)**

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:

- « **Explaining the significance or relevance of the writer's rhetorical choices (given the rhetorical situation).**
- « **Explaining a purpose or function of the passage's complexities or tensions.**
- « **Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive throughout the student's response.**

*No point earned for the following:*

- *Attempt to contextualize the text, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations.*
- *Only hint at or suggest other arguments.*
- *Examine rhetorical choices but do not examine the relationships among different choices throughout the passage.*
- *Oversimplify complexities in the passage.*
- *Use complicated or complex sentences or language that are ineffective because they do not enhance their analysis.*
- *This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student's argument, not merely a phrase or reference.*

## **SOPHISTICATION-- NOTES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

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## **ESSAY STRUCTURE & MECHANICAL ATTRIBUTES -- (DEFINED SPECIFICALLY BELOW)**

**Structure of the essay is conducive to setting forth a strong argument, including:**

- Proper paragraphing
- Proper citing of references to the text
- Order of points made is logical and builds toward strongest point
- Introduction sets forth direction of argument
- Conclusion wraps up the essay with elements to gain the sophistication point

**Mechanics of the essay are indicative of command of language:**

- Spelling is correct, to the best of one's ability, including correct spelling of author's name
- Grammar is correct, to the best of one's ability, and proofreading is evident
- Sentences vary in length and grammatical structure in order to maintain reader interest
- Word choice is sophisticated, to the best of one's ability, and shows command of language

## **ESSAY STRUCTURE & MECHANICAL ATTRIBUTES -- NOTES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

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