

2002 AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)

Question 2

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

Below are excerpts from a crucial scene in Shakespeare's ^{fiction 413.C.} play *Julius Caesar*. Calphurnia, Caesar's wife, has ^{2 speakers} dreamt that Caesar will be murdered and tries to persuade him to remain at home, where he will be safe. Decius, a ^{wife + "friend"} member of a group of conspirators, tries to persuade Caesar to go to the Senate, where the conspirators plan to kill him.

Read the excerpts carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the rhetoric of both arguments and explain why you think that Caesar finds Decius's argument more persuasive than Calphurnia's. You may want to consider such elements as choice of detail, use of appeals, and understanding of audience.

What leads Caesar to listen to Decius more than his wife?

Cal's language = scary, dark, evil

Very strange happenings + Cal, who isn't superstitious, is scared by omens

Calphurnia. Caesar, I never stood on ceremonies,¹
 Yet now they fright me. There is one within,
 Besides the things that we have heard and seen,
 Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch.
 A lioness hath whelped in the streets,
 And graves have yawned, and yielded up their dead;
 Fierce fiery warriors fought upon the clouds
 In ranks and squadrons and right form of war
 Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol;
 The noise of battle hurtled in the air,
 Horses did neigh and dying men did groan,
 And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets.
 O Caesar, these things are beyond all use,²
 And I do fear them.

appealing to Caesar's superstitious nature + fear in signs.

15 Caesar. What can be avoided
 Whose end is purposed by the mighty gods?
 Yet Caesar shall go forth; for these predictions
 Are to the world in general as to Caesar.

Doesn't work - Caesar believes those signs aren't specific to him but to the world.

Omens don't happen for regular people only important people use you.

Calphurnia. When beggars die, there are no comets seen;
 The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.

- appeals to his ego.

25 Caesar. Cowards die many times before their deaths;
 The valiant never taste of death but once.
 Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
 It seems to me most strange that men should fear,
 Seeing that death, a necessary end,
 Will come when it will come.

I can't be seen as a coward - I don't fear death, for it is a certainty in life. If it happens, then so be it.

Calphurnia. Alas, my lord,
 Your wisdom is consumed in confidence.³
 Do not go forth today. Call it my fear
 That keeps you in the house and not your own.
 We'll send Mark Antony to the Senate House,
 And he shall say you are not well today.
 Let me, upon my knee, prevail in this.

Gives him excuse for not going she begs him

- appeals to his love for.

2002 AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE
 QUESTIONS (Form B)

35 Caesar. Mark Antony shall say I am not well,
 And for thy humor, I will stay at home.

it works! He agrees to stay home, but he's only humoring her (not convinced!)

Enter Decius.

40 Caesar. Calphurnia here, my wife, stays me at home.
 She dreamt tonight she saw my statue,
 Which, like a fountain with an hundred spouts,
 Did run pure blood, and many lusty Romans
 Came smiling and did bathe their hands in it.
 And these does she apply for warnings and portents
 And evils imminent, and on her knee
 Hath begged that I will stay at home today.

Cal also appealed to his fear by telling Caesar of her creepy dream

she's scared & has begged me to stay home

45 Decius. This dream is all amiss interpreted;
 It was a vision fair and fortunate:
 Your statue spouting blood in many pipes,
 In which so many smiling Romans bathed,
 Signifies that from you great Rome shall suck
 50 Reviving blood, and that great men shall press
 For tinctures, stains, relics, and cognizance.⁴
 This by Calphurnia's dream is signified.

Reinterprets the dream in a positive way = Rome will be revived under you & you'll be well-loved for it = appeal to Caesar's ego & desire to be liked

Decius' language = flattery, threats, more flattery.

Caesar. And this way have you well expounded it.

Decius. I have, when you have heard what I can say;
 55 And know it now, the Senate have concluded
 To give this day a crown to mighty Caesar.
 If you shall send them word you will not come,
 Their minds may change. Besides, it were a mock
 Apt to be rendered, for someone to say
 60 "Break up the Senate till another time,
 When Caesar's wife shall meet with better dreams."
 If Caesar hide himself, shall they not whisper
 "Lo, Caesar is afraid"?
 Pardon me, Caesar, for my dear dear love
 65 To your proceeding⁵ bids me tell you this,
 And reason to my love is liable.

appeals to Caesar's desire for power by speaking of the offer of the crown.

appeals to Caesar's fear of looking like a coward or a weak man who would bend to his wife.

Caesar. How foolish do your fears seem now,
 Calphurnia!
 I am ashamed I did yield to them.
 70 Give me my robe, for I will go.

I love you so much, I had to tell you these truths. Decius ultimately wins because he understands what is most important to Caesar - his ego, his desire for power, & his reputation.

¹ stood on ceremonies: paid attention to omens
² use: normal experience
³ consumed in confidence: destroyed by too much confidence
⁴ cognizance: mark of identification worn by a nobleman's followers
⁵ proceeding: advancement