

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 play *Julius Caesar*. Calphurnia, Caesar's wife, has dreamt that Caesar will be murdered and tries to persuade him to remain at home, where he will be safe. Decius, a 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.

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,
Line Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch.
5 A lioness hath whelpèd 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;
10 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.

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.

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

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,
25 It seems to me most strange that men should fear,
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come.

.....

Calphurnia. Alas, my lord,
Your wisdom is consumed in confidence.³
30 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.

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

Enter Decius.

.....

Caesar. Calphurnia here, my wife, stays me at home.
She dreamt tonight she saw my statue,
Which, like a fountain with an hundred spouts,
40 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.

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.

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.

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.

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