

Question 1—Synthesis Essay

How to Score 6 Points

- Address the prompt with a defensible thesis.
- Present specific evidence from at least three sources and consistently explain how the evidence supports your thesis statement.
- Use style and rhetoric to persuade the reader.

Source Overview

- Source A:** President Kennedy explains that the U.S. seeks to go to the Moon to ensure that the benefits of space exploration are used for the betterment of all people.
- Source B:** Space exploration has lost the primacy it had during the Cold War and is now politically discretionary. However, exploring space still offers an opportunity for international cooperation as it did in the past.
- Source C:** NASA ranks fourth in federal research and development funding, after the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, and Energy, and ahead of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Education.
- Source D:** *The Telegraph* reports that Stephen Hawking believes a biological threat from humans, in the form of an engineered virus, will eliminate humanity unless we extend our species into space colonies.
- Source E:** A 2003 popular poll found that 82% of those questioned supported continuing a manned space shuttle program in the wake of the Columbia accident. Further, a majority of those polled want to maintain current levels of NASA funding and maintain manned missions.
- Source F:** Marko Kovic considers the moral risks of space exploration, arguing for the establishment of evidenced-based, ethically responsible governance to ensure the safety of space colonization.

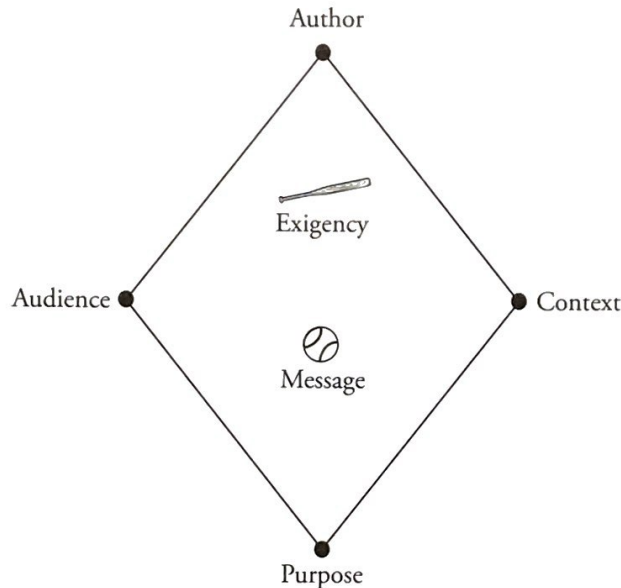
Sample First Paragraph

For as long as there has been space exploration, there have been those questioning its legitimacy as a science and worth as a public investment. While space exploration is certainly productive and beneficial, one would be justified in questioning whether or not NASA merits being the fourth highest funded research and development agency in the United States today.

Question 2—Rhetorical Analysis Essay

How to Score 6 Points

Use the Rhetorical Diamond! While you're reading the prompt and the passage, imagine—and try to flesh out—a baseball diamond with the following six points:



Author: President Barack Obama

Audience: Attendees of the First Session of COP21 in Paris, France

Purpose: To inspire the audience to work toward solutions for climate change

Context: A president from the U.S. gives a public address to the United Nations Climate Change Conference.

Exigency: The imminent dangers climate change poses to the international community

Message: International leaders must act now to avert the worst effects of climate change.

Sample Rhetorical Modes and Devices

- **First-person plural pronouns:** “What should give us hope that this is a turning point, that this is the moment we finally determined we would save our planet, is the fact that our nations share a sense of urgency about this challenge and a growing realization that it is within our power to do something about it.”
- **Personification:** “Alaska, where the sea is already swallowing villages and eroding shorelines...”
- **Oxymoron:** “...where permafrost thaws and the tundra burns...”
- **Parallelism:** “Submerged countries. Abandoned cities. Fields that no longer grow. Political disruptions that trigger new conflict...”
- **Hypothetical situation:** “Our generation may not even live to see the full realization of what we do here. But the knowledge that the next generation will be better off for what we do here—can we imagine a more worthy reward than that? Passing that on to our children and our grandchildren, so that when they look back and they see what we did here in Paris, they can take pride in our achievement.”

Sample First Paragraph

World leaders today face a threat the likes of which none before have known: climate change, and the environmental threats that face populations across all national borders. In opening the First Session of the COP21 summit in 2015, President Barack Obama sought to acknowledge the challenges posed by climate change and call the international leaders gathered to action. To do so, President Obama acknowledges the fear and challenges associated with climate change and uses first-person plural pronouns, poetic devices, and hypothetical scenarios to inspire his audience to take action against climate change.

Question 3—Argument Essay

How to Score 6 Points

- Take a definite position, so no one will question where you stand on the topic of the prompt.
- Develop an argument that builds and moves forward instead of simply repeating the same point several times in different ways.
- Support the points in your argument with evidence drawn from your own knowledge, reading, experiences, and observations.
- Explain how your evidence supports your argument.

Sample Evidence

- I'm afraid to ride in a car exceeding 80 miles per hour or otherwise driving recklessly.
- Many use cognitive behavioral therapy to address irrational fears, like the fear of flying or the fear of dogs.
- Jerry Seinfeld has a bit about more people being afraid of public speaking than being afraid of dying, meaning most people would rather be lying in the casket than giving the eulogy at a funeral.
- Taking on a new challenge, like more responsibility or introducing one's self to a new friend, can feel scary.
- Some fears are instinctive, such as fire, enclosed spaces, heights, extreme weather, and earthquakes.

Sample First Paragraph

Fear is a primal human emotion, an instinct that safeguards us against the dangers inherent to being human in the world. While our fear can keep us alive, acknowledging our fears can also be a powerful tool for individual growth. While we should always consider doing what we are afraid to do, we should also consider whether or not our fear is keeping us safe.