



## AP<sup>®</sup> English Language and Composition 2002 Sample Student Responses Form B

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Write in the box the number of each question you are answering as it is designated in the examination.

Question 2

H<sub>1</sub>

In these excerpts from Julius Caesar, Caesar is being pulled in two directions at once. Calphurnia is attempting to make Caesar avoid making her nightmare come true. Decius, who knows that the nightmare is destined to come true, tries to persuade Caesar otherwise, to fall into a trap.

It is an age-old, unwritten law that husbands must listen with reverence to their wives. Calphurnia's audience is Caesar, and she knows, ~~that~~ ~~like~~ like modern-day wives, that he can be convinced if she persuades him enough. Her argument is simply her dream, the premonition that he will die and a lot of war and warriors would be present, and ghosts came out of graves and walked around. She feels all of this has been shown to her because his death is approaching, and she is afraid for him. In lines 19-21, she chooses to ~~not~~ appeal by saying that nothing at all happens when a common man dies, but ~~if~~ if and when he should die, the heavens themselves would blaze forth. When her arguments prove to be rather unsuccessful, as seen in

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Write in the box the number of each question you are answering as it is designated in the examination.

H2

Caesar's statement that death shall come when it will, she resorts to begging, pleading for him to stay away from the Senate house (that may lead to a fulfillment of her dreams) just for the day.

For Caesar, who throughout these excerpts is merely the audience, his wife has said what was needed, and in order to make her happy, he succumbs to her pleading arguments and decides to remain at home.

Then Decius enters the picture. Decius, whom Caesar does not know is a traitor, who decides to begin his arguments which, so Decius hopes, will lead ~~the~~ Caesar on the trail to his death. Decius's arguments are all formulated out of lies to trick Caesar. First to get Caesar's wife out of the picture, he refutes all that she has said, and says her dream is a premonition for great things, happy things - the Romans won't wash their hands in Caesar's blood, they will be revived because of Caesar, and of course his

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2

H3

death is not ~~near~~ near, the blood Calpurnia saw was nectar, sustenance that the Romans used for nourishment, not his death, but growth for the country. Decius then goes on to say that Caesar has received an award, a crown, that he will be presented with on that day, so he should show up. He ~~it~~ says that if Caesar doesn't show, he is a chicken - afraid of something unknown. He builds Caesar up, convincing him of his greatness.

The effectiveness of this argument is brought about by the buildup of Caesar's ego, trickery, and deceit. But it is successful, because Caesar, the audience, like this ego buildup and believes the lies of Decius.

Indeed, I feel that Decius's argument is more effective and persuasive than Calphurnia's. This is so, due to each argument's different appeals and very different selection of detail.

Calphurnia's argument heavily relies on her graphic descriptions and lists of sensory details that she has seen within a dream. For example, "A lioness hath whelped in the streets, And graves have yawned, and yielded their dead," is a freight train of graphic clauses and descriptions in which Calphurnia intends to use to appeal to Caesar's fear. However, the fact remains that Calphurnia's argument and detail is from a dream, an apparition or vision, which in itself is not reality. Caesar realizes this and responds. Then Calphurnia deliberately chooses to use a powerful metaphor to try and justify and resurrect her idea. For example, "When beggars die, there are no comets seen; The heaven themselves blaze forth the death of princes," this metaphor justifies her graphic visions by indicating that since he is wealthy and powerful (like "princes") the visions have occurred, (parallel to "The heavens themselves blaze"). Then Calphurnia appeals to Caesar's love and relationship with her, by writing "Call it my fear... Let me, upon my knee, prevail in this." Caesar finally gives in, with ~~with~~ a quip, to signify his amusement with her argument (hence, demonstrating its weakness). However, Decius's argument provides

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

R2

a totally different perspective on Calphurnia's visions, which appeals to Caesar pride and great love for his country. For example, "This dream is all amiss interpreted, it was a vision fair and fortunate... signifies that from you great Rome ~~will~~ shall suck... and that great men shall ~~stand~~ press... and cognizance," here Decius is indicating that vision is not symbolizing his death, but his great leadership and ambition. This ~~is~~ makes Caesar swell with pride and forget his fear. Also the reason why Decius's argument is more persuasive, is because is question's Caesar's bravery, manliness, courage and judgement. By questioning these things Decius makes Caesar forget fearful and unknown aspect of Calphurnia's graphic descriptions and ~~remember~~ remember something that most hold higher, their ego, and reputation. For example, "for someone to say "Break up... When Caesar's wife shall meet with better dreams, if Caesar ~~is~~ hide himself, shall they not whisper "Lo, Caesar is afraid."?" This is a very strong appeal to Caesar's judgement (of Calphurnia's visions) and more importantly to his ego and vanity ("Lo, Caesar is afraid," and "To give this day a crown to mighty Caesar.")

Therefore, in conclusion Decius's argument is more persuasive due to it's indirect questioning of Caesar's character and appeal to his pride and vanity. Even though,

Calphurnia's argument's rhetoric contain's appeals, they are not directed to the area on to which they are to have the most effect (i.e Caesar's vanity and pride.) I find that this dual argument somewhat parallel's another ~~argument~~ dual argument written by Shake Speare within Macbeth, where lady Macbeth argues with Macbeth by appealing to his manhood, bravery, and devotion as Decius did, to convince him kill King Duncan. Macbeth kills king Duncan because Lady Macbeth's argument was more persuasive than Macbeth's conscience. Lady Macbeth, as Decius did, uses this appeal to pride, devotion and bravery to ~~more~~ compose ~~an~~ a more effective argument than Macbeth's conscience, where Decius composes a more effective ~~one~~ than Calphurnia.

In Shakespeare's play, Julius Caesar, Decius wins over Caesar much more effectively than Calpurnia, Caesar's wife, in his careful choice of detail, use of appeals, and his understanding of Caesar himself.

In the passage, Calpurnia begins by trying to scare Caesar and uses the details of her 'omens' to warn him and get him to remain at home. She says, "... graves have yawned... drizzled blood upon the Capitol...", to try and make Caesar understand her fear.

Decius is more effective ~~when~~ in his argument because he leaves out much of the ~~scary~~ scary details, skipping over them or making them into positive visions, for example, when he twists Calpurnia's words into, "...reviving blood... for tinctures, stains, relics, and cognizance." He discredits her in this way and makes her seem foolish ~~and~~ for her fear. He also takes control of the situation by showing no fear and staying calm and collected while she rants ~~like~~ and begs like a crazy woman.

Both Calpurnia and Decius use appeals to sides and elements of Caesar. Calpurnia appeals to his love for her and asks that he "Call it my (Calpurnia's) fear... and not your (Caesar's) own." She appeals to his weakness for her and when Decius begins his argument he destroys this power she is trying to use by appealing to Caesar's feelings for Caesar, and



for no one else. ~~Decius~~

Decius appeals to Caesar's strong ambition, pride and honor. Three things that were strong, vital and important in the Roman era. He appeals to Caesar's manly sensibilities and wins this way. He exploits Caesar's ambition when he says, "To give this day a crown to mighty Caesar," and to his pride and honor by saying, "If Caesar hide himself, shall they not whisper 'Lo, Caesar is afraid'?" This appeals to what Caesar says earlier to Calpurnia, "... The valiant never taste death but once." which proves his strong concept of honor.

Decius argues and understands his audience, knowing that whereas Calpurnia argues for Caesar to stay for her own feelings, Caesar will go against her wishes if Decius can persuade him to do it for himself. Decius says, "... To your proceeding bids me tell you this..." and this statement shows Caesar that Decius is trying to take care of Caesar's worries and that it is Caesar's own good for which he argues his case.

When Decius wins this argument it is based on the fact that he knew Caesar's strengths and weaknesses and played to them both. He sees that to Caesar everything comes down to ambition and honor and tempts them both in turn.