

Section II Commentary

2014 Practice AP Seminar Exam

Task Overview

The question instructs students to read four sources from a variety of genres and time periods, which present different perspectives of the role of revolution and change. Students are required to focus on a thematic connection and the different perspectives each source represents and then write a logically organized, well-reasoned, and well-written argument, presenting the student's own perspective derived from the theme. Students are required to use at least two of the sources provided, and they may also use other sources or their own knowledge.

Student Sample A

Score: Low

The essay cites information from two or more sources, yet the argument is disorganized and poorly reasoned, offering opinions that support a single perspective. The perspective includes summary with little or no connection between claim and evidence: "[b]ecause of people like Rosa Parks, who spoke out against injustice, many Americans were encouraged to do the same, which eventually led to the end of segregation." The argument contains many technical flaws (errors in subject/verb agreement, spelling, punctuation, and word choice) that interfere with communication to the reader.

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Revolutions occurs in order to bring change, to better the lives of people and right the wrongs. People aren't always going to agree with the government and policies, just as much the policies aren't always going to be fair or right.

As stated in source C, "the character inherent in the American people has done all that has been ~~accomplished~~ ~~and~~ accomplished," saying that those revolutions and civil disobedience Americans have succeed in trying to better the lives of people. For years Americans ~~have been that~~ fight for equality among races and finally started to accomplish their goal of equality when they began to revolt and speed up for themselves. An example would be Rosa Parks, who refused to give up ~~her seat to a white~~ ^{and} ~~give it~~ to into the ~~was~~ Jim Crow bus and give her seat up to a white person, for not giving up her seat she was arrested and when asked why she refused to give up her seat she said she would if she ~~was~~ if it was true she didn't give up her seat because she her feet were tired she said "the only tired I was, was tired of giving in" ~~to~~ (source D) Rosa Parks like many

Rosa Parks like many other people

Grew tired of social injustice and decided
that they ~~would~~ ^{wouldn't} stand for it any longer. ~~Because~~

Because of people like Rosa Parks, who spoke out
against injustice, many other Americans were encouraged
to do the same, which eventually led to the end of
segregation. ~~and the need for change was finally~~

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Student Sample B

Score: Medium

The argument identifies a thematic connection among the sources and offers an adequate yet unoriginal thesis: “[r]evolution is fire ignited by a spark for change. This idea keeps people fighting for what they want or what is right, and without it, there can be no change.”

The essay utilizes multiple sources and recognizes different perspectives in the readings (through the use of Sources A, B, and D), yet the sources are primarily described via summaries, with a limited and simplistic personal perspective. The argument is underdeveloped and hindered by an overuse of generalizations and an abrupt conclusion. The argument contains errors in sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation, yet the technical flaws minimally interfere with communication with the reader.

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Revolution is fire ignited by a spark for change. This idea keeps people fighting for what they want or what is right, and without it, there can be no change.

Many people believe that revolution ~~does not~~ started for a desired change, but only to stir the pot as shown in Source B. This poem, "A Sane Revolution", gives examples of seasons revolutions have been started and mocks them; it says "if you make a revolution, make it for fun." While this ~~is an exaggeration~~ poem is an exaggeration, it still conveys how revolutions aren't always meaningful and only create more problems than they are trying to solve.

While revolution may have the features, it has the potential to do so much more. This ~~idea~~ is shown in Source D. This speech, made by Senator Obama, discusses Rosa Parks and how her action lead to a revolution in America. This type of revolution, like many, focused on equality and gaining rights within a country which is a prime example of the motives of revolution. Also, as discussed in Source A, revolution works toward equality; when people in a community or country aren't treated equally

Civil unrest is inevitable.

In conclusion, revolution is a fight for a change to make equality, and while sometimes it may look differently and only create more problems, that is its essential purpose.

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Student Sample C
Score: High

This essay clearly identifies the thematic connection among the sources, effectively interprets multiple perspectives, untangles the nuances associated with each treatment on revolution and change, and comes to a new perspective by establishing an original line of argument. The introductory paragraph concludes by acknowledging the existing positions and establishing a personal perspective with respect to the source material: "...I also think that the case of one person making a lasting impact on a large scale is rare, and sometimes the risks of standing up for oneself may outweigh the benefits." The argument is logically organized, well-reasoned and complex; however, some of the contextualization is awkwardly linked to the essay's claim and the offered evidence:

Rosa Parks...caused a huge change in society and a landmark supreme court decision. However, I do not believe that most people who refuse to obey laws end up having this effect. I have not learned of more than a couple people in American history who, as individual[s], have caused great changes.

While a variety of information from two or more sources is presented, the use of the D.H. Lawrence poem misrepresents Lawrence's claim and strays from the essay's central thematic discussion. The essay contains few technical flaws and clearly communicates to the reader.

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The four documents that compose this packet all argue that individual people must follow their desires and stand up for their rights, therefore ~~benefiting~~ ^{benefiting} themselves and society as a whole. Each document presents a different way of concluding this argument, but the underlying thematic connection is the same. While I agree with this perspective, I also think that the case of one person making a lasting impact on a large scale is rare, and sometimes the risks of standing up for ~~oneself~~ ^{oneself} may outweigh the benefits.

Henry David Thoreau, in ~~Source~~ ^{Source} C concludes that if the government of a people over-extends its power, the citizens ~~to~~ under the government have a duty to rebel. Thoreau writes about when the government over-reaches its power: "I think that it is not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionize" (Source C). He also includes "But when the friction comes to have its machine, and oppression and robbery are organized, I say, let us not have such a machine any longer" (Source C). ~~Thoreau~~ Thoreau, in the last line of the excerpt, refers to rebelling as a "duty," illustrating to readers that he believes "honest men" must partake in to better one's government and one's country. While I think that Thoreau's argument would make sense in a small community that was self-governed, I do not believe that it is a viable solution that could be implemented in American society. I think that America is too big of a country, and if individuals rebelled they would rarely be able to make a lasting change because so many

Other citizens would abide by the rules, thus undermining the rebel's cause.

While Thoreau argues to change the nature of government by rebelling, D.H. Lawrence, in "A sane Revolution" argues to ~~change~~ change the face of work by ~~rebellious~~ rebelling. Lawrence writes: "Let's abolish labor, let's have done with laboring! / Work can be fun, and men can enjoy it; then it's not labor / Let's have it so! Let's make a revolution for fun!" (Source B). Lawrence reasons to rebel to "see which way the apples would go a-rolling" (Source B), making readers see the revolution he proposed as more of an experiment. Lawrence also writes: "...do it just to spit in their eye" (Source B), hinting at rebelling as a means of revenge. Lawrence's argument to make work into something that people enjoy doing implies that the country would be ~~benefited~~ benefited because people would have more fun. ~~I think~~

I think that he has a good idea and that work should be fun for people, I do not think it is plausible for all jobs to be fun, and I also don't ~~see~~ see how rebelling would necessarily make jobs fun. Additionally, it would be nearly impossible to make what someone considered the worst job fun. While I like Lawrence's idea, he did not explain it enough to alter my opinion that what he is proposing is not plausible.

In Document D, Barack Obama, in his statement "Death of Bria Parks - Senate Floor Statement," gives a specific example of a person,

Roscoe Parks, who stood up for her rights by rebelling, and ultimately ended up making a great change to society and really helping the civil rights movement. Obama writes, "Roscoe Parks" life was a lesson in perseverance" (Source D). He also includes, "The solitary act of civil disobedience was also the spark that ignited the beginning of the end for segregation and inspired millions around the country and ultimately around the world to get involved in the fight for racial equality" (Source D). These words make the crux of Obama's message: that one person, if they work enough at something, can make a lasting impact. Obama includes the fact that the time Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a bus was not the first time that she "refused to acquiesce to the Jim Crow system" (Source D). This information supports Obama's message of perseverance to achieve one's goals. Yet, while this piece is inspiring and I think the message is a good one, I do not think that events like these occur often. Roscoe Parks, in standing up for herself, caused a huge change in society and a landmark supreme court decision. However, I do not believe that more people should stand up for themselves and end up in jail or worse. I have not learned of more than a couple people in American history who, as individuals, have caused great changes. Therefore, I think that generally it is important to stand up for oneself, but if it involves breaking a law, I think that most times the risks would outweigh the potential benefits.

Alexis de Tocqueville, in Document A, "Why Great Revolutions Will Become More Rare," argues that in a society of social equality, rapid transformation will be continually occurring. ~~He~~ He says that our society would greatly benefit from this and that "much will have been done for the peace of the world" (Source A) if our society was equal. Yet, he ~~also~~ indirectly says that our society is not equal, ~~and~~ and this therefore ~~causes~~ causes revolutions with the principle of inequality at the bottom, but not the principle of ~~the~~ change as the motivation. De Tocqueville presents the benefits of revolutions if people are equal, but ultimately concludes that since ~~there~~ ^{there} is a gap in equality, the benefit of revolution ~~cannot~~ ^{cannot} not be recognized. I agree with the entire article because, unlike the other sources, this source presents more of a realistic point of view and argument. De Tocqueville lays out the ideal ~~society~~ ^{concedes} society, but ~~states~~ ^{concedes} that humanity has not quite reached that point. ~~De~~ De Tocqueville argues for revolution that depends on society, which I agree with because I do not think revolutions are independent of society.

The common theme between the four source documents that society will reap benefits if individuals stand up for themselves by rebelling, while a good idea, is ultimately not viable in today's society because of the wealth gap, differing viewpoints, and the risks associated with breaking laws.

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