

*All three essays share one 6-point rubric: thesis (1), evidence and commentary (0–4), sophistication (1). The commentary row is where nearly every mark is won or lost, and it is won by explaining HOW the evidence supports the line of reasoning – not by adding more evidence. 三篇作文共用同一评分表; 分数集中* “ 论证 ” 一栏, 靠解释而非堆砌例证。

## The thesis row – one point

The thesis must be defensible and must state a line of reasoning. A restatement of the prompt, a statement of the obvious, or a list of devices with no claim earns nothing.

**I Prompt: write an essay that argues your position on the value of striving for an unattainable goal.**

Striving for a goal one cannot reach is valuable only when the striving itself produces something – skill, knowledge, a changed community – because the pursuit, not the arrival, is what generates those goods; where nothing is built along the way, the same striving is merely waste dressed as virtue.

*Defensible: a reader could disagree with it, which is the test.*

*The ‘because’ clause is the line of reasoning, and it tells the reader the shape of the essay before they reach it.*

*The final clause names the limit of the claim, which is where the sophistication point usually begins.*

## The evidence and commentary rows – four points

Two of the four points come from specific evidence; the other two come from commentary that explains how that evidence supports the reasoning. Most essays supply evidence and assert relevance instead of explaining it.

**I A body paragraph on the rhetorical-analysis essay.**

Roosevelt opens by conceding that ‘this Nation asks for action, and action now’ – a phrase whose repetition and stripped syntax place urgency ahead of explanation. By withholding any policy detail until after this concession, he positions himself as responding to a demand the audience has already made rather than as imposing a programme, so that the measures which follow arrive as fulfilment rather than intrusion. The rhetorical work is done by sequence as much as by diction: the audience agrees to the need before it hears the cost.

*The quotation is short and embedded, not block-dropped. Long quotations displace commentary, which is where the points are.*

*‘By withholding ... so that ...’ explains the EFFECT of a choice on a reader. That sentence is the commentary point.*

*The last sentence generalises the device rather than repeating the example – the move that lifts a 3 to a 4.*

Never write ‘this shows that the author is trying to persuade the audience’. Every text in the exam is trying to persuade its audience; the point is HOW, and on whom it works.

## The sophistication row – one point

Awarded sparingly, and never for vocabulary. It is earned by situating the argument in a broader context, by taking a genuine complication seriously, or by a consistently controlled style.

**I A complication handled well.**

The objection to this reading is that Roosevelt’s audience had no alternative to offer, so its assent proves little about the speech’s power. But that is precisely the condition under which the choice of sequence matters: an audience with no alternative is most alert to whether it is being led or being commanded, and the concession that opens the address answers that suspicion before it is voiced.

*The counter-argument is stated in its strongest form, then answered – not named and dismissed.*

*A paragraph that begins ‘Some may say ...’ and abandons the objection in one clause does not earn this point.*