



AP[®] English Language & Composition 2003 Sample Student Responses

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the Civil War, a war fought during the 1860s, decided a great many things: slavery or freedom, South & North or unification. In the beginning of the war, the Northern African Americans were not allowed to join the Union army and fight against the Southern oppressors. Alfred M. Green, while giving a speech in Philadelphia at the beginning of the war, urged African Americans to prepare to enlist. He also spoke ^{subversively} about the unfairness of the treatment of African Americans ~~not~~ not only in the South but also in the North. Green uses a variety of methods to persuade his fellow African-Am. to prepare for war while also speaking out against the treatment of the Afr.-Am. in the North.

Green begins his speech by immediately mentioning the cornerstone of the American ideology; that ~~the~~ American citizens believe in "freedom, & of civil & religious toleration." By reminding the African Americans what America ~~is~~ is founded on, he incites in them the desire to go to war against anyone opposing the idea. Green, by the same token, reminds the whites of their unfairness in denying the Afr. Amer. their rights. The mention of the "immortal Washington" and "Jackson" also ~~make~~ appeals to the patriotism in the African Americans, moving them closer ~~to~~ desiring to fight in the war.

The appeal Green makes to the religious beliefs of the African Americans is apparent throughout his speech. Because most of the Afr. Americans at the time were Christian, by referring to their God as

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"God of truth, justice & equality to all men" makes the Afr. Am. feel obligated to help the cause of the Civil War. Because their God believes in "freedom" why & how can they deny anyone else that right?

At the same time, Green also reminds the whites that their same God is the white God & that the Afr. Amer. deserve rights as well. Green also wants the Afr. Americans to be "trusting in God"; because their God wants them to go to war & will protect them, why should the Afr. Amer. not go to war?

By the end of his speech, Green begins to remind the African Americans of their "oppressed brethren" in the South. He reminds them of people under a "tyrant system" & requests their assistance in overthrowing it. He also mentions the desire of the Southern leaders to "drive back... civil & religious freedom... have more slave territory." By mentioning the goals of the other side, he motivates the Afr. Americans to battle by showing them the ^{future} ~~consequences~~ of the nation if the South wins because they did not fight. Green notes that their "very presence" on the battlefield will urge the slaves in the South to revolt.

Green's word choice throughout his speech helps him to motivate the ^{Afr. Americans} ~~to~~ battle w/ their realization. He constantly uses the phrase "let us" to persuade the Afr. Amer. to join the army without directly telling them to do so. A direct order is much less likely to be followed than a softer direction such

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as "let us" he also includes himself in with the Afr. Americans by using the word "us," making him seem motivated & desirous of joining the army as well. If he desires to join, why should they not? Green also anticipates certain rebuttles to his want of the Afr. Americans joining the war to fight ~~for~~ for an oppressive government, but he silences them by beginning his arguments with "it is true." He wants the Afr. Amer. to know that he too realizes the problems w/ the government but he is still willing to go to war.

Although Green does ~~make~~ ^{make} certain condescending arguments towards the white audience of the speech, by the end of the speech he has "united" both African Americans & Whites by focusing them against a common enemy: the South. He does want change, but he knows that defeating the Southern slavery system is much more pressing & important in the long run. Green is careful to "hope for the future" but still "improve the present," and he hopes not only the Afr. Americans but also the Whites will do the same.

~~His words~~

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"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." wrote Charles Dickens in A Tale of Two Cities. This quote applies to the situation in which African Americans found themselves at the onset of The Civil War. It was a good time because the war was being fought in order for them to receive their freedom. However, it was a bad time because many of their brethren were still slaves, and they were still being discriminated against by not being allowed to join the Union army. Alfred M. Green looked beyond the bad times to the good and encouraged African Americans to fight for their right to serve their country. He was able to persuade his fellow African Americans to join the Union forces by delivering a powerful speech in which he spoke of duty, the evilness of the Confederacy, and what a Union victory could do for African Americans.

Mr. Green begins his speech with talk of duty and patriotism. "My country, right or wrong, I love thee still." It is their duty to serve their country in any way they can. According to Mr. Green, African Americans must show the world that they are filled with pride for their country and are willing to fight for freedom.

In the second and third paragraphs, Mr. Green qualifies the fact that African Americans have been mistreated in the past, in the United States of America. He does this to show that he has not forgotten the wrongs done to African Americans in past years. He makes allusions to George Washington

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and the Revolutionary War, to Andrew Jackson and the War of 1812, the Dred Scott case, and other cases in which African Americans were treated unjustly. Mr. Green is not forgiving these grievances, only saying that they are in the past, and he wants to work for the future. These two paragraphs are constructed delicately because of the sensitive subject matter. He uses parallel structure by beginning both paragraphs with, "It is true..." He does this in order to soften the writing and make the reader more comfortable because of the familiarity.

Mr. Green attempts to persuade his fellow African Americans to fight if not for themselves, then for their duty to their fathers, or for revenge against the institution of slavery. He explains that it is the duty of these men to create a better future in order to help make the past more bearable. Mr. Green appeals to people's sense of family duty by writing, "... let not the honor and glory achieved by our fathers be blasted or sullied by a want of true heroism among their sons." Also, he appeals to their sense of ~~just~~ revenge by explaining how the Confederacy is going to war in order to expand slavery. He tells them that they should fight for the freedom of their own race. Also, he states that if they fight for the Union, then slaves in the South might get the courage to overthrow their masters.

The tone of Mr. Alfred M. Green's speech is both powerful and heartfelt. He attempts to persuade his fellow

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African Americans to join the Union forces by appealing to their sense of duty, sense of family obligation, and their respect for freedom. He ends by powerfully concluding that they must have faith in God who is, "the God of truth, justice, and equality to all men."

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Green's moving speech urges his fellow African-Americans to enlist in the Union army despite the way they have been treated. He begins by discussing patriotism and "love of country, of freedom, and of civil and religious toleration", an excellent example of parallelism. The first paragraph would make any American want to fight for his country.

In the next paragraph Green begins to discuss issues specific to African-Americans. He does not ignore the fact that, even after fighting in several wars, they are still not recognized as citizens. "The brave deeds of our fathers have failed to bring us into recognition as citizens." He also enumerates many injuries done to African-Americans in the ~~second~~ third paragraph, "fugitive slave laws, Dred Scott decisions, indictments for treason, and long and dreary months of imprisonment."

In the fourth paragraph Green states that they must overlook these grievances and fulfill their duty to the nation. He uses alliteration, "let us not be derelict to duty", to emphasize this point. He uses alliteration again when discussing their "present position in the country". Not only should they fight ~~for~~ because of duty, but also "to hope for the future" and so they do not

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sully "the honor and glory achieved by our fathers".

Green uses the final paragraph to give a few more reasons to fight. They should fight against the secessionists because they want to "build stronger the tyrant system of slavery". This ~~switches~~ noticeably changes from giving reasons to fight for the republic to giving a ~~reason~~ reason to fight against the secessionists. He goes on to say that "their mere presence among Union troops will inspire your oppressed brethren in the South with the zeal for the overthrow of the tyrant system." He concludes the speech by evoking the Lord's name "the God of truth, justice and equality to all men" This lets the men know that God is on their side and they will be fighting for the moral right.

All of the methods that Green used combine to make this speech very effective and persuasive.

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