



**AP[®] English Language
2004 Sample Student Responses
Form B**

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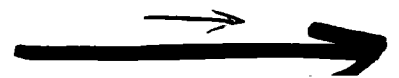
Question 1



In the excerpt from Rachel Carson's book "Silent Spring", Carson uses scientific fact combined with harsh yet widely understandable diction to press her case for the heartlessness of employing parathion as a means of eradicating pests.

Carson begins by noting a frightening trend in ^{the} human "habit of killing", ~~saying that~~ refuting any anticipated argument that perhaps humans accidentally kill birds by stating that birds are "more and more... a direct target of poisons". This harsh allegation is compared to the ~~so-called benefits~~ ^{purposes} of using parathion — "to [eradicate] any creature that may annoy or inconvenience us". By ~~saying~~ understating the ^{supposed} reasons for pest control yet simultaneously ~~overstating~~ exaggerating the actual intentions, the killing of birds by means of parathion is ~~made~~ crafted into a cold-blooded act. This appeal to ethos — the inner sense of morality that Carson presumes will lead readers to pity the birds and hate the poisoners — establishes the tone of the piece from the start. Carson then continues to cite authorities who agree with her stance, namely the reputable "Fish and Wildlife Service". The result of such an appeal is ~~that~~ her credibility is established. Furthermore, Carson provides an anecdote ~~of~~ — southern Indiana — to show her readers the extent to which the use of parathion can be limited but no action is taken to save the birds. Again Carson chooses to mention the ~~of~~ seemingly logical and mutually

with simple steps such as growing different corn,



Question 1

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favorable solution that is ignored; instead an ~~ineffective~~^{unethical}, costly method is employed by apparently dense "farmers (who) had been persuaded of the merits of killing".

In her second paragraph, Carson bitterly mocks the farmers, saying that they were probably "gratified" by the results. She stuns her readers by quoting ~~to~~ a large number of bird casualties — 65,000, and if that were not sufficient, she further ~~states~~^{pounds} the severity of the situations by expanding ~~the~~^{parathion's} sphere of influence beyond birds. ~~She~~^{Such} "Parathion... is a universal killer", she confidently asserts. ~~The effect of such~~^{Such} strong diction, ~~is~~^{is} in context, is taken as a definitive statement of truth.

Carson ends the paragraph with an emotional appeal to the readers, essentially equating those who are sided with the use of parathion to people who are ignorant and heartless.

Carson extends the effect of parathion from the animal realm to the human realm in her third paragraph. By ~~graphically~~ detailing the close brush with death of those who handled parathion, she succeeds in two purposes — to show the effect of the poison on humans, as well as nature's punishment on the perpetrators of ~~this~~^{this} crime. The rest of the paragraph and the majority of the ~~last~~^{last} paragraph is comprised of questions, mostly rhetorical in nature. ~~The~~ The result of the continual questioning ~~is~~ is that the readers ponders these for him/herself; after being shown compelling evidence against



the use of parathion, presumably the reader is in agreement with the author. [△] Carson finishes her piece ~~with~~ with an emphatic statement of right and power. Taking an ^{detached} ~~an almost~~ ~~high~~ perspective, she relegates authority to "authoritarian[s] temporarily entrusted with power" who ignore the "millions" (a hyperbole) who seek beauty in nature.

★ Carson, while establishing her credibility by use of specific examples, does not confound her reader; instead she uses lay terms to communicate her message to the common people. By appealing to ~~to~~ ~~the~~ pathos and ethos ^{as well as} ~~as well as~~ the expected logical argument of a biologist, she leaves readers impassioned not only by the plight of the birds but also by the plight of humanity, apparently sliding down a slippery slope of habitual killing and destruction of the natural world.

★ Throughout the passage, Carson likens the spraying of parathion to the waging of a war, by means of her carefully selected diction. Words such as "kill", "deadly" and "lethal" are used repetitively in the piece to stress the ramifications of parathion on life forms. The imagery of war is further perpetuated by the ^{parallel} ~~parallel~~ of "planes on [a] mission of death" to ^{the} spraying of the poison, and "~~the~~ needless war" to the ~~the~~ pointless killing of blackbirds.

△ Also, the repetitive use of the word "who" in the ^{rhetorical} questions raised aim to point a finger ~~at~~ at those leading the movement of the usage of parathion. By providing vivid and graphic details of the birds' death, Carson appeals to the sympathy of the ~~readers~~ readers, urging them to feel sorry for the pitiful birds slaughtered by intentional yet preventable uses of poisonous pesticides.

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Question 1

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In her book, Silent Spring, Rachel Carson attacks mankind's use of poison and death to eliminate problems, through her diction, analogies, and rhetorical questions. Carson declares her disgust with farmers' use of poisons and she supports her view through figures and alternative solutions.

To emphasize the needless slaughter of animals caused by farmers, Carson uses diction relating to war and carnage. The farmers sent planes carrying poison "on their mission of death." The phrase "mission of death" puts a strong emphasis on the actual purpose of the farmers' planes, which is to kill. Many birds died and "the casualty list included some 65,000" birds. "Casualty" is a word commonly used when describing the effects of war, therefore when Carson described the death of the birds as "casualties" she emphasized the serious and graphic nature of poison. The aftermath of the poisonings are like a "wave of death that spreads out." This metaphor supports Carson's argument that the use of poison is evil, because it uses diction that has a very evil, morbid connotation. Carson links the poisonings to war and violence through her diction and analogies.

Another strategy Carson utilizes in her argument against the use of poisons, is rhetorical questions. Carson asks, "Who kept vigilant watch ... coated with a lethal film?" In



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asking this question, Carson is blatantly accusing the farmers of not being responsible for their own toxic fields. She also asks, "Does Indiana still raise... margins of a river?" This rhetorical question supports Carson's argument because it is ~~aimed~~ ~~at~~ presenting an obvious truth - that boys will explore nature - and the farmers therefore should not dump harmful poisons into that environment. Finally, Carson also asks, "Who has made the decision that sets... a still pond?" In asking this, Carson is clearly demanding for someone to take responsibility for the deaths and destruction caused by the poisons. Through her use of rhetorical questions, Carson emphasizes points, presents truths, and ~~demands~~ makes demands, which ultimately support her argument against poisonings.

To further support her stand against poison, Carson presents figures of the destruction caused, and alternative solutions. The ~~the~~ red-winged blackbirds and starlings killed in the poisonings totaled "65,000". In including this fact, Carson defends her view that the use of poison is evil. Not only does Carson find the poison alarming, but "The Fish + Wildlife Service" also expresses concern. By her inclusion of this fact, she shows the reader that she is not the only concerned individual. Poison could have been avoided and "the problem could have been solved easily by a slight change in agricultural practice..." Carson presents an alternative to poison and therefore supports her view that poison is the wrong choice.



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F₃

Through her use of diction, analogies, ~~an~~ rhetorical questions, facts and figures, and alternative solutions, Carson supports her view that farmers should not use poison. She argues that other methods would be better and that poison is irresponsible and causes needless death. Carson successfully supported and constructed her argument with these strategies.

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Deadly Spring

The 1940^s are commonly remembered as a decade of change in the lives and attitudes of the American people. Noteworthy in this mental transformation is Rachel Carson, author of *Silent Spring*, who exposed the carelessness of humans toward the environment. In the passage, Carson centralizes her argument on the rights of those who poison the environment—namely, that they have no right to do so. The use of rhetorical questions and ~~death~~ death-related diction serve to make her argument a persuasive one in accusing environmental destructors of their carelessness for life.

Carson's ~~main~~ central argument is, simply put, that points out the recent "trend" of using poisons to kill animals, and centralizes her argument on the fact that those who do the poisoning ~~and~~ have no right to do so and are not taking other lives into consideration. "...Who has the right to decide for the... people who were not consulted?" she demands, demonstrating the fact that all those affected by such mass animal killings were not taken into account. "Raccoons or opossums as may have never... visited the farmers' cornfields were doomed." Carson illustrates that if a certain species was a nuisance on a farmer's crop, the poisoning of



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~~It's~~ its habitat results in many more unnecessary killings. In such fashion, pointing out the loss of life and threat endured by all, Carson shows that those who use such methods as poison to rid themselves of animals have no right to do so, because innocent creatures stand chance of harm. ~~The right~~ This right (or lack of it) is Carson's principle argument throughout the passage.

The use of repetitive questioning helps to construct Carson's argument. The questions are ones with obvious answers and infer that ~~humans~~ humans' destructive attitude towards nature are baseless. "Who has made the decision that sets in these... poisonings?... Who has placed in one pan the... remains of birds? Who has decided... [on a world] ungraced by... a bird in flight?" These questions, put together one after the other, ~~help~~ make Carson's argument solid by allowing little room for debate, and ~~it~~ refer back to her central argument, that no one has the right to make such decisions on nature's welfare.

Death-related diction is spread throughout the passage, making the poisoning



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sound less like "eradicating" and more like murder. Carson's first sentence - "as the habit of killing grows" - implements the murderous nature of people who use poisons. She ~~goes on~~ extends on this idea by saying that the deaths of 65,000 birds "probably gratified the farmers," ~~and~~ and refers to the dead birds as a "casualty list," making it sound like a wartime slaughter. ~~SA~~ Carson leads back to her central argument by questioning the "wave of death" and the "bludgeon of insecticidal poisons." The death-related diction is an effective rhetorical strategy in constructing Carson's argument.

Rachel Carson changed America's attitudes toward nature with Silver Spring, and her use of rhetorical questioning and death-related diction helped her ~~to~~ do it. Her central argument on the right to kill undoubtedly awoke thousands to the preservation of the environment, a legacy that lives today.

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