



### Prestwick House Pre-AP: Readings and Exercises

# How to Frame an Interpretation... and Then Talk and Write About It

## CHAPTER 4

**Y**OU'RE PROBABLY FAMILIAR WITH the expression that a person “can’t see the forest for the trees.” You may or may not already realize that what this expression means is that paying too much attention to individual detail (the trees) can prevent someone from seeing, understanding, and appreciating the big picture (the forest).

So far in this book, we’ve been looking at trees—several types of trees—all of which contribute something to the total forest. We’ve also paid some attention to *what* these different types of trees contribute to the forest. But we haven’t stepped back to look at the forest, the whole, literary big picture.

One big picture that an Advanced Placement exam might ask you to see is the passages’ “meaning.” AP literature and language free-response items even often ask you to write about what a specific detail contributes to “the overall meaning of the piece.” *Overall* clearly suggests that, once you have looked at a few specific trees, you need to step back and consider the entire forest.

What exactly the writers of the AP exam mean each time they ask about *meaning* will be up to you to decide when you face the question. Generally, however, questions about *overall meaning* will want you to discuss theme, philosophical insight, social commentary or satire (for fiction, drama, and poetry), or perhaps the author’s main idea, thesis, or argument (for nonfiction).

Except for the simplest and most obvious written communications, determining the meaning of something someone else has written is largely a matter of inference or interpretation.

It doesn’t take much thought to understand what the writers of the following “passages” intended to communicate to their audience.

Dear John,

I do not want to go to the dance with you Saturday night. I am going with Jeffrey instead.

Joanne

Sweetums,

Please pick up a loaf of bread and a gallon of low-fat milk on your way home. Thanks.

Your Snookie

Other passages, while more complex and subtle, also reflect an author's purpose or intent. The act of inference or interpretation is not merely a free-for-all of guessing and baseless opinion. The point of interpretation is not to *make up the meaning of the passage*; it is to *figure out the author's intent in writing it*.

How is that done? Well, that's why the previous four chapters dealt with "trees" before we decided to step back and look at the "forest." Details like word choice, use of figurative and rhetorical devices, selection of form and genre, and faithfulness to (or departure from) conventions are the tools by which writers communicate their meaning. They are also the only clues by which a reader can expect to infer the writer's meaning.

Ignore or misread the clues, and you misinterpret the text. It's really as simple as that.

In fact, for most of the Advanced Placement passages you'll encounter, your interpretation won't matter as much as how you discuss and support it.

That's what this chapter is about.

Let's examine a few passages from the standpoint of developing an overall interpretation and then arguing for the validity of your interpretation.

The first ten amendments to the United States Constitution, commonly called "The Bill of Rights," has been annotated for you by our model students. AP-style multiple-choice and free-response items have been completed to show you how these students would respond to this piece on an Advanced Placement exam.

The second selection, George Washington's famous 1796 Farewell Address, is long and very challenging. For this reason, it has been divided into three sections, two exercise sections and one model section. The factors that make this such a challenging piece are exactly those that a close reader must consider when trying to interpret the meaning and intent of another writer's work: word meanings, and grammar and sentence structure.

As interpretation is one of the main points of reading, challenges like these are worth facing and overcoming.

## Model One:

### The Bill of Rights

The Preamble to The Bill of Rights<sup>1</sup>

*Congress of the United States begun and held at the City of New York, on Wednesday the fourth of March, one thousand seven hundred and eighty nine.*

THE Conventions of a number of the States, having at the time of their adopting the Constitution, expressed a desire,<sup>2</sup> in order to prevent misconstruction or abuse of its powers,<sup>3</sup> that further declaratory and restrictive clauses should be added:<sup>4</sup> And as extending the ground of public confidence in the Government, will best ensure the beneficent ends of its institution.<sup>5</sup>

RESOLVED by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, two thirds of both Houses concurring,<sup>6</sup> that the following Articles be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States, as amendments to the Constitution of the United States, all, or any of which Articles, when ratified by three fourths of the said Legislatures, to be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of the said Constitution; viz:<sup>7</sup>

ARTICLES in addition to, and Amendment of the<sup>8</sup> Constitution of the United States of America, proposed by Congress, and ratified by the Legislatures of the several States, pursuant to the fifth Article of the original Constitution.<sup>9</sup>

#### Sample Student Commentary

<sup>1</sup> Preamble is something that comes before. Like an introduction. The Constitution itself begins with a famous Preamble.

<sup>2</sup> The demand for a "Bill of Rights" came from the states when they were in the process of ratifying the Constitution. The antecedent to *its* is not yet clear, but the intent of this Bill is to prevent abuse or misunderstanding of "its" powers.

<sup>3</sup> "Declarative" statements would explain the powers. "Restrictive" statements would limit the powers.

<sup>4</sup> The earlier use of "its" probably also refers to the Government. "The beneficent ends of its institution" is a difficult phrase. Beneficent is probably synonymous with beneficial, meaning good or helpful. The ends would be the results. Beneficial ends would then be the advantages. Not institution as the noun meaning "an organization or formal arrangement (like an institution of higher learning)," but institution as the noun meaning "the process of being instituted." So, this phrase means "the advantages of instituting this government."

<sup>5</sup> Article V of the Constitution currently being debated by the states specifies this two-thirds majority of both houses in order for Congress to propose an amendment. The Constitution is not law yet, but the drafters of this Bill are following it as if it were.

<sup>6</sup> Viz. means "namely" or "as follows."

<sup>7</sup> Formal and essentially repetitive phrases that mean the proposed articles with be added to the Constitution, and they will change the Constitution.

<sup>8</sup> To establish the absolute legality of their proposal, and their way of proposing it, the drafters refer to the specific portion of the Constitution that allows for amendment and establishes the processes to do so.

**Amendment I—Freedom of Speech, Press, Religion and Petition**

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof;<sup>10</sup> or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press;<sup>11</sup> or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.<sup>12</sup>

**Amendment II—Right to keep and bear arms**

A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State,<sup>13</sup> the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.<sup>14</sup>

**Amendment III—Conditions for quarters of soldiers**

No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner,<sup>15</sup> nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.<sup>16</sup>

**Amendment IV—Right of search and seizure regulated**

The right of the people<sup>17</sup> to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures,<sup>18</sup> shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause,<sup>19</sup> supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.<sup>20</sup>

**Amendment V—Provisions concerning prosecution**

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime,<sup>21</sup> unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or

**Sample Student Commentary**

<sup>10</sup> This is a much-debated phrase. A great deal of the debate centers on what exactly it means to establish religion or what types of restrictions actually constitute prohibition of free religious exercise.

<sup>11</sup> Similarly, the exact meanings of abridging and freedom make these provisions the subjects of debate.

<sup>12</sup> Structurally, this is all one sentence. Congress shall pass no law ... abridging ... the right of the people. It is interesting to note that this Article does not grant or establish a right; it recognizes a right that Congress cannot take away.

<sup>13</sup> Another hotly debated phrase. Does this limit the right only to arms that could be used in a volunteer militia?

<sup>14</sup> Again, this is presented as a right that already exists and that the Amendment merely protects. The right is attributed to the people, which may or may not help to clarify the "militia" phrase. Finally, how one interprets this amendment depends a lot on what one means by infringing.

<sup>15</sup> Two qualifications here that should not be overlooked: in time of peace and without consent. The implication is that in time of war, a citizen may be required to quarter soldiers without consent.

<sup>16</sup> This clarifies that previous implication. Still, the manner to be prescribed by law is not specified here, leaving room for further interpretation or legislation.

<sup>17</sup> So far, the writers have consistently taken the approach that the people already possess these rights, and this Constitution merely protects them.

<sup>18</sup> Unreasonable is another broad term subject to a range of interpretations.

<sup>19</sup> Another term subject to interpretation.

<sup>20</sup> These are probably the most specific provisions in all of these amendments.

<sup>21</sup> Infamous is also subject to interpretation.

naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger;<sup>22</sup> nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb;<sup>23</sup> nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself;<sup>24</sup> nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law;<sup>25</sup> nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.<sup>26</sup>

**Amendment VI—Right to a speedy trial, witnesses, etc.**

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right<sup>27</sup> to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law,<sup>28</sup> and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor;<sup>29</sup> and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.<sup>30</sup>

**Amendment VII—Right to a trial by jury**

In suits at common law,<sup>31</sup> where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved,<sup>32</sup> and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.<sup>33</sup>

**Sample Student Commentary**

<sup>22</sup> This is another phrase that is often debated. The sentence structure seems to connect it to the "and or naval forces..." not to all citizens.

<sup>23</sup> Apparently, the amendment allows for the possibility of having a hand or an arm cut off as punishment for a crime. Jeopardy is taken to mean "brought up on charges and tried." This is the famous "double jeopardy" clause.

<sup>24</sup> This is the clause usually referred to when people mention the Fifth Amendment.

<sup>25</sup> Certainly subject to interpretation, but it is commonly taken to mean the full process of securing warrants for search and seizure, presenting before a Grand Jury, and a trial by jury—all of which are specified in these ten amendments.

<sup>26</sup> In the United States, even Eminent Domain requires that the government purchase the land. Notice that this clause does not require the property owner's consent.

<sup>27</sup> Is this right being granted or protected by the Constitution? This language is ambiguous.

<sup>28</sup> Future perfect tense. The "districts" are not being delineated now, but they will be in order for this provision to be met.

<sup>29</sup> Compulsory process establishes the right of the court to subpoena witnesses and to punish private citizens who do not obey subpoenas.

<sup>30</sup> This article is all one sentence. In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right... to have the assistance of counsel.

<sup>31</sup> To correctly interpret this phrase, we might need some additional legal knowledge. Does suits refer to litigation? Is common law the same as civil law? So, are these criminal cases (like the previous amendment), or does this article pertain only to civil cases—lawsuits?

<sup>32</sup> Here, this right is being presented as already existing, and this amendment is merely "preserving" it.

<sup>33</sup> To interpret this accurately would probably require some understanding of English common law, which is probably what the phrase refers to.

**Amendment VIII—Excessive bail, cruel punishment**

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.<sup>34</sup>

**Amendment IX—Rule of construction of Constitution**

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights,<sup>35</sup> shall not be construed to deny or disparage others<sup>36</sup> retained by the people.<sup>37</sup>

**Amendment X—Rights of the States under Constitution**

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively,<sup>38</sup> or to the people.<sup>39</sup>

**Sample Student Commentary**

<sup>34</sup> Excessive, cruel, and unusual are all subject to interpretation.

<sup>35</sup> Certain here means specific.

<sup>36</sup> The fact that some rights are specified cannot be taken to mean that those not specified are not protected.

<sup>37</sup> Again, the stance is that the people already have the rights. This Bill of Rights is not the source of the rights.

<sup>38</sup> Respectively could mean “accordingly” or “correspondingly” or “likewise.”

<sup>39</sup> Does this provision suggest that the States cannot deny the people a right, even if it is not specified in the Constitution?

**Sample Multiple-Choice Questions:**

- All of the following factors come into play when determining what these amendments mean EXCEPT
  - denotations of words.
  - pronoun antecedents.
  - sentence structure and syntax.
  - individual experience.
  - historical background.
- Words like [no law] prohibiting (Amendment I), [not] infringed (Amendment II), and [not] violated (Amendment IV) clearly suggest that the rights specified in this document are
  - granted by the document.
  - natural and fundamental.
  - limited in scope.
  - privileges of citizenship.
  - restricted to those specified.
- Problems of interpretation that arise in this document are largely due to
  - indefinite words.
  - outmoded connotations.
  - frequent negation.
  - excess verbiage.
  - double entendres.
- Which of the following is probably not allowable according to this document?
  - formation of a new interdenominational church
  - an e-zine article criticizing the local school board
  - a second prosecution following an acquittal
  - a state's changing its driver's license regulations
  - refusal to admit a police officer into one's home
- The overall purpose of this document is most likely to
  - delineate the rights of the people.
  - undermine the newly ratified Constitution.
  - define the legitimate role of government.
  - protect the people's undeniable rights.
  - assure ratification of the Constitution.

### Answers and Explanations:

- Understanding the strict denotations (A) of words like *declaratory* and *restrictive*, *compulsory*, and *respectively* is crucial for interpreting the articles in which these words appear. It is especially important to know whether the most common denotation has changed over time, or whether there are, perhaps, any archaic uses or denotations that have fallen out of use since the eighteenth century. As in the Preamble, to understand "government" as the antecedent (B) of *its* is essential to understanding the purpose of these amendments. In Article VI, to understand that *his defense* refers to *the accused* and not to the compulsory witness is equally important. Most of the articles are long, complex, or compound-complex sentences, so an understanding of the relationship between relative clause or introductory prepositional or participial phrase (C) is key to understanding the articles as written: *A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed. In what way(s) does the introductory phrase alter the meaning of the main clause? Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of... or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...; or abridging the freedom of... or of the ...; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to...* This is an example of one sentence with a single subject (Congress), a single verb (*shall make*), a single direct object (*no law*), three participial phrases (*regarding... prohibiting... abridging...*), and six objects of the preposition. Clearly (C) is crucial to interpreting the amendment accurately. (E) comes into play when a reader considers such phrases as *common law*. However tempting (D) might be to a twentieth-century reader, and however certain we might be that the drafters of this document did indeed inform at least some of the provisions in it from their own experience, the individual experience of a contemporary reader is not relevant to an attempt to understand the writers' intent. **Thus, (D) is the best answer.**
- The absence of restriction in the three cited amendments suggests that the specified rights exist prior to, and independent of, the document, thus eliminating (A). (C) might tempt some who ignore the language within the brackets, but the intent is clear that these amendments limit only the government's ability to restrict the rights. (D) is easily eliminated by the realization that the document is dealing with rights, not privileges, and that these rights are protected by this document, not extended or governed by conditions. (E) should tempt only those few who focus on the restrictive language without considering the total document, which explicitly states that even those rights not specified are protected. The pre-supposition of most of the amendments, that "the right [of the people]..." exists and "shall not be [limited or restricted]..." clearly suggests that these rights are a natural and fundamental element of the human condition. **Thus, (B) is the best answer.**

- While the connotations of some of the words used by the 1789 writers of this document may certainly have changed over the past two-plus centuries, none of the key words in this document is unclear simply because of an archaic or outmoded use. (B). The document does use frequent negation, (C), to suggest that it is not within the power of any governmental document to grant a right and that this new government will do nothing to limit the right; this use and meaning is fairly straightforward. The document itself is actually quite concise. Words are used to specify, expand, and clarify, but there are rare occasions (if any) of unnecessary repetition, (D). Some students may confuse an abstract or indefinite word that is subject to interpretation as a double entendre, which is an intentional play on words in which second meaning might actually be risqué. None of the words, phrases, or clauses in this document, however, is meant to be taken lightly or ironically, (E). Many of the words themselves, however, are subject to interpretation. Words and phrases like *unreasonable*, *probable cause*, *excessive*, and *cruel and unusual* are probably intentionally open-ended to allow the document a degree of flexibility to meet a variety of situations. This open-endedness, however, does invite both dialogue and disagreement over specific interpretation. **Thus, (A) is the best answer.**
- (A) is clearly allowed by the provisions of Amendment I forbidding the establishment of a state religion and forbidding the free exercise of religion. (B) is likewise protected by Amendment I's protections of free speech and a free press. (D) is suggested in Amendment X as "[a] power not delegated to the United States." (E) is less obviously wrong since it does not specify whether the police officer has a warrant, but Amendment IV possibly does allow for such refusal in the absence of "probable cause" and a warrant. (C), however, is explicitly prohibited by Amendment V: "nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb." **Thus, (C) is the best answer.**
- (A) might tempt some students, but Articles IX and X do not "delineate" the rights that are nonetheless reserved for the States and the people. (B) and (E) might tempt a few who do see this document as a weakening of the government outlined in the Constitution so that the states will ratify it; but the drafters themselves present this document merely as a clarification of the Constitution, not as a repudiation of anything in the original articles. (C), likewise, might tempt some, but even the "declaratory... clauses" are restricted only to the government's relationship to the people and their rights. Much more in the original articles is left untouched than is amended in these ten articles. **(D) is the best answer.** The wording of most of the amendments makes explicit that the people already have the rights, and the amendment is drafted merely to specify that the government cannot do anything to limit or revoke the right.


**Sample Free-response item 1 (Text-based):**

Carefully read The Bill of Rights and write a thoughtful and well-supported essay in which you defend, refute, or qualify the thesis that the original writers intended this document to be a series of guidelines and not a prescriptive set of ten commandments. Do not merely summarize the amendments.

*Understanding that they could not possibly foresee every possible future situation, the authors of The Bill of Rights purposely used ambiguous language in order to allow future legislators flexibility in interpreting the Constitution. Rather than establishing a rigid document to be followed unswervingly, the authors intended for legislators and judges to use good judgment in applying these open guidelines in keeping with the basic principles the United States was founded upon.*

*The authors' diction is a major clue to their intent. Throughout the document, ambiguous words are employed in places where a more definitive description might have led to absolute clarity. The language of Amendment VIII is a fine example. Amendment VIII reads, "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted." Of course, the words "excessive," "cruel," and "unusual" are completely open to interpretation; further, the authors supply no examples of what may constitute "cruel and unusual punishments," leaving this issue for legislators to decide.<sup>1</sup>*

*The structure of the document likewise lends credence to the interpretation that The Bill of Rights is meant to be a set of guidelines. The first eight Amendments discuss specific (though not always precise)<sup>2</sup> limitations on the powers of the federal government. The final two Amendments, however, make clear that the rights described in the first eight Amendments are not the only rights protected from infringement. These final two Amendments do not tell Congress what rights to protect; instead, Amendments IX and X read as a warning to the government not to overstep its bounds. In order not to infringe on these unspecified but protected rights, legislators will have to use wisdom and restraint.*

*Finally, the conciseness<sup>3</sup> of many of the Amendments is another factor pointing toward the authors' intent. The longest Amendment, Amendment V, contains 108 words. Little in this Amendment is open to interpretation apart from "infamous," "public danger," and "just compensation." Still, these three ambiguous items allow*

**Scorer Commentary**

<sup>1</sup> This student's argument is clear. He is going to support the assigned thesis.

<sup>2</sup> Because this is the text-based essay, the student knows he absolutely must quote directly. He provides three specific examples of unclear or ambiguous language.

<sup>3</sup> Notice the distinction this student makes between a specific limitation and a precise delineation of that limitation.

<sup>4</sup> It would probably have been better for this student to have dealt with all of the language issues before moving on to structure, but this is still an important point and makes the discussion of language more satisfyingly thorough.

for a wide range of interpretations; it is likely that the authors' conception of an "infamous crime" or a "public danger" would have been far different from our present ideas, and a constantly changing economy practically requires the vague "just compensation" (though, interestingly, Amendment VII sets twenty dollars as the minimum value that can be disputed in a lawsuit). However, Amendment V is relatively clear compared to most of the others. Compare Amendment V with Amendment II, which contains only 26 words. The right of the people "to keep and bear arms" is established, but nothing more is defined. What sorts of arms are the people allowed to keep and to bear? What is meant by "infringed"? Must those who keep and bear arms belong to a "well-regulated militia"?<sup>5</sup> These questions have no easy answers, and it is not surprising that Amendment II is one of the most heavily debated in The Bill of Rights. A smaller word count results in less explanation, and less explanation results in more freedom of interpretation for future legislators.

The authors could have chosen to explain these amendments more thoroughly in order to make their ideas absolutely clear, but they clearly envisioned a document that allowed for a wide range of interpretations. We cannot say for certain why they would have done this, but it is not unreasonable to believe that part of the reason was so that The Bill of Rights would not become an outdated document. Many of the rights enumerated in these first ten Amendments are constantly debated, but this is not necessarily a weakness of the document; values change over time, and an inflexible set of rules would not allow for these changes to be reflected in legislation.

**Scorer Commentary**

<sup>5</sup> What is interesting is that these are not really rhetorical questions. The author is not pressuring the reader into any one particular answer; the student is raising the questions himself.



### Sample Free-response item 2 (Independent):

A common challenge encountered by historians is the attempt to understand the past on its own terms and not through the lenses of contemporary society's values and assumptions. The interpretation of key documents is often a particular challenge—using the writers' language to discern the writers' intent. Choose a significant document from United States history and write a thoughtful and well-structured essay in which you propose and support a reasonable and appropriate interpretation of the meaning and intent of the document. Do not merely summarize the document.

*In writing The Bill of Rights, the authors intended to assuage public fears that the newly constituted government would abuse its power and become tyrannical. Given that the colonies had only recently secured their freedom from England, the public needed reassurances that the new federal government would not be given absolute power; to escape one oppressive government only to institute another would be no victory for the colonists. Thus, the authors took care to focus these Amendments on the rights of the people rather than on the rights of the federal government.<sup>1</sup>*

*No heavy interpretation is needed in order to understand the authors' intent; they declare their intent in the Preamble. They wish to extend "the ground of public confidence in the Government" in order to "best ensure the beneficent ends of its institution."<sup>2</sup>*

*They are going to do this by adding "further declaratory and restrictive clauses" to the original Constitution in order to "prevent [the government's] misconstruction or abuse of its powers." The key word here is "restrictive." The authors understand that in order to earn the public's trust they must restrict the government's powers.*

*Instead of simply enumerating the powers the government holds, however, the authors instead delineate the rights held by the people. The difference is subtle but important:<sup>3</sup> focusing the language on the people's rights instead of the government's powers allows the authors to define some of the government's powers while reassuring the people by placing limits on these powers. For example, take Amendment IV, which concerns search and seizure. Though this Amendment establishes that citizens are protected against "unreasonable" searches and seizures, it also establishes the government's right to perform searches and seizures under appropriate conditions. "Unreasonable" is a vague phrase, as is "probable cause,"*

#### Scorer Commentary

<sup>1</sup> In order to address the question, this student first places his chosen document in its historical and social context.

<sup>2</sup> Here the student begins to do precisely what the question assigns: "us[e] the writers' language to discern the writers' intent."

<sup>3</sup> As we saw in his earlier essay, this student enjoys pointing out the subtle differences in word choice, but such distinctions do help him establish a strong case.

and these items are subject to interpretation by legislators and judges; they may decide to enhance the government's power by redefining these terms.

Ultimately, though Amendment IV ostensibly places limits on the government's power, the exact scope of these limits must be determined by those in the government. However, the authors do take care to mention that any warrant issued must be issued "upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation"; this clause, especially the words "supported by oath or affirmation," suggests that the decision to issue a warrant for search and seizure should not be made by one person only.<sup>4</sup> The specific language used here should reduce the potential that the powers granted in this Amendment will be abused. This pattern continues throughout The Bill of Rights; the authors suggest that certain rights belong to the people, while simultaneously establishing the government's powers regarding those rights.

This is not to say that The Bill of Rights is a document that has little meaning beyond mollifying eighteenth-century citizens and state governments. Clearly, because The Bill of Rights modifies the overarching law of the land, the Constitution, it is much more than a public service announcement to build public confidence in an untested and unproven government. One of the major strengths of the document is its flexibility: the language within these ten Amendments is nonspecific enough to allow legislators freedom to adapt the ideas to present situations and needs.<sup>5</sup> Provided legislators wield this power wisely and with discretion, The Bill of Rights can fulfill the promise its authors intended: protecting the people's inalienable rights.<sup>6</sup>

#### Scorer Commentary

<sup>4</sup> Again, whether you agree or disagree with this student's interpretation is irrelevant. He does use the writers' words in an attempt to discern their intent.

<sup>5</sup> It probably would have been better for this student to have spent more time on the non-specificity of the document.

<sup>6</sup> He does return to his thesis, that the document was intended more to protect people than define government.



**Exercise One:**

**Questions 1–5.** Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

*General George Washington refused to be a candidate for a third term as President of the United States. Not only did he long to return to private life and his beloved home, Mount Vernon, but he also feared setting the precedent of a popular president allowing himself to become a despot. In May of 1796, he sent his longtime friend Alexander Hamilton a draft of his farewell address. The final document was published on September 19 and read to the House of Representatives. Washington's advice to Congress about the functioning of the government and the role of the still-new nation on the world stage continues to influence the ideals and policies of the United States.*

### The Address of General Washington To The People of The United States on his declining of the Presidency of the United States,

*AMERICAN DAILY ADVERTISER, SEPTEMBER 19, 1796 (PART I)*

Friends and Fellow-Citizens:

- 1 THE PERIOD FOR A NEW ELECTION OF A CITIZEN, to administer the Executive Government of the United States, being not far distant, and the time actually arrived, when your thoughts must be employed in designating the person, who is to be clothed with that important trust, it appears to me proper, especially as it may conduce to a more distinct expression of the public voice, that I should now apprise you of the resolution I have formed, to decline being considered among the number of those, out of whom a choice is to be made.
- 2 I beg you, at the same time, to do me the justice to be assured, that this resolution has not been taken, without a strict regard to all the considerations appertaining to the relation, which binds a dutiful citizen to his country—and that, in withdrawing the tender of service which silence in my situation might imply, I am influenced by no diminution of zeal for your future interest, no deficiency of grateful respect for your past kindness; but am supported by a full conviction that the step is compatible with both.
- 3 The acceptance of, and continuance hitherto in, the office to which your suffrages have twice called me, have been a uniform sacrifice if inclination to the opinion of duty, and to a deference for what appeared to be your desire.—I constantly hoped that it would have been much earlier in my power, consistently with motives, which I was not at liberty to disregard, to return to that retirement, from which I had been reluctantly drawn.—The strength of my inclination to do this, previous to the last election, had even led to the preparation of an address to declare it to you; but mature reflection on the then perplexed and critical posture of our affairs with foreign Nations, and the unanimous advice of persons entitled to my confidence, impelled me to abandon the idea.—

- 4 I rejoice, that the state of your concerns, external as well as internal, no longer renders the pursuit of inclination incompatible with the sentiment of duty, or propriety, and am persuaded, whatever partiality may be retained for my services, that, in the present circumstances of our country, you will not disapprove my determination to retire.
- 5 The impressions, with which I first undertook the arduous trust, were explained on the proper occasion. In the discharge of this trust, I will only say, that I have, with good intentions, contributed towards the organization and administration of the government, the best exertions of which a very fallible judgment was capable.—Not unconscious, in the outset, of the inferiority of my qualifications, experience in my own eyes, perhaps still more in the eyes of others, has strengthened the motives to diffidence of myself; and every day the increasing weight of years admonishes me more and more, that the shade of retirement is as necessary to me as it will be welcome.—Satisfied, that, if any circumstances have given peculiar value to my services, they were temporary, I have the consolation to believe, that, while choice and prudence invite me to quit the political scene, patriotism does not forbid it.
- 6 In looking forward to the moment, which is intended to terminate the career of my public life, my feelings do not permit me to suspend the deep acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude, which I owe to my beloved country—for the many honors it has conferred upon me; still more for the steadfast confidence with which it has supported me; and for the opportunities I have thence enjoyed of manifesting my inviolable attachment, by services faithful and persevering, though in usefulness unequal to my zeal.—If benefits have resulted to our country from these services, let it always be remembered to your praise, and as an instructive example in our annals, that under circumstances in which the Passions, agitated in every direction, were liable to mislead, amidst appearances sometimes dubious, vicissitudes of fortune often discouraging, in situations in which not unfrequently want of success has countenanced the spirit of criticism, the constancy of your support was the essential prop of the efforts, and a guarantee of the plans by which they were effected.—Profoundly penetrated with this idea, I shall carry it with me to my grave, as a strong incitement to unceasing vows that Heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence—that your union and brotherly affection may be perpetual—that the free Constitution, which is the work of your hands, may be sacredly maintained—that its administration in every department may be stamped with wisdom and virtue—that, in fine, the happiness of the people of these States, under the auspices of liberty, may be made complete, by so careful a preservation and so prudent a use of this blessing, as will acquire to them the glory of recommending it to the applause, the affection, and adoption of every nation, which is yet a stranger to it.
- 7 Here, perhaps, I ought to stop.—But a solicitude for your welfare, which cannot end but with my life, and the apprehension of danger, natural to that solicitude, urge me on an occasion like the present, to offer to your solemn contemplation, and to recommend to your frequent review, some sentiments; which are the result of much reflection, of no inconsiderable observation and which appear to me all important to the permanency of your felicity as a People. These will be offered to you with the more freedom, as you can only see in them the disinterested warnings of a parting friend, who can possibly have no personal motive to bias his counsel.—Nor can I forget, as an encouragement to it, your indulgent reception of my sentiments on a former and not dissimilar occasion.



**8** Interwoven as is the love of liberty with every ligament of your hearts, no recommendation of mine is necessary to fortify or confirm the attachment.—

**9** The Unity of Government, which constitutes you one people, is also now dear to you.—It is justly so; for it is a main Pillar in the Edifice of your real independence; the support of your tranquillity at home; your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity in every shape; of that very Liberty, which you so highly prize.—But as it is easy to foresee, that, from different causes, and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed, to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth;—as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly and insidiously) directed it is of infinite moment, that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national Union to your collective and individual happiness;—that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to it; accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the Palladium of your political safety and prosperity; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion, that it can in any event be abandoned, and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our Country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts.

**10** For this you have every inducement of sympathy and interest.—Citizens by birth or choice of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections.—The name of AMERICAN, which belongs to you, in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of Patriotism, more than any appellation derived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference, you have the same Religion, Manners, Habits, and Political Principles. You have in a common cause fought and triumphed together; the Independence and Liberty you possess are the work of joint counsels, and joint efforts—of common dangers, sufferings, and successes.—

**11** But these considerations, however powerfully they address themselves to your sensibility, are greatly outweighed by those which apply more immediately to your Interest. Here every portion of our country finds the most commanding motives for carefully guarding and preserving the Union of the whole.

**12** The *North*, in an unrestrained intercourse with the *South*, protected by the equal Laws of a common government, finds, in the productions of the latter, great additional resources of maritime and commercial enterprise—and precious materials of manufacturing industry.—The *South*, in the same intercourse, benefiting by the agency of the *North*, sees its agriculture grow and its commerce expand. Turning partly into its own channels the seamen of the *North*, it finds its particular navigation invigorated;—and, while it contributes, in different ways, to nourish and increase the general mass of the national navigation, it looks forward to the protection of a maritime strength to which itself is unequally adapted. The *East*, in a like intercourse with the *West*, already finds, and in the progressive improvement of interior communications, by land and water, will more and more find, a valuable vent for the commodities which it brings from abroad, or manufactures at home.—The *West* derives from the *East* supplies requisite to its growth and comfort, and—what is perhaps of still greater consequence, it must of necessity owe the secure enjoyment of indispensable outlets for its own productions to the weight, influence, and the future maritime strength

of the Atlantic side of the Union, directed by an indissoluble community of interest as one *Nation*.—Any other tenure by which the *West* can hold this essential advantage, whether derived from its own separate strength, or from an apostate and unnatural connection with any foreign power, must be intrinsically precarious.

**13** While then every part of our Country thus feels an immediate and particular interest in Union, all the parts combined in the united mass of means and efforts cannot fail to find greater strength, greater resource, proportionably greater security from external danger, a less frequent interruption of their Peace by foreign Nations; and, what is of inestimable value! they must derive from Union an exemption from those broils and wars between themselves, which so frequently afflict neighboring countries, not tied together by the same governments; which their own rivalships alone would be sufficient to produce; but which opposite foreign alliances, attachments, and intrigues would stimulate and embitter.—Hence likewise they will avoid the necessity of those overgrown Military establishments, which, under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to Republican Liberty. In this sense it is, that your Union ought to be considered as a main prop to your liberty, and that the love of the one ought to endeavor to you the preservation of the other.

### Multiple-Choice Questions 1–5:

**1.** Washington's frequent use of litotes in the opening paragraphs of this address (*not far distant, no diminution of zeal, no deficiency of grateful respect*) could be interpreted to suggest that Washington was

- A. aloof.
- B. reticent.
- C. unexcitable.
- D. uneducated.
- E. haughty.

**2.** In the third paragraph, Washington suggests that he

- A. unwillingly served his second term.
- B. is too ill to serve a third term.
- C. is reluctant to retire.
- D. has been unanimously advised not to seek a third term.
- E. considers the presidency to be a loss of his liberty.

3. In the sixth paragraph, Washington attributes whatever benefits the United States has reaped during his administration to

- A. the nation's reliance on reason over emotion.
- B. the single-mindedness of the nation.
- C. his perseverance and zeal.
- D. the unflinching support of the people.
- E. an unwillingness to criticize.

4. According to this speech, which of the following is the chief source of the nation's strength?

- A. patriotism
- B. liberty
- C. tranquility
- D. unity
- E. government

5. In his elaboration on the benefits of a strong union (paragraphs 9 through 13) Washington's tone can best be described as

- A. idealistic.
- B. pragmatic.
- C. optimistic.
- D. pessimistic.
- E. caustic.

### Free-response item 1 (Text-based):

Carefully read "The Address of General Washington To The People of The United States on his declining of the Presidency of the United States" and write a thoughtful and well-supported essay in which you explain Washington's understanding of the term *patriotism* and its role in his defense of maintaining national unity. Do not merely summarize this portion of Washington's address.

### Before you write your essay:

1. Make sure you understand exactly what you're being asked to write about.
  - List all of the verbs in the prompt.
  - Underline the verb that describes the essay.
  - Write the direct object of that verb.
2. Make sure you have something valid to write about.
  - Write a sentence or two that make a positive and focused statement about the topic.
  - Make sure these sentences address all of the issues and subpoints specified in the prompt.
3. Review the selection and find your textual support.
4. Write your essay.
 

Keep referring to the prompt and whatever you underlined or highlighted in the selection to make sure you're on track and addressing everything the prompt wants you to address.

### Free-response item 2 (Independent):

A common issue that arises from time to time in national, state, and local politics is the issue of term limits, the question of whether a legal cap should be set on the number of years an individual can serve in a particular office. Proponents of term limits argue that the founders of the United States intended the government to be run by private citizens—not career politicians—who postponed their private lives for the sake of public service. Opponents argue that established terms and regularly scheduled elections make such limits unnecessary. Both look to the past, the writings of the nation's founders and other historical leaders, to support their arguments. Choose a document from United

States history in which the writer addresses the nature of public service and/or the need for established term limits. Then write a thoughtful and well-organized essay in which you agree or disagree with the writer's argument. Be certain to support your claims with specific references to your selected document. Do not merely summarize the document.

### Before you write your essay:

1. Make sure you understand exactly what you're being asked to write about.

- List all of the verbs in the prompt.
- Underline the verb that describes the essay.
- Write the direct object of that verb.

2. Choose an appropriate selection.

If you're using this book, your teacher probably wants you to write your essay on whatever story, article, or poem, etc., the writing prompt follows.

3. Make sure you have something to say about both the topic and your selected literature.

- Jot down key plot events
- Think in terms of plot structure: rising action, climax, falling action, and so on.
- Make sure you jot down notes that pertain to the assigned topic.
- Jot down quotations or at least close paraphrases.
- Jot down everything you know and remember about the assigned topic.

4. Make sure you are clear about what you are going to say.

- Write a sentence or two that make a positive and focused statement about the topic.
- Make sure these sentences address all of the issues and subpoints specified in the prompt.

5. Write your essay.

## Model Two:

### The Address of General Washington To The People of The United States on his declining of the Presidency of the United States,

AMERICAN DAILY ADVERTISER, SEPTEMBER 19, 1796 (PART 2)

1 THESE CONSIDERATIONS<sup>1</sup> speak a persuasive language to every reflecting and virtuous mind,<sup>2</sup> and exhibit<sup>3</sup> the continuance of the Union as a primary object of Patriotic desire,<sup>4</sup> Is there a doubt, whether a common government can embrace so large a sphere?—Let experience solve it.<sup>5</sup> To listen to mere speculation in such a case were criminal.<sup>6</sup>—We are authorized to hope that a proper organization of the whole, with the auxiliary agency of governments for the respective subdivisions,<sup>7</sup> will afford a happy issue to the experiment. It is well worth a fair and full experiment.<sup>8</sup> With such powerful and obvious motives to Union, affecting all parts of our country, while experience shall not have demonstrated its impracticability,<sup>9</sup> there will always be reason to distrust the patriotism of those, who in any quarter may endeavor to weaken its bands.<sup>10</sup>

2 In contemplating the causes which may disturb our Union, it occurs as matter of serious concern, that any ground should have been furnished for characterizing parties by geographical discriminations!<sup>11</sup>—Northern and Southern, Atlantic and Western; whence designing men may endeavor to excite a belief, that there is a real difference

#### Sample Student Commentary

<sup>1</sup> These refers to the "considerations" Washington enumerated and described in the previous three or four paragraphs (the final paragraphs of the Exercise One selection).

<sup>2</sup> Such a statement, whether intentional or unintentional, does not allow for reasonable discourse. Those who disagree are neither "reflecting" nor "virtuous."

<sup>3</sup> Here is a grammatical sentence structure concern. The subject of the sentence is These considerations. The two verbs are speak and exhibit. It is the "considerations" that are exhibiting.

<sup>4</sup> Continuance of Union is the direct object of exhibit. Here again, Washington is insisting that continuance of Union is a primary goal of patriotism. One cannot call himself a "patriot" if one does not support the union.

<sup>5</sup> Procrustes: acknowledging a potential objection and addressing it.

<sup>6</sup> Here again, Washington does not allow for much dialogue or debate.

<sup>7</sup> By respective subdivision, Washington probably means "state." Is he implying that the states should consider themselves "parts of the whole" rather than entire entities in their own right? His use of auxiliary to describe state government might suggest this.

<sup>8</sup> Perhaps he is simply asking the nation, the states, to try to see whether it is in their best interest to defer fully to union.

<sup>9</sup> These are all points that Washington has discussed previously. Notice the double negative: experience has not proven it impracticable. This is not necessarily the same thing as proving it practicable.

<sup>10</sup> Again asserting that those who do not favor union can be distrusted as unpatriotic.

<sup>11</sup> Washington first warns against regional divisions.

of local interests and views.<sup>12</sup> One of the expedients of Party<sup>13</sup> to acquire influence, within particular districts, is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts.<sup>14</sup> —You cannot shield yourselves too much<sup>15</sup> against the jealousies and heart burnings, which spring from these misrepresentations;—they<sup>16</sup> tend to render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection.<sup>17</sup> —The inhabitants of our Western country have lately had a useful lesson on this head—they have seen, in the negotiation by the Executive, and in the unanimous ratification by the Senate, of the treaty with Spain, and in the universal satisfaction at that event, throughout the United States, a decisive proof how unfounded were the suspicions propagated among them of a policy in the General Government and in the Atlantic States unfriendly to their interests in regard to the Mississippi!<sup>18</sup>—they have been witnesses to the formation of two Treaties, that with Great Britain, and that with Spain, which secure to them every thing they could desire, in respect to our Foreign Relations, towards confirming their prosperity.—Will it not be their wisdom to rely for the preservation of these advantages on the Union by which they were procured?—Will they not henceforth be deaf to those advisers, if such there are, who would sever them from their Brethren, and connect them with Aliens?<sup>19</sup>

3 To the efficacy and permanency of your Union, a Government for the whole is indispensable.—No alliances, however strict between the parts can be an adequate substitute.<sup>20</sup>—They must inevitably experience the infractions and interruptions which all alliances in all times have experienced.<sup>21</sup> Sensible of this momentous truth, you have

#### Sample Student Commentary

<sup>12</sup> Word choice is very important here. Designing means "scheming or conniving." As used here to excite can mean either "to create" or "to arouse." Thus, Washington is suggesting that these scheming men are creating a non-existent belief that the local interests of different regions are different from one another or from the national interest. His specifying real difference suggests that there might indeed appear to be differences, but these are not real except in the designs of these men who would disturb the Union.

<sup>13</sup> Expedient is what is fast or easy, not necessarily what is right or best. Party here suggests the division of the people into separate groups.

<sup>14</sup> Districts emphasizes that Washington is talking about regional divisions. According to Washington, some in the North can misrepresent the South in order to gain influence, just as some in the South can misrepresent the North for the same reason.

<sup>15</sup> Modern readers might read this differently from the way Washington intended. Traditionally, this expression means no amount of...is too much. Today, we would probably say, "You cannot shield yourselves enough."

<sup>16</sup> They refers to the jealousies and burnings.

<sup>17</sup> The syntax is challenging here. Alien is used as an adjective meaning "foreign or different"; to render is "to cause to become." The jealousies and burnings cause those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection to become foreign or different.

<sup>18</sup> Historical Note: a recent treaty with Spain secured the border between the United States western frontier and Spanish colonies. This same treaty granted Americans the right to sail their trade ships on the Spanish-owned Mississippi River, greatly increasing their opportunity to trade.

<sup>19</sup> Of course, Washington is assuming all of his readers will answer his rhetorical questions in the same way. By citing the treaties with Britain and Spain, however, he does provide concrete and factual support for his point about the benefits of American unity.

<sup>20</sup> Washington is drawing the distinction between a government and an alliance.

<sup>21</sup> Without citing specific examples, Washington refers to history in which probably every alliance ever entered into was, at one time or another, broken.

improved upon your first essay,<sup>22</sup> by the adoption of a Constitution of Government, better calculated than your former for an intimate Union, and for the efficacious management of your common concerns.<sup>23</sup> —This government, the offspring of our own choice uninfluenced and unawed, adopted upon full investigation and mature deliberation, completely free in its principles, in the distribution of its power, uniting security with energy, and containing within itself a provision for its own amendment, has a just claim to your confidence and your support.<sup>24</sup>—Respect for its authority, compliance with its Laws, acquiescence in its measures,<sup>25</sup> are duties enjoined by the fundamental maxims of true Liberty.—The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their Constitutions of Government.—But the Constitution which at any time exists, till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole People, is sacredly obligatory upon all.<sup>26</sup>—The very idea of the power and the right of the People to establish Government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established Government.<sup>27</sup>

4 All obstructions to the execution of the Laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract, or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle,<sup>28</sup> and of fatal tendency.—They serve to organize faction, to give it an artificial and extraordinary force—to put in the place of the delegated will of the nation, the will of a party;<sup>29</sup>—often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community;<sup>30</sup>—and, according to the alternate triumphs of different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of the ill-concerted and incongruous projects of faction, rather than the organ of consistent and wholesome plans digested by common councils,<sup>31</sup> and modified by mutual interests.<sup>32</sup>—However combinations or associations of the above descriptions may now and then answer popular ends,<sup>33</sup> they are likely, in

#### Sample Student Commentary

<sup>22</sup> Essay means "attempt." The first essay to which Washington is referring are the Articles of Confederation, which were replaced by the Constitution.

<sup>23</sup> More than merely "close" or "familiar," intimate means "relating to one's deepest nature." Washington continues to stress the commonness, the sense that, regardless of superficial differences like location, the people are one being.

<sup>24</sup> It is probably important to note that this is 1796; the Constitution was ratified into law in 1788. The issue Washington is addressing, then, is not whether or not to ratify the Constitution but whether to preserve the union it established.

<sup>25</sup> To acquiesce is to "submit" or "yield."

<sup>26</sup> Here again, Washington's word choice is very important. The Government is the People, and the people are obligated to it as they are to whatever religious creed they believe.

<sup>27</sup> The one idea [that the People have the right to establish their own laws] is based on the other idea [that the People are bound to obey the laws they establish].

<sup>28</sup> The right of the people to establish their own laws is founded upon their obligation to obey those laws.

<sup>29</sup> Washington has used the words discriminations, faction, and now party to describe the same type of division.

<sup>30</sup> Artful here is a synonym for the earlier designing. It means "scheming."

<sup>31</sup> Words associated with party or faction are *ill-conceived* and *incongruous*. Words associated with unity are *organ*, *consistent*, and *wholesome*.

<sup>32</sup> Mutual is not a strict synonym for common. It carries a connotation of sharing and reciprocity.

<sup>33</sup> Washington's understanding of however would have been similar to the modern *although*.

the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the Power of the People, and to usurp for themselves the reins of Government;<sup>34</sup> destroying afterwards the very engines, which have lifted them to unjust dominion.—<sup>35</sup>

**5** Towards the preservation of your Government, and the permanency of your present happy state,<sup>36</sup> it is requisite, not only that you steadily discountenance irregular oppositions to its acknowledged authority, but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious<sup>37</sup> the pretexts.—One method of assault may be to effect, in the forms of the Constitution, alterations<sup>38</sup> which will impair the energy of the system, and thus to undermine what cannot be directly overthrown.<sup>39</sup>—In all the changes to which you may be invited, remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true character of Governments, as of other human institutions—that experience is the surest standard, by which to test the real tendency of the existing Constitution of a Country—that facility in changes upon the credit<sup>40</sup> of mere hypothesis and opinion<sup>41</sup> exposes to perpetual change, from the endless variety of hypothesis and opinion:—and remember, especially, that, for the efficient management of your common interests, in a country so extensive as ours, a Government of as much vigor as is consistent with the perfect security of Liberty is indispensable.—Liberty itself will find in such a government, with powers properly distributed and adjusted, its surest Guardian.<sup>42</sup>—It is, indeed, little else than a name, where the Government is too feeble to withstand the enterprise of faction, to confine each member of the society within the limits prescribed by the laws, and to maintain all in the secure and tranquil enjoyment of the rights of person and property.

**6** I have already intimated to you the danger of parties in the State, with particular reference to the founding of them on Geographical discriminations.—Let me now take a more comprehensive view<sup>43</sup> and warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the Spirit of Party; generally:<sup>44</sup>

#### Sample Student Commentary

<sup>34</sup> Very powerful language to describe the quality of individuals who could use party sentiments to prey on the short-term desires of the people in order to set themselves up in power.

<sup>35</sup> ...and then dismantle the Government that gave them their power but protected the rights of others as well.

<sup>36</sup> Washington is begging the question here, assuming that the people of the United State are happy.

<sup>37</sup> "Showy" or "deceptively attractive, seductive."

<sup>38</sup> Legal amendments.

<sup>39</sup> Another careful distinction between words, To undermine is to "weaken from within," to "subvert." There is a sense of secretiveness and wrongdoing in undermining. To "overthrow" is to mount a complete assault. It is obvious, open. Notice also the antithesis that unwise amendments undermine what cannot be overthrown.

<sup>40</sup> Credit here means "credibility."

<sup>41</sup> Here, as elsewhere in this address, Washington urges a reliance upon history and experience rather than speculation.

<sup>42</sup> Sentence structure note: the subject is Liberty; the verb is will find; the direct object is Guardian.

<sup>43</sup> Metaphor: a quick recap of what Washington has said and a brief introduction of what he is going to say.

<sup>44</sup> By Party, Washington means "political party." A bane is a "killer," a "poisoner," "one who destroys." By his choice of this word, Washington is suggesting that party politics could be the ruin of the United States.

### Sample Multiple-Choice Questions:

**6. Washington suggests that all of the following are indications of patriotism EXCEPT**

- A. willingness to enter public service.
- B. subordination of state to federal government.
- C. private obedience to federal law.
- D. trust in history rather than speculation.
- E. avoidance of party affiliation.

**7. In paragraph 4, Washington offers a strongly worded warning against**

- A. tyrants.
- B. upstarts.
- C. despots.
- D. demagogues.
- E. anarchists.

**8. Which of the following best summarizes Washington's argument against geographical divisions?**

- A. The recent treaty with Spain illustrates the benefits of unity.
- B. The most important concerns of Americans everywhere are the same.
- C. Scheming men fuel local prejudices and sow distrust of other regions.
- D. Americans in different geographic regions cannot understand one another's needs.
- E. It is impossible for people to protect themselves from unfounded regional biases.

**9. Based on his word choice in paragraph 6, what does Washington believe that the Spirit of Party will potentially do to the United States?**

- A. divide it
- B. destroy it
- C. reform it
- D. alter it
- E. undermine it

**10. Washington's view on amending the Constitution can best be described as**

- A. opposing.
- B. neutral.
- C. fearful.
- D. aggressive.
- E. cautious.

## Answers and Explanations:

6. Throughout this selection, Washington has equated *patriotism* with *preservation of the Union* (*These considerations ... exhibit the continuance of the Union as a primary object of Patriotic desire. and ... there will always be reason to distrust the patriotism of those, who in any quarter may endeavor to weaken [the Union's] bands.*) so the "indications of patriotism" would logically be those attitudes or behaviors that foster union. (B) is eliminated by Washington's paragraph 1 use of "subdivisions" to refer to the sovereign states, and "auxiliary agency" when referring to state government. Clearly, he hopes for the subordination of the state to the federal government. (C) is eliminated in paragraph 3 when Washington writes, "...the Constitution which at any time exists, 'till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole People, is sacredly obligatory upon all.—The very idea of the power and the right of the People to establish Government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established Government." Thus, the patriotic individual has a "sacred observation" to obey the federal law until that law is lawfully amended. In paragraph 1, he writes, "Is there a doubt, whether a common government can embrace so large a sphere?—Let experience solve it. To listen to mere speculation in such a case were criminal." He further develops this idea later in the same paragraph: "experience shall not have demonstrated its impracticability." Still later, in paragraph 5, he writes: "In all the changes to which you may be invited, remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true character of Governments, as of other human institutions—that experience is the surest standard, by which to test the real tendency of the existing Constitution of a Country." Thus (D) is eliminated. The selection ends with Washington warning against "the baneful effects of the Spirit of Party, generally," eliminating (E). Nowhere in this selection, however, does Washington speak about a citizen's obligation or right to participate in government beyond obedience to its laws and avoidance of party affiliation. **Thus, (A) is the correct answer.**

7. Toward the end of the paragraph, Washington warns, "...cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the Power of the People, and to usurp for themselves the reins of Government." That these men, having usurped the reins of government might become tyrants (A) follows this warning, but these "cunning... unprincipled men" are not tyrants yet. It is not their tyranny that Washington is warning against. While "upstart" (B) may have the negative connotation of a presumptuous or ill-qualified person, primarily an upstart refers to anyone who rises quickly to power or influence from humble origins. Clearly, Washington would not be warning against such people. Despot (C) might also connote a tyrant, which has already been eliminated, but the word chiefly denotes a person with absolute power. As was the case with (A), these "cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men" may become despots after they have gained power, but it is actually their nature before gaining power, the means by

which they gain power that Washington is warning against here. Anarchists (E) are those who would prefer no government. Washington is warning against those who would subvert the government for their own gain, not those who would abolish the government altogether, so (E) is eliminated. A demagogue (D) is a person who rises to power by arousing the passions and prejudices of the people. Washington argues that the "potent engines" that allowed these "cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men" to "subvert the power of the people" were party affiliations, "combinations or associations ... [that] ... now and then answer popular ends." Having already discussed the ability of scheming men to fuel the people's biases and prejudices for the sake of fabricated divisions, it is clear that Washington fears the threat of demagoguery. **Thus, (D) is the correct answer.**

8. (A) is true, but as it states, it is an illustration of the validity of the argument, not a summary of the argument itself. (C) is also one point, not the crux, of Washington's argument. (D) would be the claim of the "designing men" who "excite [the] belief" that people in different regions are "alien" to one another; it is almost the antithesis of what Washington is saying. (E) is based on a misreading of paragraph 2's "You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heart burnings, which spring from these misrepresentations." Washington does not mean the modern sense of "you cannot shield yourselves enough..." but the older sense of "no amount of shielding can to excessive [too much]." However, when Washington accuses the "designing men [of] endeavor[ing] to excite a belief, that there is a real difference of local interests and views," he is clearly suggesting that there is not such a "real difference." Later, when he notes that "One of the expedients of Party ... is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts," he is further explaining the false belief that there are real differences in interests and views across regions. Finally, when he claims that the misrepresentations of other regions' interests and beliefs "tend to render alien to each other those, who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection," he is clearly concluding that all people in all regions are alike, share a common interest, and should be bound to one another, not divided against each other. **Thus, (B) is the correct answer.**

9. (A) might tempt some, but Washington focuses on the aspect of division only when he is talking about parties established along geographical lines. "Divide" is also too general a word to fully satisfy. (C) might tempt those who misread the section on unnecessary amendments, in which Washington says that time and experience will reform the country more effectively than party-motivated amendments. (D), like (A), is too general to satisfy. (E) might tempt a few, but Washington mentions practitioners of party politics both undermining and overthrowing the government, so (E) as it stands is incomplete and not the best answer. This section ends, however, with Washington's warning against the "baneful effects of the Spirit of Party, generally." Denotatively, *baneful* is killing or destructive. **Thus, (B) is the best answer.**



10. The most detailed mention of the Constitution's provisions for amendment are in the 3rd and 5th paragraphs. Washington first points out, "The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their Constitutions of Government," so he certainly cannot be said to oppose (A) appropriate amendments. He does, however, warn, "One method of assault may be to effect, in the forms of the Constitution, alterations which will impair the energy of the system, and thus to undermine what cannot be directly overthrown." Such a warning cannot be said to come from someone who is neutral (B). (C) is certainly tempting, but it is perhaps too strong a word and not the best choice. (D) is, likewise, too strong a word, as Washington neither opposes nor encourages amendments but acknowledges the importance of the right to amend, while cautioning against certain types of amendment. Throughout his treatment of constitutional amendment, however, Washington urges, "that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the pretex[s]." When it comes to considering amending the Constitution, the people should "remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true character of Governments, as of other human institutions—that experience is the surest standard, by which to test the real tendency of the existing Constitution of a Country." He suggests "that facility in changes upon the credit of mere hypothesis and opinion exposes [the Constitution] to perpetual change." He urges caution, therefore, that any considered amendment be weighed and considered, the principles it covers tested to see whether amending the Constitution is necessary or will the problem to be addressed in the amendment solve itself in time. **Thus, (E) is the best answer.**

### Sample Free-Response Item 1 (Text-based)

Carefully read the second selection from "The Address of General Washington To The People of The United States on his declining of the Presidency of the United States," in which Washington describes some of the potential internal dangers he thought the still-fledgling United States might face. In a well-written and well-supported essay, choose one of Washington's key points and evaluate the extent to which he succeeds in communicating the point and establishing its validity.

*In declining to run for a third term as President of the United States, George Washington warns the infant nation of several potential dangers it will encounter.<sup>1</sup> Among these are the dangers of artificial divisions, specifically geographical divisions, the misconception that people in different regions are somehow separate from one another with their own, separate values and concerns.<sup>2</sup> His message, while inspiring on an idealistic level, is largely unconvincing because he defines the terms of his Address in such a way as to make debate difficult or impossible.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, one cannot disagree with Washington without being labeled "unvirtuous" and "unpatriotic." While lessening debate might be essential Washington's strategy, to utterly dismiss opposition like this is not the best way to win that opposition over to your cause. It might actually be said to be counter to the principles of American democracy. When Washington uses concrete examples to support his arguments, however, his speech is quite strong: his arguments are less when he speculates on potential problems and blithely dismisses any possibility of reasonable disagreement.<sup>4</sup>*

*In the previous section of this speech, Washington began to enumerate the number of factors that could threaten the United States' unity and the advantages of unity over disunity. This section begins with his insisting that the advantages he has listed "speak a persuasive language to every reflecting and virtuous mind." Whether he means it or not, Washington is saying that someone who is not persuaded by these advantages is somehow stupid and evil. This type of argument borders on propaganda. Certainly, this reasoning does not provide any substance for those who do not already agree with Washington to change their minds.<sup>5</sup> In this same sentence, Washington equates a desire for unity with patriotism: "These considerations ... exhibit the continuance of the Union as a primary object*

#### Scorer Commentary

- <sup>1</sup> An innocent enough topic sentence, but not yet a thesis. It is important to note that, even though the student is answering a question, he begins the essay as if it were an independent piece.
- <sup>2</sup> This sentence fulfills the requirement to "choose one of Washington's key points."
- <sup>3</sup> This sentence begins to fulfill the evaluation requirement.
- <sup>4</sup> This first paragraph successfully introduces the topic, states a thesis, and introduces two subpoints as elements of that thesis.
- <sup>5</sup> So this first section does indeed look to the speech and evaluate the effectiveness of one of Washington's points.



of Patriotic desire." Patriots, then, desire union. Those who suggest that people of one geographical region have basic differences in beliefs from people in another geographical location are fomenting discord and may be anti-Union agents, i.e., unpatriotic. Again, there is not much in this assertion to convince someone who disagrees to change his or her mind.

Washington then offers his first concrete illustration, something that truly cannot be argued with as supporting his point. He writes, "In contemplating the causes which may disturb our Union, it occurs as matter of serious concern, that any ground should have been furnished for characterizing parties by geographical discriminations...whence designing men may endeavor to excite a belief, that there is a real difference of local interests and views." Those who support unity are patriots; those who suggest that each region has its own unique needs are "designing men." But this time, Washington does, at least offer an example to support his claim. He reminds his audience about the recent signing of a treaty between the United States and Spain, a treaty with which the "inhabitants of our Western country" had some concerns. Washington's language is not entirely clear on this point, but it appears that an unspecified group was informing the inhabitants of the West that the government, in collusion with the Atlantic states, was making policy that would be detrimental to those living in the West. Washington claims that the aforementioned treaty was met with "universal satisfaction," and so these fears were unfounded. This historical, factual example supports Washington's argument in favor of Union and against regionalism and factionalism.<sup>6</sup>

This, however, is the only specific illustration Washington has to offer of the benefit of unity over faction. He speaks a good deal about the danger of party divisions, the "small but artful and enterprising minority" that may attempt to set its will above the will of the commonwealth. He warns that party factions are, in reality, the tools "by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the Power of the People, and to usurp for themselves the reins of Government." He does not, however, provide any concrete facts or examples. Given his earlier reliance on abstract terms like "patriotic" and "virtuous" and the manner with which he barred any possible debate, these insistences are less than convincing.<sup>7</sup>

In Washington's opinion, the greatest danger facing the nation is factionalism, whether based on geographical region or political party. He may have been right, but the fact that he provides only one concrete example, speaks in such a way as to make it impossible to disagree without being labeled unintelligent and unpatriotic, and he relies almost solely on conjecture and speculation make this a fairly unconvincing argument.

#### Scorer Commentary

<sup>6</sup> This is a good use of a specific example.

<sup>7</sup> The student here does begin to work toward a conclusion that establishes the validity of his thesis: Washington warns of the potential danger of disunity, and his argument is strongest only when he has concrete examples to illustrate his point.

### Sample Free-Response Item 2 (Independent)

The definition of an abstract concept like patriotism is a popular topic for political debate, with persons at both ends of the political spectrum criticizing the others' understanding and condemning their views as "unpatriotic" or "un-American." Choose a public document, either current or historical, that touches on an understanding of what it means to be a patriot. Then, in a thoughtful and well-developed essay, analyze both the strengths and weaknesses of this understanding. You need not provide a definition of your own. Do not merely summarize the view presented in the document you choose.

*In his Farewell Address upon declining a third term as President of the United States, George Washington argues that being an American patriot means obeying the laws of the Constitution and protecting that document from unnecessary and damaging amendments. For Washington, patriotism is a spirit of unification; all Americans have similar ideals and, therefore, should not let petty, artificial divisions damage their solidarity. Washington's understanding of patriotism is highly idealistic, and this has its advantages and disadvantages.<sup>1</sup>*

*The major advantage of Washington's stance on patriotism is that it is based on the premise of mutual respect. Washington believes that all Americans share similar ideals and, therefore, should not discriminate against one another on any basis, whether geographical or political. This is, of course, a highly idealistic policy, one that requires people to step away from their personal ideals and remember that they must work together, despite differences in opinion. The people of the United States are part of something much larger than themselves, and Washington intends for them to remember that fact. He even makes the statement that avoiding geographical and political differences is the primary goal of the true patriot.<sup>2</sup> In today's heated, divisive political climate, a spirit of mutual respect and compromise would certainly be a welcome change. Washington's warnings about the deleterious effects of the "Spirit of Party" seem eerily prophetic when read today.<sup>3</sup> One wonders whether Washington would find many true patriots—according to his definition—among the politicians of either party today.*

*While maintaining unity, a patriot, according to Washington will also protect the Constitution from extensive and unwarranted amendment. Ideally, a patriot should be committed to maintaining the ideals of the country in which he or she lives, and Washington's ideas on American patriotism certainly reflect this fact. To Washington, a patriot is someone who obeys and defends the Constitution, the*

#### Scorer Commentary

<sup>1</sup> This thesis does address the issue broached in the question, but it does not state what advantages or disadvantages are going to be addressed.

<sup>2</sup> This student cannot quote from the document, since he does not have the speech immediately before him, but this is a good, tight paraphrase.

<sup>3</sup> The application to the present, while not requested, will not hurt this student's score.

document that, more than any other, defines what the United States stands for. Washington is correct to take this stance. If the Constitution is the document that defines the ideals of the country, then those who wish to amend it must take great care to ensure that no amendment runs counter to these ideals. This caution, then, is somewhat related to the patriot's desire for unity because a person or faction who pushed for an amendment that would actually contradict the ideals of the nation would foster disunity and would be no patriot. Washington describes these politicians as "cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men."<sup>4</sup> Such people, by betraying the ideals of their nation and fomenting disharmony among the people of the United States, would be no patriots in Washington's view.

However, one of the weaknesses of Washington's stance is that it seems to leave little room for rational dissent. Washington's stance on the Constitution is that it is an excellent document; he advises extreme caution when considering amendments to it. However, modern readers can easily see that the Constitution was an imperfect document in 1796; for example, the Thirteenth Amendment—abolishing slavery—was not part of the Constitution at this time, nor was the Nineteenth Amendment, which allowed women their proper right to vote. Clearly, however, these amendments are in keeping with the ideals of the United States, and those who advanced them were not disloyal or unpatriotic.<sup>5</sup> It is unlikely that Washington believed that the Constitution was perfect as constructed in 1796, but his concept of patriotism advocates near-absolute obedience to an imperfect document, and that is a flaw in retrospect.

By the same token, the division of the nation into parties was probably inevitable, not necessarily harmful. While the South's interests are not different from the North's, in many respects, the South's needs are different from the North's. The farmer and the industrialist must both be confident that they are being represented in their government. Perhaps, rather than warning against partisan divisions, Washington should have entreated his audience to find a way to maintain balance between the individual interests of party and the greater interest of the common good.<sup>6</sup>

Still, though Washington's concept of patriotism has minor flaws, one could make the argument that he advocated absolute non-partisanship and strict adherence to the Constitution to serve a greater purpose: maintaining the stability of a fledgling nation. Any criticism of this Farewell Address should be filtered to include this fact. Washington's view of patriotism is largely acceptable to the modern reader, as many of the values laid out in the original Constitution and *The Bill of Rights* are still applicable today. For those looking to examine a moderate and wise treatise on the proper place of patriotism, Washington's Farewell Address should be considered essential reading.

#### Scorer Commentary

<sup>4</sup> While quotations are not required in the independent essay, it certainly does not hurt to quote when you can.

<sup>5</sup> The student's point is that the fact of these amendments contradicts Washington's assertion that true patriots must avoid tampering with the Constitution.

<sup>6</sup> This student does successfully manage to discuss a disadvantage of both aspects of Washington's definition.

### Exercise Two:

**Questions 11–15.** Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

General George Washington refused to be a candidate for a third term as President of the United States. Not only did he long to return to private life and his beloved home, Mount Vernon, he feared setting the precedent of a popular president's allowing himself to become a despot. In May of 1796, he sent to his longtime friend Alexander Hamilton a draft of his farewell address. The final document was published on September 19 and read to the House of Representatives. Washington's advice to Congress about the functioning of the government and the role of the still-new nation on the world stage continues to influence the ideals and policies of the United States.

## The Address of General Washington To The People of The United States on his declining of the Presidency of the United States,

AMERICAN DAILY ADVERTISER, SEPTEMBER 19, 1796 (PART 3)

- 1 **T**HIS SPIRIT (OF PARTY), UNFORTUNATELY, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind.—It exists under different shapes in all Governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or repressed; but, in those of the popular form, it is seen in its greatest rankness, and is truly their worst enemy.—  
The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism.—But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism.—The disorders and miseries, which result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an individual; and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of Public Liberty.
- 3 Without looking forward to an extremity of this kind, (which nevertheless ought not to be entirely out of sight), the common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of Party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it.—  
It serves always to distract the Public Councils, and enfeeble the Public administration. It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms, kindles the animosity of one part against another, fomenters occasionally riot and insurrection.—It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the Government itself through the channels of party passions. Thus the policy and the will of one country, are subjected to the policy and will of another.

**5** There is an opinion, that parties in free countries are useful checks upon the Administration of the Government, and serve to keep alive the spirit of Liberty.—This within certain limits is probably true—and in Governments of a Monarchical cast, Patriotism may look with indulgence, if not with favor, upon the spirit of party.—But in those of the popular character, in Governments purely elective, it is a spirit not to be encouraged.—From their natural tendency, it is certain there will always be enough of that spirit for every salutary purpose,—and there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be, by force of public opinion, to mitigate and assuage it.—A fire not to be quenched; it demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame, lest, instead of warming, it should consume.

**6** It is important, likewise, that the habits of thinking in a free country should inspire caution in those entrusted with its administration, to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres; avoiding in the exercise of the powers of one department to encroach upon another. The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism.—A just estimate of that love of power, and proneness to abuse it, which predominates in the human heart, is sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of this position.—The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power, by dividing and distributing it into different depositories, and constituting each the Guardian of the Public Weal against invasions by the others, has been evinced by experiments ancient and modern; some of them in our country and under our own eyes.—To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them. If, in the opinion of the People, the distribution or modification of the Constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the Constitution designates.—But let there be no change by usurpation; for though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed.—The precedent must always greatly overbalance in permanent evil any partial or transient benefit which the use can at any time yield.—

**7** Of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, Religion, and Morality are indispensable supports.—In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of Men and Citizens.—The mere Politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them.—A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity.—Let it simply be asked where is security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation *désert* the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in Courts of Justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion.—Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure.—reason and experience both forbid us to expect, that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.—

**8** 'Tis substantially true, that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government.—The rule indeed extends with more or less force to every species of Free Government.—Who that is a sincere friend to it can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?—

**9** Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.

**10** As a very important source of strength and security, cherish public credit.—One method of preserving it is, to use it as sparingly as possible.—avoiding occasions of expense by cultivating peace, but remembering also that timely disbursements to prepare for danger frequently prevent much greater disbursements to repel it—avoiding likewise the accumulation of debt, not only by shunning occasions of expense, but by vigorous exertions in time of Peace to discharge the debts which unavoidable wars may have occasioned, not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burthen which we ourselves ought to bear. The execution of these maxims belongs to your Representatives, but it is necessary that public opinion should cooperate.—To facilitate to them the performance of their duty, it is essential that you should practically bear in mind, that towards the payment of debts there must be Revenue—that to have Revenue there must be taxes—that no taxes can be devised, which are not more or less inconvenient and unpleasant—that the intrinsic embarrassment, inseparable from the selection of the proper objects (which is always a choice of difficulties) ought to be a decisive motive for a candid construction of the conduct of the Government in making it, and for a spirit of acquiescence in the measures for obtaining Revenue, which the public exigencies may at any time dictate.—

**11** Observe good faith and justice towards all Nations. Cultivate peace and harmony with all.—Religion and Morality enjoin this conduct; and can it be, that good policy does not equally enjoin it?—It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and, at no distant period, a great nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example, of a People always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence.—Who can doubt that in the course of time and things, the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages, which might be lost by a steady adherence to it? Can it be that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a Nation with its virtue? The experiment, at least, is recommended by every sentiment which ennobles human nature.—Alas! is it rendered impossible by its vices?

**12** In the execution of such a plan nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations and passionate attachments for others, should be excluded; and that, in place of them, just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated.—The Nation, which indulges towards another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest.—Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable, when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur.—Hence frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed and bloody contests.—The Nation prompted by ill-will and resentment, sometimes impels to War the Government, contrary to the best calculations of policy.—The Government sometimes participates in the national propensity, and adopts through passion what reason would reject—at other times, it makes the animosity of the Nation subservient to projects of hostility instigated by pride, ambition, and other sinister and pernicious motives.—The peace often, sometimes perhaps the Liberty, Nations has been the victim.—

- 13 So likewise a passionate attachment of one Nation for another produces a variety of evils.—Sympathy for the favorite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter, without adequate inducement or justification. It leads also to concessions to the favorite Nation of privileges denied to others, which is apt doubly to injure the Nation making the concessions; by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained; and by exciting jealousy, ill-will, and a disposition to retaliate, in the parties from whom equal privileges are withheld; and it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens, (who devote themselves to the favorite Nation) facility to betray or sacrifice the interests of their own country, without odium, sometimes even with popularity:—gilding, with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation, a commendable deference for public opinion, or a laudable zeal for public good, and the base or foolish compliances of ambition, corruption, or infatuation.—
- 14 As avenues to foreign influence in innumerable ways, such attachments are particularly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent Patriot.—How many opportunities do they afford to tamper with domestic factions, to practise the arts of seduction, to mislead public opinion, to influence or awe the public councils! Such an attachment of a small or weak, towards a great and powerful nation, dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter.
- 15 Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence, I conjure you to believe me, fellow-citizens, the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake; since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican Government.—But that jealousy, to be useful, must be impartial; else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided, instead of a defense against it.—Excessive partiality for one foreign nation, and excessive dislike of another, cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other. Real Patriots, who may resist the intrigues of the favorite, are liable to become suspected and odious; while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people, to surrender their interests.
- 16 The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign Nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little *Political* connection as possible.—So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith.—Here let us stop.—
- 17 Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote relation.—Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns.—Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships, or enmities.
- 18 Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course.—If we remain one People, under an efficient government, the period is not far off, when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon to be scrupulously respected. When belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making

acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by our justice, shall counsel.

19 Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation?—Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground?—Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor, or caprice?—

20 'Tis our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances, with any portion of the foreign world;—so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it;—for let me not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements. (I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs, that honesty is always the best policy.)—I repeat it therefore let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense.—But in my opinion it is unnecessary and would be unwise to extend them.—

21 Taking care always to keep ourselves, by suitable establishments, on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.—

22 Harmony, liberal intercourse with all nations, are recommended by policy, humanity, and interest. But even our commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand;—neither seeking nor granting exclusive favors or preferences;—consulting the natural course of things;—diffusing and diversifying by gentle means the streams of commerce, but forcing nothing;—establishing with Powers so disposed—in order to give trade a stable course, to define the rights of our Merchants, and to enable the Government to support them—conventional rules of intercourse, the best that present circumstances and mutual opinion will permit; but temporary, and liable to be from time to time abandoned or varied, as experience and circumstances shall dictate; constantly keeping in view, that 'tis folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another;—that it must pay with a portion of its independence for whatever it may accept under that character—that by such acceptance, it may place itself in the condition of having given equivalents for nominal favors, and yet of being reproached with ingratitude for not giving more. There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon real favors from Nation to Nation. 'Tis an illusion, which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.

23 I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression, I could wish,—that they will control the usual current of the passions, or prevent our Nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the destiny of Nations. But if I may even flatter myself, that they may be productive of some partial benefit; some occasional good, that they may now and then recur to moderate the fury of party spirit, to warn against the mischiefs of foreign intrigue, to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism, this hope will be a full recompense for the solicitude for your welfare, by which they have been dictated.—

24 How far in the discharge of my official duties, I have been guided by the principles which have been delineated, the public Records and other evidences of my conduct must witness to You and to the world.—To myself the assurance of my own conscience is, that I have at least believed myself to be guided by them.

25 In relation to the still subsisting War in Europe, my Proclamation of the 22nd of April 1793, is the index to my plan.—Sanctioned by your approving voice and by that of your