

# Free midterm short answers essay sample

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

\n \t

1. [Question 1](#) \n \t

2. [Question 2](#) \n \t

3. [Work Cited](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

## **Question 1**

“ Through history, the powers of single black men flash here and there like falling stars, and die sometimes before the world has rightly gauged their brightness” (DuBois 13). This statement by W. E. B DuBois captures the power of his book in attempting to change the mindsets of African Americans about their self worth relative to those of people from other races. It is a statement rich in rhetoric because it contains a symbol and simile where black men are likened to flashing fallings stars to indicate the plight of even the brightest of black men. African Americans have fallen prey to rhetoric which demeans their stature in the world. The goal of rhetoric is to persuade.

First, African Americans have been taught to believe that they exists in some sought of veil that forbids them to interact with people from other races on an equal level. This is reflected in W. E. B DuBois’s writing where he tells the story of how a white girl refused to exchange visiting cards with him on account of the fact that he was black. This example highlights the manner in which African Americans were made to view themselves as inferior. When such acts were done against them, African Americans retreated into self-

loathing and low self-esteem. However, DuBois criticizes the approach of self-loathing by stating that he had chosen to retaliate by being the best he could be. He vowed to rise in his profession and beat his white adversaries intellectually through books or if it was necessary through physical confrontation DuBois (12). He contrasts this by stating that some African Americans chose to sink into tasteless sycophancy and resignation to the white man's rhetoric. He uses pathos to appeal to African Americans to rise up against the ills of the white man and his text may also be viewed as a call to resist oppression.

Secondly, African Americans were made to believe that they were inferior by being deprived of rights which whites enjoyed. Frederick Douglass, used rhetorical questions in his speech to persuade African Americans that they had been made to feel inferior. For example, about freedom he poses the question: " Why do you want it?" (Douglass 1). He says that white Americans espoused the idea of the Government and universal suffrage while still ruling out African Americans from their social and legal freedoms. By being deprived of their rights, African Americans were made to believe that they were inferior because they did not deserve the privileges afforded to whites by law. His is a call to a reformation of the legal structures that oppress black Americans.

The Third way in which African Americans were made to feel inferior is through slavery. David Walker in his book titled Appeal states that African Americans were enslaved together with their children to work for the white man. He asserts his argument by saying that African Americans became the most degraded, wretched, and object set of beings to ever walk the earth.

He adds that all this was being done by the whites, who purported to be Christians. His approach is that of calling upon African Americans to recreate, resist, reform and renew. He calls upon them to “ be men”. David Walker employs the tools of ethos, pathos and logos in his persuasive writing to call upon his African American readers as well as their white counterparts. The book is correctly named as “ appeal” because Walker champions a denouncement of apathy among black people. He also uses allusion whereby he refers to the conversation between Joseph and Pharaoh Bible to challenge the whites in America for not allowing African Americans to be chosen as leaders. By alluding to the Bible, he gives credibility to his arguments. This is his way of using the social theory of reform to evoke change in the leadership structures.

## **Question 2**

I believe that the signification strategy would be most effective in reaching out to African Americans as well as whites in trying to enter discussions on the abolition of slavery, women’s rights or the overall progress of the country. This is because by using insult on fellow blacks, one may succeed in evokes action. Signification works as an indirect form of pathos. This is because it makes the audience (who in this case are the oppressed) to awake to their situation and plight. It is aimed at raising their awareness. The fact that the speech or text originates from a person who shares the same plight as the audience makes it less offensive and comically effective. One examples of signification in African America writers is that in Appeal by David Walker. He says: “ But we, (coloured people) and our children are brutes!! and of course are, and ought to be SLAVES to the American people

together with their children forever!!” (Walker 17). This kind of writing by Walker may be explained using the social theory of rhetoric use among African American writers. Walker’s success in appealing to the African American population through this method highlights its effectiveness. The second reason why signification is suited to addressing the oppressed is because it enables the speaker to critique people without direct confrontation. It also underlines the Speaker’s superiority in handling a particular issue. This is because by belittling others, he gets to be heard by the audience while those he/she is indirectly do not have the platform to respond immediately. By demonstrating his verbal power, the speaker earns the attention of his audience. For example Walker states that the inhabitants of the entire world “ except, however, the sons of Africa” are referred to as men (Walker 17). This is also repeated by Booker T. Washington in his Up From Slavery when he refers to African Americans as not fit to be considered as men. For example he uses the example of a man who tries to teach him how to vote in Tuskegee. By providing this example, Washington seeks to indirectly insult the African people. This is an insult to the African American people, who the author implies are not men. He later states that they are brutes. This signifying approach to capturing the attention of his audience is founded on his ability to show his prowess with language and his superiority. This approach is appropriate because it not only gives him credibility but also works to appeal to his audience. Signifyin’ is a rhetorical approach which gives credibility to the speaker by making him appear superior. These are the reasons why I would chose signifying as a rhetorical approach while

addressing abolition of slavery, women's rights or the overall progress of the country.

### **Work Cited**

DuBois, W. E. B. *The souls of black folk: essays and sketches*. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1961. Print.

Washington, Booker T. *Up from slavery, an autobiography*. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1963. Print.

Douglass, Frederick. "What the Black Man Wants." Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. Frederick. Boston, Massachusetts. 4 Mar. 1871. Address.