

ESSAY QUESTION 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one third of the total score for Section II.)

Read the following passage, an excerpt from an email written to friends and family by an American soldier fighting in Iraq, 2003–2004. Then write an essay in which you analyze the rhetorical strategies used by the author to explain his experience and convey his attitude toward that experience.

I know a number of you have been curious about what it's like over here, so we are going to take a small mental voyage. First off, we are going to pre-
pare our living area. Go to your vacuum, open the canister, and pour it all
Line over you, your bed, clothing, and your personal effects. Now roll in it until
(5) it's in your eyes, nose, ears, hair, and . . . well, you get the picture. You know it's just perfect when you slap your chest and cough from the dust cloud you kicked up. And so, there is no escape, trust me. You just get used to it.

OK, pitch a tent in your driveway, and mark off an area inside it along one wall about six feet by eight feet (including your bed). Now pack every-
(10) thing you need to live for four months—without Wal-Mart—and move in. Tear down the three walls of your tent seen from the street and you have about as much privacy as I have.

If you really want to make this accurate, bring in a kennel full of pugs; the smell, snoring, and social graces will be just like living with my nine
(15) tentmates. Also, you must never speak above a whisper because at all times at least four of your tentmates will be sleeping. That's where the flashlight comes in handy; you are going to use it to navigate a pitch-dark tent, 24 hours a day.

Time for hygiene. Walk to the nearest bathroom. In my case, it's a thou-
(20) sand-foot trudge over loose gravel. Ever stagger to the john at 0400? Try it in a frozen rock garden. Given the urges that woke you at this hour, taking the time to put on your thermals and jacket might not be foremost in your mind. But halfway there, it's too late. So dress warmly. It gets really freakin' cold here at night.

(25) I don't even feel like talking about the latrine experience. All I have to say is that, after the first time, I went back to the tent and felt like either crying or lighting myself on fire to remove the filth.