Sedaris Rhetoric and Style Questions
AP Language and Comp
M. Ray

QUESTIONS ON RHETORIC AND STYLE

1. How does Sedaris’s selection of detail in the first paragraph establish a humorous tone?

2. Find 2 examples of hyperbole in the essay. What is the effect of each exaggeration?

3. Identify examples of Sedaris’s ethnic references. What is their effect?

4. Identify an instance of irony and understatement. How does each help to create humor?

5. Explain the effect of the sarcastic remarks of the French teacher.
MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

These multiple-choice questions refer to the entire essay.

1. Each of the following statements contributes to the humor of the essay EXCEPT
   a. “If you have not miemsllxp or lqpdnurct by this time, then you should not be in this room.” (paragraph 4)
   b. “My school is an easy ten-minute walk from my apartment, and on the first day of class I arrived early, watching as the returning students greeted one another in the school lobby.” (paragraph 2)
   c. “It was startling because (a) I hadn’t been asked that question in a while and (b) I realized, while laughing, that I myself did not know the alphabet.” (paragraph 5)
   d. “...I love leafing through medical textbooks devoted to severe dermatological conditions...” (paragraph 14)
   e. “That be common for I, also, but be more strong, you. Much work and someday you talk pretty.” (paragraph 25)

2. Each of the following quotations illustrates the sarcasm of the teacher EXCEPT
   a. “Oh yeah? And do you love your little war?” (paragraph 12)
   b. “How very interesting. I thought that everyone loved the mosquito...” (paragraph 8)
   c. “Even a fiussczsa ticivelmun knows that a typewriter is feminine.” (paragraph 16)
   d. “Every day spent with you is like having a cesarean section.” (paragraph 27)
   e. “You exhaust me with your foolishness and reward my efforts with nothing but pain...” (paragraph 29)

3. Which of the following is an esoteric cultural reference?
   a. Pa Kettle
   b. Polish Annas
   c. Hyeyoon Cho
   d. Good Sir Dishrag
   e. Kang and Vlatyna

4. Which of the following sentences is ironic?
   a. “The teacher marched in, deeply tanned from a recent vacation, and proceeded to rattle off a series of administrative announcements.” (paragraph 3)
   b. “The teacher continued her diatribe and I settled back, bathing in the subtle beauty of each new curse and insult.” (paragraph 28)
   c. “While the optimist struggled to defend herself, I scrambled to think of an answer to what had obviously become a trick question.” (paragraph 13)
   d. “My fear and discomfort crept beyond the borders of the classroom and accompanied me out onto the wide boulevards.” (paragraph 22)
   e. “Fall arrived and it rained every day, meaning we would now be scolded for the water dripping from our coats and umbrellas.” (paragraph 27)

5. In the essay Sedaris uses each of the following EXCEPT
   a. imperative sentence
   b. declarative sentence
   c. cumulative sentence
   d. sentence fragment
   e. interrogative sentence

SIMULATED AP ESSAY QUESTION

1. Rhetorical Analysis. Read “Me Talk Pretty One Day” and then write a well-organized essay in which you explain how the author uses rhetorical devices to achieve a comic effect.