



**INCLUDES**

- ✓ Course framework
- ✓ Instructional section
- ✓ Sample exam questions

# AP<sup>®</sup> English Language and Composition

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**COURSE AND EXAM DESCRIPTION**

Effective  
**Fall 2024**

**This course and exam description, designed with extensive feedback from teachers, features the following AP English Language and Composition resources.**

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- It details the required **AP English Language and Composition course content** clearly and succinctly.
  - It offers optional  **pacing information and teaching resources**  that AP English Language and Composition teachers can adapt or modify rather than having to build from scratch.
  - It includes an **exam information** section with details about the structure of the AP English Language and Composition Exam along with a collection of sample AP questions.
  - It provides a variety of **instructional approaches** with a range of useful teaching strategies that teachers may draw upon throughout the year.
- 



Teachers can visit [AP Classroom](#) to access additional resources including Personal Progress Checks for each unit and the progress dashboard, which lets them easily see how students are performing and which areas they need to focus on.



# AP<sup>®</sup> English Language and Composition

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## COURSE AND EXAM DESCRIPTION

Effective  
**Fall 2024**

**AP COURSE AND EXAM DESCRIPTIONS ARE UPDATED PERIODICALLY**

Please visit AP Central ([apcentral.collegeboard.org](https://apcentral.collegeboard.org)) to determine whether a more recent course and exam description is available.

# What AP® Stands For

Thousands of Advanced Placement teachers have contributed to the principles articulated here. These principles are not new; they are, rather, a reminder of how AP already works in classrooms nationwide. The following principles are designed to ensure that teachers' expertise is respected, required course content is understood, and that students are academically challenged and free to make up their own minds.

1. AP stands for clarity and transparency. Teachers and students deserve clear expectations. The Advanced Placement Program makes public its course frameworks and sample assessments. Confusion about what is permitted in the classroom disrupts teachers and students as they navigate demanding work.
2. AP is an unflinching encounter with evidence. AP courses enable students to develop as independent thinkers and to draw their own conclusions. Evidence and the scientific method are the starting place for conversations in AP courses.
3. AP opposes censorship. AP is animated by a deep respect for the intellectual freedom of teachers and students alike. If a school bans required topics from their AP courses, the AP Program removes the AP designation from that course and its inclusion in the AP Course Ledger provided to colleges and universities. For example, the concepts of evolution are at the heart of college biology, and a course that neglects such concepts does not pass muster as AP Biology.
4. AP opposes indoctrination. AP students are expected to analyze different perspectives from their own, and no points on an AP Exam are awarded for agreement with any specific viewpoint. AP students are not required to feel certain ways about themselves or the course content. AP courses instead develop students' abilities to assess the credibility of sources, draw conclusions, and make up their own minds.

As the AP English Literature course description states: "AP students are not expected or asked to subscribe to any one specific set of cultural or political values, but are expected to have the maturity to analyze perspectives different from their own and to question the meaning, purpose, or effect of such content within the literary work as a whole."

5. AP courses foster an open-minded approach to the histories and cultures of different peoples. The study of different nationalities, cultures, religions, races, and ethnicities is essential within a variety of academic disciplines. AP courses ground such studies in primary sources so that students can evaluate experiences and evidence for themselves.
6. Every AP student who engages with evidence is listened to and respected. Students are encouraged to evaluate arguments but not one another. AP classrooms respect diversity in backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints. The perspectives and contributions of the full range of AP students are sought and considered. Respectful debate of ideas is cultivated and protected; personal attacks have no place in AP.
7. AP is a choice for parents and students. Parents and students freely choose to enroll in AP courses. Course descriptions are available online for parents and students to inform their choice. Parents do not define which college-level topics are suitable within AP courses; AP course and exam materials are crafted by committees of professors and other expert educators in each field. AP courses and exams are then further validated by the American Council on Education and studies that confirm the use of AP scores for college credits by thousands of colleges and universities nationwide.

The AP Program encourages educators to review these principles with parents and students so they know what to expect in an AP course. Advanced Placement is always a choice, and it should be an informed one. AP teachers should be given the confidence and clarity that once parents have enrolled their child in an AP course, they have agreed to a classroom experience that embodies these principles.

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**Akua Duku Anokye**, *Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ*  
**Jonathan Bush**, *Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI*  
**Sheila Carter-Tod**, *Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg, VA*  
**Meghan Chandler**, *D.W. Daniel High School, Central, SC*  
**Patrick Clauss**, *University of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN*  
**Alfonso Correa**, *TAG Magnet High School, Dallas, TX*  
**Martha Davis**, *Norwalk Community High School, Norwalk, IA*  
**Angela Dorman**, *West Mesquite High School, Mesquite, TX*  
**Jennifer Fletcher**, *California State University, Monterey Bay, Marina, CA*  
**Timm Freitas**, *Whitinsville Christian High School, Whitinsville, MA*  
**Cheryl Glenn**, *Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA*  
**Sally Guadagno**, *Wheaton College, Norton, MA*  
**Asao Inoue**, *University of Washington Tacoma, WA*  
**Lisa Kelley**, *Nokomis Regional High School, Newport, ME*  
**David Klingenberg**, *Niles West High School, Skokie, IL*  
**Eloise Lynch**, *George Rogers Clark High School, Winchester, KY*  
**Kevin McDonald**, *Edmond Memorial High School, Edmond, OK*  
**Michael Neal**, *Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL*  
**Dan O'Rourke**, *Riverside Brookfield High School, Riverside, IL*  
**Adrienne Pedroso**, *School for Advanced Studies, Miami, FL*  
**Octavio Pimentel**, *Texas State University, San Marcos, TX*  
**Jaqueline Rackard**, *Coral Springs High School, Coral Springs, FL*  
**Kalimah Rahim**, *New Mission High School, Hyde Park, MA*  
**Jodi Rice**, *Bishop Strachan School, Toronto, Ontario*  
**Shannon Schiller**, *Mt. Vernon High School, Fortville, IN*  
**Mary Trachsel**, *University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA*  
**Jennifer Webb**, *Lakewood High School, Lakewood, CO*  
**Carl Whithaus**, *University of California, Davis, CA*  
**Elizabetha Wright**, *University of Minnesota Duluth, MN*  
**Paul Yeoh**, *Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ*

## College Board Staff

**Emily Valaitis**, *Director, AP English Language and Composition Course Lead*  
**Lily Chiu**, *Senior Director, AP English, World Languages, and Arts, Assessment Manager*  
**Heidi Bamatter**, *Director, Product Development and Editorial*  
**Dana Kopelman**, *Executive Director, AP Instruction & Assessment Production*  
**Claire Lorenz**, *Senior Director, AP Instruction*  
**Aubrey Ludwig**, *Executive Director, English and World Languages Department Head*  
**Jason Manoharan**, *Vice President, AP Program Development*  
**Daniel McDonough**, *Senior Director, AP Content and Assessment Publications*  
**Allison Thurber**, *Vice President, AP Curriculum and Assessment*

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# About AP

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The Advanced Placement® Program (AP®) enables willing and academically prepared students to pursue college-level studies—with the opportunity to earn college credit, advanced placement, or both—while still in high school. Through AP courses in 39 subjects, each culminating in a challenging exam, students learn to think critically, construct solid arguments, and see many sides of an issue—skills that prepare them for college and beyond. Taking AP courses demonstrates to college admission officers that students have sought the most challenging curriculum available to them, and research indicates that students who score a 3 or higher on an AP Exam typically experience greater academic success in college and are more likely to earn a college degree than non-AP students. Each AP teacher’s syllabus is evaluated and approved by faculty from some of the nation’s leading colleges and universities, and AP Exams are developed and scored by college faculty and experienced AP teachers. Most four-year colleges and universities in the United States grant credit, advanced placement, or both on the basis of successful AP Exam scores—more than 3,300 institutions worldwide annually receive AP scores.

## AP Course Development

In an ongoing effort to maintain alignment with best practices in college-level learning, AP courses and exams emphasize challenging, research-based curricula aligned with higher education expectations.

Individual teachers are responsible for designing their own curriculum for AP courses, selecting appropriate college-level readings, assignments, and resources. This course and exam description presents the content and skills that are the focus of the corresponding college course and that appear on the AP Exam. It also organizes the content and skills into a series of units that represent a sequence found in widely adopted college textbooks and that many AP teachers have told us they follow in order to focus their instruction. The intention of this publication is to respect teachers’ time and expertise by providing a roadmap that they can modify and adapt to their local priorities and preferences. Moreover, by organizing the AP course content and skills into units, the AP Program is able to provide teachers and students with free formative

assessments—Progress Checks—that teachers can assign throughout the year to measure student progress as they acquire content knowledge and develop skills.

## Enrolling Students: Equity and Access

The AP Program strongly encourages educators to make equitable access a guiding principle for their AP programs by giving all willing and academically prepared students the opportunity to participate in AP. We encourage the elimination of barriers that restrict access to AP for students from ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups that have been traditionally underserved. The AP Program also believes that all students should have access to academically challenging coursework before they enroll in AP classes, which can prepare them for AP success. It is only through a commitment to equitable preparation and access that true equity and excellence can be achieved.

## Offering AP Courses: The AP Course Audit

The AP Program unequivocally supports the principle that each school implements its own curriculum that will enable students to develop the content understandings and skills described in the course framework.

While the unit sequence represented in this publication is optional, the AP Program does have a short list of curricular and resource requirements that must be fulfilled before a school can label a course “Advanced Placement” or “AP.” Schools wishing to offer AP courses must participate in the AP Course Audit, a process through which AP teachers’ course materials are reviewed by college faculty. The AP Course Audit was created to provide teachers and administrators with clear guidelines on curricular and resource requirements for AP courses and to help colleges and universities validate courses marked “AP” on students’ transcripts. This process ensures that AP teachers’ courses meet or exceed the curricular and resource expectations that college and secondary school faculty have established for college-level courses.

The AP Course Audit form is submitted by the AP teacher and the school principal (or designated administrator) to confirm awareness and understanding of the curricular and resource requirements. A syllabus or course outline, detailing how course requirements are met, is submitted by the AP teacher for review by college faculty.

Please visit [collegeboard.org/apcourseaudit](https://collegeboard.org/apcourseaudit) for more information to support the preparation and submission of materials for the AP Course Audit.

## How the AP Program Is Developed

The scope of content for an AP course and exam is derived from an analysis of hundreds of syllabi and course offerings of colleges and universities. Using this research and data, a committee of college faculty and expert AP teachers work within the scope of the corresponding college course to articulate what students should know and be able to do upon the completion of the AP course. The resulting course framework is the heart of this course and exam description and serves as a blueprint of the content and skills that can appear on an AP Exam.

The AP Test Development Committees are responsible for developing each AP Exam, ensuring the exam questions are aligned to the course framework. The AP Exam development process is a multiyear endeavor; all AP Exams undergo extensive review, revision, piloting, and analysis to ensure that questions are accurate, fair, and valid, and that there is an appropriate spread of difficulty across the questions.

Committee members are selected to represent a variety of perspectives and institutions (public and private, small and large schools and colleges), and a range of gender, racial/ethnic, and regional groups. A list of each subject’s current AP Test Development Committee members is available on [apcentral.collegeboard.org](https://apcentral.collegeboard.org).

Throughout AP course and exam development, College Board gathers feedback from various stakeholders in both secondary schools and higher education institutions. This feedback is carefully considered to ensure that AP courses and exams are able to provide students with a college-level learning experience and the opportunity to demonstrate their qualifications for advanced placement or college credit.

## How AP Exams Are Scored

The exam scoring process, like the course and exam development process, relies on the expertise of both AP teachers and college faculty. While multiple-choice questions are scored by machine, the free-response questions and through-course performance

assessments, as applicable, are scored by thousands of college faculty and expert AP teachers. Most are scored at the annual AP Reading, while a small portion is scored online. All AP Readers are thoroughly trained, and their work is monitored throughout the Reading for fairness and consistency. In each subject, a highly respected college faculty member serves as Chief Faculty Consultant and, with the help of AP Readers in leadership positions, maintains the accuracy of the scoring standards. Scores on the free-response questions and performance assessments are weighted and combined with the results of the computer-scored multiple-choice questions, and this raw score is converted into a composite AP score on a 1–5 scale.

AP Exams are **not** norm-referenced or graded on a curve. Instead, they are criterion-referenced, which means that every student who meets the criteria for an AP score of 2, 3, 4, or 5 will receive that score, no matter how many students that is. The criteria for the number of points students must earn on the AP Exam to receive scores of 3, 4, or 5—the scores that research consistently validates for credit and placement purposes—include:

- The number of points successful college students earn when their professors administer AP Exam questions to them.
- Performance that researchers have found to be predictive of an AP student succeeding when placed into a subsequent higher-level college course.
- The number of points college faculty indicate, after reviewing each AP question, that they expect is necessary to achieve each AP grade level.

## Using and Interpreting AP Scores

The extensive work done by college faculty and AP teachers in the development of the course and exam and throughout the scoring process ensures that AP Exam scores accurately represent students’ achievement in the equivalent college course. Frequent and regular research studies establish the validity of AP scores as follows:

AP Score	Credit Recommendation	College Grade Equivalent
5	Extremely well qualified	A
4	Well qualified	A-, B+, B
3	Qualified	B-, C+, C
2	Possibly qualified	n/a
1	No recommendation	n/a

While colleges and universities are responsible for setting their own credit and placement policies, most private colleges and universities award credit and/or advanced placement for AP scores of 3 or higher. Additionally, most states in the U.S. have adopted statewide credit policies that ensure college credit for scores of 3 or higher at public colleges and universities. To confirm a specific college's AP credit/placement policy, a search engine is available at [apstudent.collegeboard.org/creditandplacement/search-credit-policies](https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/creditandplacement/search-credit-policies).

### **BECOMING AN AP READER**

Each June, thousands of AP teachers and college faculty members from around the world gather for seven days in multiple locations to evaluate and score the free-response sections of the AP Exams. Ninety-eight percent of surveyed educators who took part in the AP Reading say it was a positive experience.

There are many reasons to consider becoming an AP Reader, including opportunities to:

- **Bring positive changes to the classroom:** Surveys show that the vast majority of returning AP Readers—both high school and college educators—make improvements to the way they

teach or score because of their experience at the AP Reading.

- **Gain in-depth understanding of AP Exam and AP scoring standards:** AP Readers gain exposure to the quality and depth of the responses from the entire pool of AP Exam takers, and thus are better able to assess their students' work in the classroom.
- **Receive compensation:** AP Readers are compensated for their work during the Reading. Expenses, lodging, and meals are covered for Readers who travel.
- **Score from home:** AP Readers have online distributed scoring opportunities for certain subjects. Check [collegeboard.org/apreading](https://collegeboard.org/apreading) for details.
- **Earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs):** AP Readers earn professional development hours and CEUs that can be applied to PD requirements by states, districts, and schools.

### **How to Apply**

Visit [collegeboard.org/apreading](https://collegeboard.org/apreading) for eligibility requirements and to start the application process.

# AP Resources and Supports

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By completing a simple class selection process at the start of the school year, teachers and students receive access to a robust set of classroom resources.

## AP Classroom

**AP Classroom** is a dedicated online platform designed to support teachers and students throughout their AP experience. The platform provides a variety of powerful resources and tools to provide yearlong support to teachers and students, offering opportunities to give and get meaningful feedback on student progress.



### UNIT GUIDES

Appearing in this publication and on AP Classroom, these planning guides outline all required course content and skills, organized into commonly taught units. Each Unit Guide suggests a sequence and pacing of content, scaffolds skill instruction across units, organizes content into topics, and provides tips on taking the AP Exam.



### PROGRESS CHECKS

Formative AP questions for every unit provide feedback to students on the areas where they need to focus. Available online, Progress Checks measure knowledge and skills through multiple-choice questions with rationales to explain correct and incorrect answers, and free-response questions with scoring information. Because the Progress Checks are formative, the results of these assessments cannot be used to evaluate teacher effectiveness or assign letter grades to students, and any such misuses are grounds for losing school authorization to offer AP courses.\*



### REPORTS

Reports provides teachers with a one-stop shop for student results on all assignment types, including Progress Checks. Teachers can view class trends and see where students struggle with content and skills that will be assessed on the AP Exam. Students can view their own progress over time to improve their performance before the AP Exam.



### QUESTION BANK

The Question Bank is a searchable library of all AP questions that teachers use to build custom practice for their students. Teachers can create and assign assessments with formative topic questions or questions from practice or released AP Exams.

#### Class Section Setup and Enrollment

- Teachers and students sign in to or create their College Board accounts.
- Teachers confirm that they have added the course they teach to their AP Course Audit account and have had it approved by their school's administrator.
- Teachers or AP coordinators, depending on who the school has decided is responsible, set up class sections so students can access AP resources and have exams ordered on their behalf.
- Students join class sections with a join code provided by their teacher or AP coordinator.
- Students will be asked for additional information upon joining their first class section.

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\* To report misuses, please call, 877-274-6474 (International: 212-632-1781).

# Instructional Model

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Integrating AP resources throughout the course can help students develop skills and conceptual understandings. The instructional model outlined below shows possible ways to incorporate AP resources into the classroom.



## Plan

Teachers may consider the following approaches as they plan their instruction before teaching each unit.

- Review the overview at the start of each **Unit Guide** to identify essential questions, conceptual understandings, and skills for each unit.
- Use the **Unit at a Glance** table to identify related topics that build toward a common understanding, and then plan appropriate pacing for students.
- Identify useful strategies in the **Instructional Approaches** section to help teach the concepts and skills.



## Teach

When teaching, supporting resources could be used to build students' conceptual understanding and their mastery of skills.

- Use the topic pages in the **Unit Guides** to identify the required content.
- Integrate the content with a skill, considering any appropriate scaffolding.
- Employ any of the instructional strategies previously identified.
- Use the available resources, including **AP Daily**, on the topic pages to bring a variety of assets into the classroom.



## Assess

Teachers can measure student understanding of the content and skills covered in the unit and provide actionable feedback to students.

- As you teach each topic, use **AP Classroom** to assign student **Topic Questions** as a way to continuously check student understanding and provide just in time feedback.
- At the end of each unit, use **AP Classroom** to assign students **Progress Checks**, as homework or an in-class task.
- Provide question-level feedback to students through answer rationales; provide unit- and skill-level formative feedback using **Reports**.
- Create additional practice opportunities using the **Question Bank** and assign them through **AP Classroom**.

# About the AP English Language and Composition Course

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The AP English Language and Composition course focuses on the development and revision of evidence-based analytic and argumentative writing, the rhetorical analysis of nonfiction texts, and the decisions writers make as they compose and revise. Students evaluate, synthesize, and cite research to support their arguments. Additionally, they read and analyze rhetorical elements and their effects in nonfiction texts—including images as forms of text—from a range of disciplines and historical periods.

## College Course Equivalent

The AP English Language and Composition course aligns to an introductory college-level rhetoric and writing curriculum.

## Prerequisites

There are no prerequisite courses for AP English Language and Composition. Students should be able to read and comprehend college-level texts and to express themselves clearly in writing.

**AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION**

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# Course Framework





# Introduction

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*An AP English Language and Composition course cultivates the reading and writing skills that students need for college success and for intellectually responsible civic engagement. The course guides students in becoming curious, critical, and responsive readers of diverse texts and becoming flexible, reflective writers of texts addressed to diverse audiences for diverse purposes. The reading and writing students do in the course should deepen and expand their understanding of how written language functions rhetorically: to communicate writers' intentions and elicit readers' responses in particular situations.*

To support these objectives, this *AP English Language and Composition Course and Exam Description* delineates the knowledge and skills colleges and universities typically expect students to demonstrate in order to receive credit for an introductory college composition course.

This publication is not a curriculum. Teachers create their own curricula by selecting and sequencing the texts and tasks that will enable students to develop the knowledge and skills outlined in this document. In some cases, teachers also need to meet certain state or local requirements within the AP curriculum they develop for their school. The objective of this publication is to provide teachers with clarity regarding the content and skills students should learn in order to qualify for college credit and placement. The AP Program recognizes that the real craft is in the skill with which teachers develop and deliver instruction.

Students develop the skills of rhetorical analysis and composition as they repeatedly practice analyzing others' arguments, then compose their own arguments. As a model for teachers, the course content and skills are presented in nine units. The objective of this unit structure is to respect new AP teachers' time by suggesting one possible sequence they can adapt rather than having to build from scratch.

An additional benefit is that these units enable the AP Program to provide interested teachers with free formative assessments—the Progress Checks—that they can assign their students at the end of each unit to gauge progress toward success on the AP Exam. However, experienced AP teachers who are satisfied with their current course organization and results should feel no pressure to adopt these units, which comprise an optional, not mandatory, sequence for this course.

Because these nine units only delineate the skills students should be developing across the AP English Language and Composition course but do not specify the content or themes students will study, teachers can assign a theme or title to each of the nine units (e.g., Humanity and Nature, Industry and Technology, Family and Community) or can dedicate multiple units to the same theme (e.g., Family and Community I, II, and III). This enables teachers to avail themselves of the scaffolded skill progressions detailed in each unit to help focus their students' learning and practice and then assign students the relevant Progress Checks.

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# Course Framework Components

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## Overview

This course framework provides a description of what students should know and be able to do to qualify for college credit or placement.

### The course framework includes the following components:

#### 1 BIG IDEAS AND ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

The big ideas are cross-cutting concepts that build conceptual understanding and spiral throughout the units of the course. The enduring understandings are the long-term takeaways related to the big ideas.

#### 2 COURSE SKILLS

The course skills, and their related essential knowledge statements, are the content of this course. They describe what students should know and be able to do by the end of the course.

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## AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

# Big Ideas and Enduring Understandings

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The big ideas serve as the foundation of the AP English Language and Composition course and enable students to create meaningful connections among course concepts. They are threads that run throughout the course, and revisiting them and applying them in a variety of contexts helps students to develop deeper conceptual understanding. Below are the big ideas of the course, along with the enduring understanding associated with each one:

### **RHETORICAL SITUATION (RHS)**

**Enduring Understanding RHS-1:** Individuals write within a particular situation and make strategic writing choices based on that situation.

### **CLAIMS AND EVIDENCE (CLE)**

**Enduring Understanding CLE-1:** Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments.

### **REASONING AND ORGANIZATION (REO)**

**Enduring Understanding REO-1:** Writers guide understanding of a text's lines of reasoning and claims through that text's organization and integration of evidence.

### **STYLE (STL)**

**Enduring Understanding STL-1:** The rhetorical situation informs the strategic stylistic choices that writers make.

## UNITS


The course skills are organized within nine units that scaffold student development of the analysis and composition skills required for college credit. For each unit, the teacher selects a theme or topic and then chooses texts, typically short nonfiction pieces, that enable students to practice and develop the reading and writing skills for that unit.

Each unit culminates in a Progress Check made up of 1) a free-response question and scoring rubric for the teacher to administer in class or online and 2) online multiple-choice questions that provide each student with personalized feedback and the teacher with a class summary of skills for which students are on track for college credit and skills for which focus and practice are needed.

Pacing recommendations shown within the Course at a Glance and the unit guides provide suggestions for how to teach the required course content and administer the Progress Checks. The suggested class periods are based on a schedule in which the class meets five days a week for 45 minutes each day. While these recommendations have been made to aid planning, teachers should of course adjust the pacing based on the needs of their students, alternate schedules (e.g., block scheduling), or their school's academic calendar.

# Spiraling the Big Ideas

The following table shows how the big ideas spiral across units.

	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6	Unit 7	Unit 8	Unit 9
<b>Big Ideas</b> 									
<b>Rhetorical Situation</b> <b>RHS</b>	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	
<b>Claims and Evidence</b> <b>CLE</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
<b>Reasoning and Organization</b> <b>REO</b>			✓	✓	✓				
<b>Style</b> <b>STL</b>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## 2

## AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

# Course Skills

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Throughout the course, students will follow the pattern of reading others' arguments and then writing their own. Students will analyze what makes others' arguments convincing or confusing, engaging or dull, persuasive or powerless. They will then turn to the act of composition themselves, seeking to emulate effective argumentation they have encountered in their reading and analysis.

This pattern should be repeated in every unit of the course, ensuring students are moving back and forth between analysis of the arguments they read and composition of their own arguments.

Accordingly, the AP English Language and Composition skills consist of paired reading and writing skills. These skills will be the basis for the AP Exam questions. The unit guides in this publication provide additional detail about these skills through essential knowledge statements.

Other than some focused instruction on punctuation in Unit 7, the teaching of English grammar and mechanics is not the focus of this course. Students should be able to write complete sentences before beginning the class, and through frequent reading and analysis of the arguments of others and emulating such models in their own writing, students' proficiency in written English will increase during the course. When students write essays within the AP Exam, small grammatical errors typical of unrevised writing in a timed environment will not negatively impact the score. Performance is only hurt by grammatical errors that are so prevalent and significant as to interfere with communication.

More information about teaching these skills can be found in the Instructional Approaches section.





# AP English Language and Composition Skills

<b>BIG IDEAS</b>		<b>STL Style</b>	
<b>RHS</b> Rhetorical Situation	<b>REO</b> Reasoning and Organization	<b>STL</b> Style	
<b>ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS</b>	Writers guide understanding of a text's lines of reasoning and claims through that text's organization and integration of evidence.	The rhetorical situation informs the strategic stylistic choices that writers make.	
<b>CLE</b> Claims and Evidence	<b>Skill Category 5</b> Reasoning and Organization – <b>Reading</b>	<b>Skill Category 6</b> Reasoning and Organization – <b>Writing</b>	<b>Skill Category 7</b> Reasoning and Organization – <b>Style – Reading</b>
Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments.	Describe the reasoning, organization, and development of an argument.	Use organization and commentary to illuminate the line of reasoning in an argument.	Explain how writers' stylistic choices contribute to the purpose of an argument.
<b>Skill Category 3</b> Claims and Evidence – <b>Reading</b>	<b>Skill Category 4</b> Claims and Evidence – <b>Writing</b>	<b>Skill Category 5</b> Reasoning and Organization – <b>Reading</b>	<b>Skill Category 8</b> Reasoning and Organization – <b>Style – Writing</b>
Identify and describe the claims and evidence of an argument.	Analyze and select evidence to develop and refine a claim.	Develop a line of reasoning and explain whether it supports an argument's overarching thesis.	Select words and use elements of composition to advance an argument.
<b>3.A</b> Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument. Units 1, 2, 3, 6	<b>4.A</b> Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim. Units 1, 2, 3, 6	<b>5.A</b> Describe the line of reasoning and explain whether it supports an argument's overarching thesis. Unit 3, 5	<b>7.A</b> Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text. Units 5, 6, 8
<b>3.B</b> Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument's structure. Units 2, 4, 6	<b>4.B</b> Write a thesis statement that requires proof or defense and that may preview the structure of the argument. Unit 2, 4, 6	<b>5.B</b> Explain how the organization of a text creates unity and coherence and reflects a line of reasoning. Unit 5	<b>7.B</b> Explain how writers create, combine, and place independent and dependent clauses to show relationships between and among ideas. Units 7, 8
<b>3.C</b> Explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives. Units 7, 9	<b>4.C</b> Qualify a claim using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternative perspectives. Units 7, 9	<b>5.C</b> Recognize and explain the use of methods of development to accomplish a purpose. Units 3, 4	<b>7.C</b> Explain how grammar and mechanics contribute to the clarity and effectiveness of an argument. Unit 7
<b>1.A</b> Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message. Units 1, 4, 7	<b>2.A</b> Write introductions and conclusions appropriate to the purpose and context of the rhetorical situation. Units 4, 7	<b>6.A</b> Develop a line of reasoning and explain whether it supports an argument's overarching thesis. Unit 3, 5	<b>8.A</b> Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument. Units 5, 6, 8
<b>1.B</b> Explain how an argument demonstrates understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs. Units 2, 8	<b>2.B</b> Demonstrate an understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs. Units 2, 8	<b>6.B</b> Use transitional elements to guide the reader through the line of reasoning of an argument. Unit 5	<b>8.B</b> Write sentences that clearly convey ideas and arguments. Units 7, 8
<b>1.C</b> Explain how an argument demonstrates understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs. Units 2, 8	<b>2.C</b> Demonstrate an understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs. Units 2, 8	<b>6.C</b> Use appropriate methods of development to advance an argument. Units 3, 4	<b>8.C</b> Use established conventions of grammar and mechanics to communicate clearly and effectively. Unit 7
<b>SKILLS</b>			

# Course at a Glance

## Plan

The Course at a Glance provides a useful visual organization of the AP English Language and Composition curricular components, including:

- Sequence of units, along with suggested pacing. Please note that pacing is based on 45-minute class periods, meeting five days each week, for a full academic year.
- Progression of skills within each unit.
- Spiraling of the big ideas and skills across units.

## Teach

### BIG IDEAS/SKILL CATEGORIES

*Big ideas and their skills spiral across units.*

<b>RHS</b> Rhetorical Situation	<b>REO</b> Reasoning and Organization
<b>CLE</b> Claims and Evidence	<b>STL</b> Style

## Assess

Assign the Progress Checks—either as homework or in class—for each unit. Each Progress Check contains formative multiple-choice and free-response questions. The feedback from the Progress Checks shows students the areas where they need to focus.

### Unit 1: \_\_\_\_\_

~15 Class Periods

- RHS** 1.A Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message.
- CLE** 3.A Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument.
- CLE** 4.A Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim.

### Unit 2: \_\_\_\_\_

~15 Class Periods

- RHS** 1.B Explain how an argument demonstrates understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs.
- RHS** 2.B Demonstrate an understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs.
- CLE** 3.A Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument.
- CLE** 4.A Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim.
- CLE** 3.B Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument's structure.
- CLE** 4.B Write a thesis statement that requires proof or defense and that may preview the structure of the argument.

### Progress Check 1

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~10 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

Free-response: 1 question

### Progress Check 2

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

Free-response: 1 question

## Unit 3: \_\_\_\_\_

~15 Class Periods

- CLE** 3.A Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument.
- CLE** 4.A Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim.
- REO** 5.A Describe the line of reasoning and explain whether it supports an argument's overarching thesis.
- REO** 6.A Develop a line of reasoning and commentary that explains it throughout an argument.
- REO** 5.C Recognize and explain the use of methods of development to accomplish a purpose.
- REO** 6.C Use appropriate methods of development to advance an argument.

### Progress Check 3

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

Free-response: 1 question

## Unit 4: \_\_\_\_\_

~15 Class Periods

- RHS** 1.A Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message.
- RHS** 2.A Write introductions and conclusions appropriate to the purpose and context of the rhetorical situation.
- CLE** 3.B Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument's structure.
- CLE** 4.B Write a thesis statement that requires proof or defense and that may preview the structure of the argument.
- REO** 5.C Recognize and explain the use of methods of development to accomplish a purpose.
- REO** 6.C Use appropriate methods of development to advance an argument.

### Progress Check 4

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

Free-response: 1 question

## Unit 5: \_\_\_\_\_

~15 Class Periods

- REO** 5.A Describe the line of reasoning and explain whether it supports an argument's overarching thesis.
- REO** 6.A Develop a line of reasoning and commentary that explains it throughout an argument.
- REO** 5.B Explain how the organization of a text creates unity and coherence and reflects a line of reasoning.
- REO** 6.B Use transitional elements to guide the reader through the line of reasoning of an argument.
- STL** 7.A Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text.
- STL** 8.A Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument.

### Progress Check 5

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

Free-response: 1 question

## Unit 6: \_\_\_\_\_

~15 Class Periods

**CLE** 3.A Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument.

**CLE** 4.A Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim.

**CLE** 3.B Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument's structure.

**CLE** 4.B Write a thesis statement that requires proof or defense and that may preview the structure of the argument.

**STL** 7.A Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text.

**STL** 8.A Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument.

## Unit 7: \_\_\_\_\_

~15 Class Periods

**RHS** 1.A Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message.

**RHS** 2.A Write introductions and conclusions appropriate to the purpose and context of the rhetorical situation.

**CLE** 3.C Explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives.

**CLE** 4.C Qualify a claim using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternative perspectives.

**STL** 7.B Explain how writers create, combine, and place independent and dependent clauses to show relationships between and among ideas.

**STL** 8.B Write sentences that clearly convey ideas and arguments.

**STL** 7.C Explain how grammar and mechanics contribute to the clarity and effectiveness of an argument.

**STL** 8.C Use established conventions of grammar and mechanics to communicate clearly and effectively.

## Unit 8: \_\_\_\_\_

~15 Class Periods

**RHS** 1.B Explain how an argument demonstrates understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs.

**RHS** 2.B Demonstrate an understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs.

**STL** 7.A Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text.

**STL** 8.A Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument.

**STL** 7.B Explain how writers create, combine, and place independent and dependent clauses to show relationships between and among ideas.

**STL** 8.B Write sentences that clearly convey ideas and arguments.

### Progress Check 6

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

Free-response: 1 question

### Progress Check 7

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

Free-response: 1 question

### Progress Check 8

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

Free-response: 1 question

## Unit 9: \_\_\_\_\_

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**~15** Class Periods

**CLE** **3.C** Explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives.

**CLE** **4.C** Qualify a claim using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternative perspectives.

### Progress Check 9

**ONLINE ONLY**

**Multiple-choice: ~5 questions**

**ONLINE OR PAPER**

**Free-response: 1 question**

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## AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

# Unit Guides

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### Introduction

The course consists of nine units that scaffold student development of the analysis and composition skills required for college credit. For each unit, the teacher selects a theme or topic and then chooses texts—typically short nonfiction pieces—that enable students to practice and develop the reading and writing skills for that unit.

Some teachers assign each unit a different theme (e.g., education, ethics, technology and society, human rights, civic engagement) or assign the same theme/topic for two to three units in a row. Others who are teaching a survey will assign a specific historical period or movement to each unit. And yet others will explore nine figures or movements in depth, assigning a unit to each (e.g., the transcendentalists, the civil rights movement).

This unit structure respects new AP teachers' time by suggesting one possible sequence they can adapt and modify rather than having to build from scratch. An additional benefit is that these units enable the AP Program to provide interested teachers with formative assessments—the Progress Checks—that they can assign their students at the end of each unit to gauge progress toward success on the AP Exam. These Progress Checks each include an essay question. In the early units, to scaffold student learning, this is not a full AP free-response question, but is instead designed to assess the skills students should be demonstrating early in the course. Experienced AP teachers who are satisfied with their current course organization and exam results should feel no pressure to adopt these units, which comprise an optional, not mandatory, sequence for this course.

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# Using the Unit Guides

UNIT  
9
~15 CLASS PERIODS

## Unit 9:

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### UNIT OVERVIEW

To provide teachers with time to focus on skills their students have not yet mastered, this final unit only includes a small number of additional essential knowledge statements. AP teachers should utilize information they have gained from the Progress Checks (PCs) to identify the skills where their students most need additional instruction and practice, and focus the remaining class periods accordingly. Teachers can use the AP Question Bank to create additional practice on the skills the PCs identified as students' greatest needs for further focus.

While the skills outlined in this unit represent the required course content, teachers are free to teach the skills within the unit in any order they choose. Teachers should strategically select the texts they will teach, keeping in mind that a single text might be used to teach a range of skills.

Enduring Understanding	Skill	Essential Knowledge
<p><b>EEB-1</b> Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments.</p>	<p><b>RS-1</b> Reading – Explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives.</p> <p><b>WR-1</b> Writing – Qualify a claim using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternative perspectives.</p>	<p><b>CE-1.1</b> Effectively entering into an ongoing conversation about a subject means engaging the positions that have already been considered and argued about.</p> <p><b>CE-1.2</b> Evidence and sources will either support, complement, or contradict a writer's thesis.</p> <p><b>CE-1.3.AA</b> Writers enhance their credibility when they refute, rebut, or concede opposing arguments and contradictory evidence.</p> <p><b>CE-1.3.AB</b> When writers concede, they accept all or a portion of a competing position or claim as correct, agree that the competing position or claim is correct under a different set of circumstances, or acknowledge the limitations of their own argument.</p> <p><b>CE-1.3.AC</b> When writers rebut, they offer a contrasting perspective on an argument and its evidence or provide alternative evidence to propose that all or a portion of a competing position or claim is invalid.</p>

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**Unit titles** are written in by the teacher based on how they choose to organize the course.

**Enduring Understandings** are important concepts that a student should retain long after the completion of the course.

**Skills** define what a student should learn, practice, and develop in order to qualify for college credit. These skills are thus the targets of assessment for the AP Exam.

**Essential Knowledge** statements describe the knowledge required to perform the skills.

UNIT  
1

## INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING PAGE

This page provides a place to plan instruction and pacing for this unit. When planning, be sure to:

- Select texts and tasks that best facilitate students' learning and practice of the required skills and essential knowledge in this unit.
- Schedule time at the end of the unit for students to write the **Progress Check (PC) essay** at home online, in class online, or in class with paper and pencil.
- Schedule a separate class period for the **PC multiple-choice questions**, which can only be administered online, if you want students to do this in class. (Alternatively, the AP Program recommends assigning the PC multiple-choice questions as homework.)
- Reserve a class period for additional teaching and practice of any skills identified by the PC multiple-choice question results as challenging for your students.

Reading Text or Writing Task	Selected Skill(s) and Essential Knowledge	Class Period(s) ~15 CLASS PERIODS

AP Go to [AP Classroom](#) to assign the **Progress Check** for Unit 1. Review the results in class to identify and address any student misunderstandings.

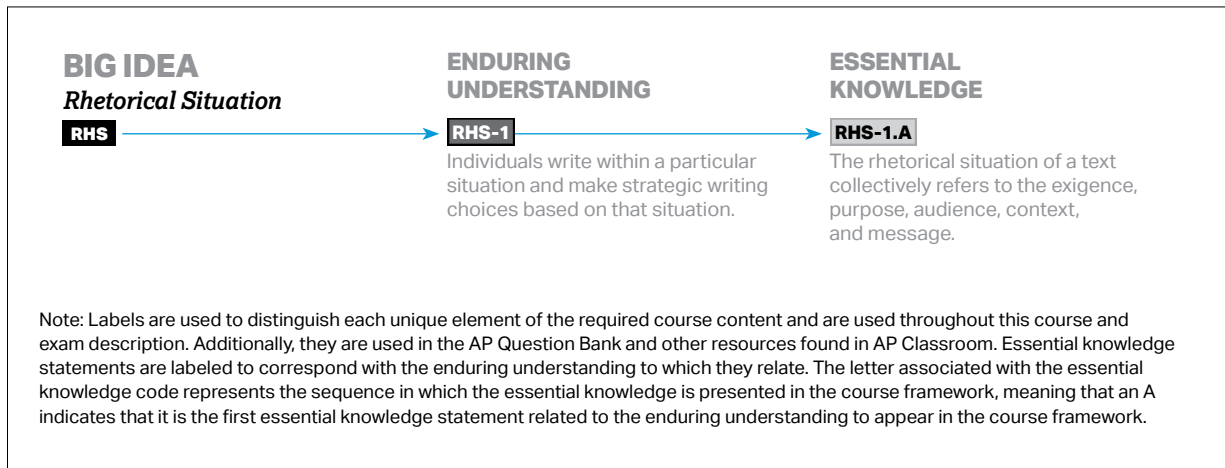
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The **Instructional Planning Page** provides a place for teachers to plan their instruction and pacing for each unit.

When planning, be sure to:

- Select texts and tasks that best facilitate students' learning of the required skills and essential knowledge for this unit.
- Schedule time at the end of the unit for students to write the **Progress Check (PC) essay** at home online, in class online, or in class with paper and pencil.
- Schedule a separate class period for the **PC multiple-choice questions**, which can only be administered online, if you want students to do this in class. (Alternatively, the AP Program recommends assigning the PC multiple-choice questions as homework.)
- Reserve a class period for additional teaching and practice of any skills identified by the PC multiple-choice question results as challenging for your students.

## COURSE CONTENT LABELING SYSTEM



# AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

## UNIT 1: \_\_\_\_\_

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**~15**  
CLASS PERIODS

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Remember to go to [AP Classroom](#) to assign students the online **Progress Check** for this unit.

Whether assigned as homework or completed in class, the **Progress Check** provides each student with immediate feedback related to this unit's topics and skills.

### **Progress Check 1**

**Multiple-choice: ~10 questions**

**Free-response: 1 question**

# Unit 1:

## UNIT OVERVIEW

Too often, students are rushed into writing full essays without having honed the skills of crafting a claim and defending it with textual evidence. Students will benefit from frequent practice during this unit writing paragraphs that include a claim that demands proof or defense and the textual evidence that furnishes that proof or defense.

One of the greatest initial challenges for students in composition classes is developing claims that require defense with textual evidence, rather than mere statements of fact that require no defense. By keeping the writing tasks in this unit focused on paragraphs rather than full essays, the likelihood of students receiving specific, consistent, and sustained feedback on the quality of the claims they are developing vastly increases.

Until students can read closely for evidence and then use that cluster of evidence to construct a claim that requires defending, it will be difficult for students to develop full essays with thesis statements and clear lines of reasoning. Each day, students should practice assembling evidence and developing claims, starting with one paragraph that includes a claim with evidence and then generating several claims about a subject, each communicated in its own paragraph with supporting evidence.

While the skills outlined in this unit represent the required course content, teachers are free to teach the skills within the unit in any order they choose. Teachers should strategically select the texts they will teach, keeping in mind that a single text might be used to teach a range of these skills.

### Enduring Understanding

#### RHS-1

Individuals write within a particular situation and make strategic writing choices based on that situation.

### Skill

**1.A** Reading – Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message.

### Essential Knowledge

#### RHS-1.A

The rhetorical situation of a text collectively refers to the exigence, purpose, audience, writer, context, and message.

#### RHS-1.B

The exigence is the part of a rhetorical situation that inspires, stimulates, provokes, or prompts writers to create a text.

#### RHS-1.C

The purpose of a text is what the writer hopes to accomplish with it. Writers may have more than one purpose in a text.

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## UNIT OVERVIEW *(cont'd)*

Enduring Understanding	Skill	Essential Knowledge
<p><b>RHS-1</b></p> <p>Individuals write within a particular situation and make strategic writing choices based on that situation.</p>	<p><b>1.A</b> Reading – Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message.</p>	<p><b>RHS-1.D</b></p> <p>An audience of a text has shared as well as individual beliefs, values, needs, and backgrounds.</p> <p><b>RHS-1.E</b></p> <p>Writers create texts within a particular context that includes the time, place, and occasion.</p>
<p><b>CLE-1</b></p> <p>Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments.</p>	<p><b>3.A</b> Reading – Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument.</p> <p><b>4.A</b> Writing – Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim.</p>	<p><b>CLE-1.A</b></p> <p>Writers convey their positions through one or more claims that require a defense.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.B</b></p> <p>Writers defend their claims with evidence and/or reasoning.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.C</b></p> <p>Types of evidence may include facts, anecdotes, analogies, statistics, examples, details, illustrations, expert opinions, personal observations, personal experiences, testimonies, or experiments.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.D</b></p> <p>Effective claims provoke interest and require a defense, rather than simply stating an obvious, known fact that requires no defense or justification.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.E</b></p> <p>Writers relate source material to their own argument by syntactically embedding particular quoted, paraphrased, or summarized information from one or more sources into their own ideas.</p>



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# AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

## UNIT 2: \_\_\_\_\_

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CLASS PERIODS

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Remember to go to [AP Classroom](#) to assign students the online **Progress Check** for this unit.

Whether assigned as homework or completed in class, the **Progress Check** provides each student with immediate feedback related to this unit's topics and skills.

### **Progress Check 2**

**Multiple-choice: ~20 questions**

**Free-response: 1 question**

# Unit 2:

## UNIT OVERVIEW

In this unit, students will continue to develop proficiency in recognizing claims and evidence in other writers' arguments, while emulating such models in their own paragraphs. In addition, they will begin identifying the ways effective writers appeal to and persuade their audiences, while practicing such appeals in their own paragraphs. During this unit, students should build a collection of claims and evidence about a topic or issue so that they can move beyond individual paragraphs to derive a thesis statement from the patterns they see within their collection.

While the skills outlined in this unit represent the required course content, teachers are free to teach the skills within the unit in any order they choose. Teachers should strategically select the texts they will teach, keeping in mind that a single text might be used to teach a range of skills.

Enduring Understanding	Skill	Essential Knowledge
<p><b>RHS-1</b></p> <p>Individuals write within a particular situation and make strategic writing choices based on that situation.</p>	<p><b>1.B</b> Reading – Explain how an argument demonstrates understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs.</p> <p><b>2.B</b> Writing – Demonstrate an understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs.</p>	<p><b>RHS-1.F</b></p> <p>Writers' perceptions of an audience's values, beliefs, needs, and background guide the choices they make.</p> <p><b>RHS-1.G</b></p> <p>To achieve a purpose, writers make choices in an attempt to relate to an intended audience's emotions and values.</p> <p><b>RHS-1.H</b></p> <p>Arguments seek to persuade or motivate action through appeals—the modes of persuasion.</p>
<p><b>CLE-1</b></p> <p>Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments.</p>	<p><b>3.A</b> Reading – Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument.</p> <p><b>4.A</b> Writing – Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim.</p>	<p><b>CLE-1.F</b></p> <p>Writers use evidence strategically and purposefully to illustrate, clarify, set a mood, exemplify, associate, or amplify a point.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.G</b></p> <p>Strategically selected evidence strengthens the validity and reasoning of the argument, relates to an audience's emotions and values, and increases a writer's credibility.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.H</b></p> <p>An effective argument contains sufficient evidence; evidence is sufficient when its quantity and quality provide apt support for the argument.</p>

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## UNIT OVERVIEW *(cont'd)*

Enduring Understanding	Skill	Essential Knowledge
<p><b>CLE-1</b> Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments.</p>	<p><b>3.B</b> Reading – Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument’s structure.</p> <p><b>4.B</b> Writing – Write a thesis statement that requires proof or defense and that may preview the structure of the argument.</p>	<p><b>CLE-1.I</b> A thesis is the main, overarching claim a writer is seeking to defend or prove by using reasoning supported by evidence.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.J</b> A writer’s thesis is not necessarily a single sentence or an explicit statement and may require a thorough reading of the text to identify, but when a thesis is directly expressed, it is called a thesis statement.</p> <p>[Note: While the texts you assign your students to analyze may not always contain obvious thesis statements, they should each have a thesis. It can be good practice for students to write a thesis statement for such texts. On the AP Exam, a clear communication of the thesis is required in students’ essays.]</p>



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# AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

## UNIT 3: \_\_\_\_\_

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CLASS PERIODS

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Remember to go to [AP Classroom](#) to assign students the online **Progress Check** for this unit.

Whether assigned as homework or completed in class, the **Progress Check** provides each student with immediate feedback related to this unit's topics and skills.

### **Progress Check 3**

**Multiple-choice: ~20 questions**

**Free-response: 1 question**



# Unit 3:

## UNIT OVERVIEW

Students should continue to see themselves as evidence collectors, continually assembling and reviewing a range of evidence to identify overarching patterns that can be used to craft a thesis statement. But in this unit, students should focus on improving the ways they explain and connect evidence and claims to establish a clear line of reasoning through their essay. Students will also become familiar with several traditional methods of development that writers have used for centuries to advance their arguments.

While the skills outlined in this unit represent the required course content, teachers are free to teach the skills within the unit in any order they choose. Teachers should strategically select the texts they will teach, keeping in mind that a single text might be used to teach a range of skills.

Enduring Understanding	Skill	Essential Knowledge
<p><b>CLE-1</b> Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments.</p>	<p><b>3.A</b> Reading – Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument.</p> <p><b>4.A</b> Writing – Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim.</p>	<p><b>CLE-1.K</b> Effective use of evidence uses commentary to establish a logical relationship between the evidence and the claim it supports.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.L</b> Writers introduce source material by using commentary to properly integrate it into their line of reasoning.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.M</b> Synthesis requires consideration, explanation, and integration of others' arguments into one's own argument.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.N</b> Writers must acknowledge words, ideas, images, texts, and other intellectual property of others through attribution, citation, or reference.</p>

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## UNIT OVERVIEW *(cont'd)*

Enduring Understanding	Skill	Essential Knowledge
<p><b>REO-1</b></p> <p>Writers guide understanding of a text's lines of reasoning and claims through that text's organization and integration of evidence.</p>	<p><b>5.A</b> Reading – Describe the line of reasoning and explain whether it supports an argument's overarching thesis.</p> <p><b>6.A</b> Writing – Develop a line of reasoning and commentary that explains it throughout an argument.</p>	<p><b>REO-1.A</b></p> <p>Writers may lead readers through a line of reasoning and then arrive at a thesis.</p> <p><b>REO-1.B</b></p> <p>Writers may express a claim and then develop a line of reasoning to justify the claim.</p> <p><b>REO-1.C</b></p> <p>Writers explain their reasoning through commentary that connects chosen evidence to a claim.</p> <p><b>REO-1.D</b></p> <p>Commentary explains the significance and relevance of evidence in relation to the line of reasoning.</p> <p><b>REO-1.E</b></p> <p>The sequence of paragraphs in a text reveals the argument's line of reasoning.</p> <p><b>REO-1.F</b></p> <p>Flaws in a line of reasoning may render an argument specious or illogical.</p>
<p><b>REO-1</b></p> <p>Writers guide understanding of a text's lines of reasoning and claims through that text's organization and integration of evidence.</p>	<p><b>5.C</b> Reading – Recognize and explain the use of methods of development to accomplish a purpose.</p> <p><b>6.C</b> Writing – Use appropriate methods of development to advance an argument.</p>	<p><b>REO-1.G</b></p> <p>Methods of development are common approaches writers frequently use to develop and organize the reasoning of their arguments. A method of development provides an audience with the means to trace a writer's reasoning in an argument.</p> <p><b>REO-1.H</b></p> <p>Some typical methods of development are narration, cause-effect, comparison-contrast, definition, and description.</p> <p><b>REO-1.I</b></p> <p>When developing ideas through narration, writers offer details about real-life experiences and offer reflections and insights on the significance of those experiences.</p> <p><b>REO-1.J</b></p> <p>When developing ideas through cause-effect, writers present a cause, assert effects or consequences of that cause, or present a series of causes and the subsequent effect(s).</p>



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# AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

## UNIT 4: \_\_\_\_\_

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CLASS PERIODS

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Remember to go to [AP Classroom](#) to assign students the online **Progress Check** for this unit.

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#### **Progress Check 4**

**Multiple-choice: ~20 questions**

**Free-response: 1 question**

# Unit 4:

## UNIT OVERVIEW

Students should enter this unit having learned to evaluate evidence to develop a thesis statement and organize an argument. Now the focus is on improving the quality, interest, and power of the argument by crafting introductions and conclusions that demonstrate a real understanding of the rhetorical situation. In addition, students will practice a few additional methods of development.

While the skills outlined in this unit represent the required course content, teachers are free to teach the skills within the unit in any order they choose. Teachers should strategically select the texts they will teach, keeping in mind that a single text might be used to teach a range of skills.

Enduring Understanding	Skill	Essential Knowledge
<p><b>RHS-1</b> Individuals write within a particular situation and make strategic writing choices based on that situation.</p>	<p><b>1.A</b> Reading – Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message.</p> <p><b>2.A</b> Writing – Write introductions and conclusions appropriate to the purpose and context of the rhetorical situation.</p>	<p><b>RHS-1.I</b> The introduction of an argument introduces the subject and/or writer of the argument to the audience. An introduction may present the argument’s thesis. An introduction may orient, engage, and/or focus the audience by presenting quotations, intriguing statements, anecdotes, questions, statistics, data, contextualized information, or a scenario.</p> <p><b>RHS-1.J</b> The conclusion of an argument brings the argument to a unified end. A conclusion may present the argument’s thesis. It may engage and/or focus the audience by explaining the significance of the argument within a broader context, making connections, calling the audience to act, suggesting a change in behavior or attitude, proposing a solution, leaving the audience with a compelling image, explaining implications, summarizing the argument, or connecting to the introduction.</p>

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## UNIT OVERVIEW *(cont'd)*

Enduring Understanding	Skill	Essential Knowledge
<p><b>CLE-1</b></p> <p>Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments.</p>	<p><b>3.B</b> Reading – Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument’s structure.</p> <p><b>4.B</b> Writing – Write a thesis statement that requires proof or defense and that may preview the structure of the argument.</p>	<p><b>CLE-1.O</b></p> <p>A thesis statement may preview the line of reasoning of an argument. This is not to say that a thesis statement must list the points of an argument, aspects to be analyzed, or specific evidence to be used in an argument.</p>
<p><b>REO-1</b></p> <p>Writers guide understanding of a text’s lines of reasoning and claims through that text’s organization and integration of evidence.</p>	<p><b>5.C</b> Reading – Recognize and explain the use of methods of development to accomplish a purpose.</p> <p><b>6.C</b> Writing – Use appropriate methods of development to advance an argument.</p>	<p><b>REO-1.G</b></p> <p>Methods of development are common approaches writers frequently use to develop and organize the reasoning of their arguments. A method of development provides an audience with the means to trace a writer’s reasoning in an argument.</p> <p><b>REO-1.K</b></p> <p>When developing ideas through comparison-contrast, writers present a category of comparison and then examine the similarities and/or differences between the objects of the comparison. When analyzing similarities and/or differences, like categories of comparison must be used.</p> <p><b>REO-1.L</b></p> <p>When developing ideas through a definition or description, writers relate the characteristics, features, or sensory details of an object or idea, sometimes using examples or illustrations.</p>





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# AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

## UNIT 5: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Progress Check 5**

**Multiple-choice: ~20 questions**

**Free-response: 1 question**

# Unit 5:

## UNIT OVERVIEW

The first four units focused on the fundamentals of analyzing and writing arguments. This unit examines ways to strengthen the coherence of an argument and should also help students become much more attuned to the effects of specific words and phrases in others' arguments.

While the skills outlined in this unit represent the required course content, teachers are free to teach the skills within the unit in any order they choose. Teachers should strategically select the texts they will teach, keeping in mind that a single text might be used to teach a range of skills.

### Enduring Understanding

**REO-1**

Writers guide understanding of a text's lines of reasoning and claims through that text's organization and integration of evidence.

### Skill

**5.A** Reading – Describe the line of reasoning and explain whether it supports an argument's overarching thesis.

**6.A** Writing – Develop a line of reasoning and commentary that explains it throughout an argument.

### Essential Knowledge

**REO-1.M**

The body paragraphs of a written argument make claims, support them with evidence, and provide commentary that explains how the paragraph contributes to the reasoning of the argument.

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## UNIT OVERVIEW *(cont'd)*

Enduring Understanding	Skill	Essential Knowledge
<p><b>REO-1</b> Writers guide understanding of a text's lines of reasoning and claims through that text's organization and integration of evidence.</p>	<p><b>5.B</b> Reading – Explain how the organization of a text creates unity and coherence and reflects a line of reasoning.</p> <p><b>6.B</b> Writing – Use transitional elements to guide the reader through the line of reasoning of an argument.</p>	<p><b>REO-1.N</b> Coherence occurs at different levels in a piece of writing. In a sentence, the idea in one clause logically links to an idea in the next. In a paragraph, the idea in one sentence logically links to an idea in the next. In a text, the ideas in one paragraph logically link to the ideas in the next.</p> <p><b>REO-1.O</b> Repetition, synonyms, pronoun references, and parallel structure may indicate or develop a relationship between elements of a text.</p> <p><b>REO-1.P</b> Transitional elements are words or other elements (phrases, clauses, sentences, or paragraphs) that assist in creating coherence among sentences, paragraphs, or sections in a text by showing relationships among ideas.</p> <p><b>REO-1.Q</b> Transitional elements can be used to introduce evidence or to indicate its relationship to other ideas or evidence in that paragraph or in the text as a whole.</p>
<p><b>STL-1</b> The rhetorical situation informs the strategic stylistic choices that writers make.</p>	<p><b>7.A</b> Reading – Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text.</p> <p><b>8.A</b> Writing – Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument.</p>	<p><b>STL-1.A</b> Words have both connotative and denotative meanings.</p> <p><b>STL-1.B</b> Descriptive words, such as adjectives and adverbs, not only qualify or modify the things they describe but also convey a perspective toward those things.</p> <p><b>STL-1.C</b> Precise word choice reduces confusion and may help the audience perceive the writer's perspective.</p>



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# AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

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### **Progress Check 6**

**Multiple-choice: ~20 questions**

**Free-response: 1 question**

# Unit 6:

## UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit asks students to recognize and account for biases and limitations within the evidence they are utilizing in an argument. Students should develop an initial thesis statement and line of reasoning based on a pool of evidence that is fairly consistent, and then the teacher should introduce contradictory evidence that requires the students to revise their thesis statements to account for it. Accordingly, teachers should be especially thoughtful in sequencing the readings and evidence base for the topic of this unit. This unit also continues to examine the subtle and significant impact of specific words and phrases, with students analyzing how connotations of particular words convey an author’s attitude or feeling about a subject.

While the skills outlined in this unit represent the required course content, teachers are free to teach the skills within the unit in any order they choose. Teachers should strategically select the texts they will teach, keeping in mind that a single text might be used to teach a range of skills.

Enduring Understanding	Skill	Essential Knowledge
<p><b>CLE-1</b> Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments.</p>	<p><b>3.A</b> Reading – Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument.</p> <p><b>4.A</b> Writing – Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim.</p>	<p><b>CLE-1.P</b> When synthesizing, writers draw upon arguments from multiple sources, strategically select the most relevant information, and combine apt and specific source material as part of their own argument.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.Q</b> A source provides information for an argument, and some sources are more reliable or credible than others.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.R</b> A position and a perspective are different. Sources may have the same position on a subject, yet each comes from a different perspective based on their background, interests, and expertise.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.S</b> When incorporating evidence or sources into an argument, the strongest arguments recognize and acknowledge the biases and limitations of the material and account for those limitations in their reasoning.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.T</b> The degree to which a source does or does not consider other positions reflects the degree to which that source is biased.</p>

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## UNIT OVERVIEW *(cont'd)*

Enduring Understanding	Skill	Essential Knowledge
<p><b>CLE-1</b></p> <p>Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments.</p>	<p><b>3.B</b> Reading – Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument’s structure.</p> <p><b>4.B</b> Writing – Write a thesis statement that requires proof or defense and that may preview the structure of the argument.</p>	<p><b>CLE-1.U</b></p> <p>Consideration and use of new evidence may require revision of the thesis statement and/or changes to the line of reasoning.</p>
<p><b>STL-1</b></p> <p>The rhetorical situation informs the strategic stylistic choices that writers make.</p>	<p><b>7.A</b> Reading – Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text.</p> <p><b>8.A</b> Writing – Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument.</p>	<p><b>STL-1.D</b></p> <p>A writer’s tone is the writer’s attitude or feeling about a subject, conveyed through word choice and writing style.</p> <p><b>STL-1.E</b></p> <p>Readers infer a writer’s tone from the writer’s word choice, and especially the positive, negative, or other connotations of those words.</p> <p><b>STL-1.F</b></p> <p>A writer’s shifts in tone from one part of a text to another may suggest the writer’s qualification, refinement, or reconsideration of their perspective on a subject.</p>



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# AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

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### **Progress Check 7**

**Multiple-choice: ~20 questions**

**Free-response: 1 question**



# Unit 7:

## UNIT OVERVIEW

In this unit, students should continue to practice revising claims (and sometimes the overarching thesis statement) to account for nuance, complexity, and contradictions in their sources. By the end of this unit, students should be highly facile consumers of evidence, able to determine quickly whether a new piece of evidence supports, refutes, or qualifies their claims, and then able to use modifiers to revise claims accordingly.

This unit also includes an understanding of how punctuation and design contribute to a writer’s purpose. However, grammar and mechanics are not the focus of this course. Students should be able to write complete sentences before beginning the AP class, and through frequent reading and analysis of others’ arguments and by emulating such models in their own writing, students’ proficiency in written English will increase during the course. When students write essays within the AP Exam, small grammatical errors typical of unrevised writing in a timed environment will not negatively impact the score. Performance is only hurt by grammatical errors that are so prevalent and significant as to interfere with communication.

While the skills outlined in this unit represent the required course content, teachers are free to teach the skills within the unit in any order they choose. Teachers should strategically select the texts they will teach, keeping in mind that a single text might be used to teach a range of skills.

Enduring Understanding	Skill	Essential Knowledge
<p><b>RHS-1</b> Individuals write within a particular situation and make strategic writing choices based on that situation.</p>	<p><b>1.A</b> Reading – Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message.</p> <p><b>2.A</b> Writing – Write introductions and conclusions appropriate to the purpose and context of the rhetorical situation.</p>	<p><b>RHS-1.I</b> The introduction of an argument introduces the subject and/or writer of the argument to the audience. An introduction may present the argument’s thesis. An introduction may orient, engage, and/or focus the audience by presenting quotations, intriguing statements, anecdotes, questions, statistics, data, contextualized information, or a scenario.</p> <p><b>RHS-1.J</b> The conclusion of an argument brings the argument to a unified end. A conclusion may present the argument’s thesis. It may engage and/or focus the audience by explaining the significance of the argument within a broader context, making connections, calling the audience to act, suggesting a change in behavior or attitude, proposing a solution, leaving the audience with a compelling image, explaining implications, summarizing the argument, or connecting to the introduction.</p>

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## UNIT OVERVIEW *(cont'd)*

Enduring Understanding	Skill	Essential Knowledge
<p><b>CLE-1</b></p> <p>Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments.</p>	<p><b>3.C</b> Reading – Explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives.</p> <p><b>4.C</b> Writing – Qualify a claim using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternative perspectives.</p>	<p><b>CLE-1.V</b></p> <p>A lack of understanding of the complexities of a subject or an issue can lead to oversimplification or generalizations.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.W</b></p> <p>Because arguments are usually part of ongoing discourse, effective arguments often avoid expressing claims, reasoning, and evidence in absolute terms.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.X</b></p> <p>Writers may strategically use words, phrases, and clauses as modifiers to qualify or limit the scope of an argument.</p>
<p><b>STL-1</b></p> <p>The rhetorical situation informs the strategic stylistic choices that writers make.</p>	<p><b>7.B</b> Reading – Explain how writers create, combine, and place independent and dependent clauses to show relationships between and among ideas.</p> <p>(Note: Students should be able to read and analyze these complexities but are not expected to write with them on timed essays.)</p> <p><b>8.B</b> Writing – Write sentences that clearly convey ideas and arguments.</p>	<p><b>STL-1.G</b></p> <p>Writers express ideas in sentences. Sentences are made up of clauses, at least one of which must be independent.</p> <p><b>STL-1.H</b></p> <p>The arrangement of sentences in a text can emphasize particular ideas.</p> <p><b>STL-1.I</b></p> <p>Subordination and coordination are used to express the intended relationship between ideas in a sentence.</p> <p><b>STL-1.J</b></p> <p>Writers frequently use coordination to illustrate a balance or equality between ideas.</p> <p><b>STL-1.K</b></p> <p>Writers frequently use subordination to illustrate an imbalance or inequality between ideas.</p> <p><b>STL-1.L</b></p> <p>The arrangement of clauses, phrases, and words in a sentence can emphasize ideas.</p>
<p><b>STL-1</b></p> <p>The rhetorical situation informs the strategic stylistic choices that writers make.</p>	<p><b>7.C</b> Reading – Explain how grammar and mechanics contribute to the clarity and effectiveness of an argument.</p> <p><b>8.C</b> Use established conventions of grammar and mechanics to communicate clearly and effectively.</p>	<p><b>STL-1.M</b></p> <p>Grammar and mechanics that follow established conventions of language enable clear communication.</p> <p><b>STL-1.N</b></p> <p>Writers use punctuation strategically to demonstrate the relationships among ideas in a sentence.</p> <p><b>STL-1.O</b></p> <p>Punctuation (commas, colons, semicolons, dashes, hyphens, parentheses, quotation marks, or end marks) advances a writer’s purpose by clarifying, organizing, emphasizing, indicating purpose, supplementing information, or contributing to tone.</p> <p><b>STL-1.P</b></p> <p>Some design features, such as italics or boldface, create emphasis.</p>



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# AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

## UNIT 8: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Progress Check 8**

**Multiple-choice: ~20 questions**

**Free-response: 1 question**

# Unit 8:

## UNIT OVERVIEW

To provide teachers with time to focus on skills their students have not yet mastered, this penultimate unit only includes a small number of additional essential knowledge statements. AP teachers should utilize information they have gained from the Progress Checks (PCs) to identify the skills where their students most need additional instruction and practice, and focus the remaining class periods accordingly. Teachers can use the AP Question Bank to create additional practice on the skills the PCs identified as students' greatest needs for further focus.

While the skills outlined in this unit represent the required course content, teachers are free to teach the skills within the unit in any order they choose. Teachers should strategically select the texts they will teach, keeping in mind that a single text might be used to teach a range of skills.

Enduring Understanding	Skill	Essential Knowledge
<p><b>RHS-1</b> Individuals write within a particular situation and make strategic writing choices based on that situation.</p>	<p><b>1.B</b> Reading – Explain how an argument demonstrates understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs.</p> <p><b>2.B</b> Writing – Demonstrate an understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs.</p>	<p><b>RHS-1.K</b> Writers may make comparisons (e.g., similes, metaphors, analogies, or anecdotes) in an attempt to relate to an audience. Effective comparisons must be shared and understood by the audience to advance the writer's purpose.</p> <p><b>RHS-1.L</b> Writers' choices regarding syntax and diction influence how the writer is perceived by an audience and may influence the degree to which an audience accepts an argument.</p> <p><b>RHS-1.M</b> Word choice may reflect writers' biases and may affect their credibility with a particular audience.</p> <p><b>RHS-1.N</b> Because audiences are unique and dynamic, writers must consider the perspectives, contexts, and needs of the intended audience when making choices of evidence, organization, and language in an argument.</p>

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## UNIT OVERVIEW *(cont'd)*

Enduring Understanding	Skill	Essential Knowledge
<p><b>STL-1</b></p> <p>The rhetorical situation informs the strategic stylistic choices that writers make.</p>	<p><b>7.A</b> Reading – Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text.</p> <p><b>8.A</b> Writing – Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument.</p>	<p><b>STL-1.Q</b></p> <p>A writer’s style is made up of the mix of word choice, syntax, and conventions employed by that writer.</p> <p><b>STL-1.R</b></p> <p>Writers may signal a complex or ironic perspective through stylistic choices. Irony may emerge from the differences between an argument and the readers’ expectations or values.</p>
<p><b>STL-1</b></p> <p>The rhetorical situation informs the strategic stylistic choices that writers make.</p>	<p><b>7.B</b> Reading – Explain how writers create, combine, and place independent and dependent clauses to show relationships between and among ideas.</p> <p><b>8.B</b> Writing – Write sentences that clearly convey ideas and arguments.</p>	<p><b>STL-1.S</b></p> <p>Modifiers—including words, phrases, or clauses—qualify, clarify, or specify information about the thing with which they are associated. To reduce ambiguity, modifiers should be placed closest to the word, phrase, or clause that they are meant to modify.</p> <p><b>STL-1.T</b></p> <p>Parenthetical elements—though not essential to understanding what they are describing—interrupt sentences to provide additional information that may address an audience’s needs and/or advance a writer’s purpose.</p>





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# AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

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### **Progress Check 9**

**Multiple-choice: ~5 questions**

**Free-response: 1 question**

# Unit 9:

## UNIT OVERVIEW

To provide teachers with time to focus on skills their students have not yet mastered, this final unit only includes a small number of additional essential knowledge statements. AP teachers should utilize information they have gained from the Progress Checks (PCs) to identify the skills where their students most need additional instruction and practice, and focus the remaining class periods accordingly. Teachers can use the AP Question Bank to create additional practice on the skills the PCs identified as students' greatest needs for further focus.

While the skills outlined in this unit represent the required course content, teachers are free to teach the skills within the unit in any order they choose. Teachers should strategically select the texts they will teach, keeping in mind that a single text might be used to teach a range of skills.

Enduring Understanding	Skill	Essential Knowledge
<p><b>CLE-1</b></p> <p>Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments.</p>	<p><b>3.C</b> Reading – Explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives.</p> <p><b>4.C</b> Writing – Qualify a claim using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternative perspectives.</p>	<p><b>CLE-1.Y</b></p> <p>Effectively entering into an ongoing conversation about a subject means engaging the positions that have already been considered and argued about.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.Z</b></p> <p>Evidence and sources will either support, complement, or contradict a writer's thesis.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.AA</b></p> <p>Writers enhance their credibility when they refute, rebut, or concede opposing arguments and contradictory evidence.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.AB</b></p> <p>When writers concede, they accept all or a portion of a competing position or claim as correct, agree that the competing position or claim is correct under a different set of circumstances, or acknowledge the limitations of their own argument.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.AC</b></p> <p>When writers rebut, they offer a contrasting perspective on an argument and its evidence or provide alternative evidence to propose that all or a portion of a competing position or claim is invalid.</p>

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## UNIT OVERVIEW *(cont'd)*

Enduring Understanding	Skill	Essential Knowledge
<p><b>CLE-1</b> Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments.</p>	<p><b>3.C</b> Reading – Explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives.</p> <p><b>4.C</b> Writing – Qualify a claim using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternative perspectives.</p>	<p><b>CLE-1.AD</b> When writers refute, they demonstrate, using evidence, that all or a portion of a competing position or claim is invalid.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.AE</b> Transitions may be used to introduce counterarguments.</p> <p><b>CLE-1.AF</b> Not all arguments explicitly address a counterargument.</p>



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AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

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# Instructional Approaches



# Selecting and Using Course Materials

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## Reading

The AP English Language and Composition course requires nonfiction readings (e.g., essays, journalism, political writing, science writing, nature writing, autobiographies/biographies, diaries, history, criticism) that give students opportunities to identify and explain an author’s use of rhetorical strategies and techniques. If fiction and poetry are also assigned, their main purpose should be to help students understand how various effects are achieved by writers’ rhetorical choices.

The course focuses on effective reading and writing practices, emphasizing depth of knowledge over breadth. This is not a content-driven course, so the curriculum need not cover every work on a long reading list; rather, students should come away from the course with intensive practice of literacy skills that they can apply to further reading. Furthermore, although the course should provide students some practice in sustained reading of complex arguments, the inclusion of many lengthy texts throughout the course may be antithetical to achieving the goals of the course, as students may focus on the content of a text while overlooking its rhetorical structure or techniques. A focus on flexibility in applying language skills in multiple contexts to accomplish multiple purposes, along with an emphasis on depth of rhetorical understanding, permits the inclusion of multiple shorter works that students can read and respond to in a narrow timeframe.

### USE OF RHETORICAL TERMINOLOGY

Growth in skills cannot be measured or assessed as students’ mastery of a vocabulary of rhetorical terms. While older versions of this course (including questions on the AP English Language and Composition Exam itself) relied on knowledge of terminology as a way of assessing student work, the AP English Language and Composition Exam has evolved to emphasize the appropriate application of such terminology in students’ analyses of texts. Any rhetorical terms that appear in this course are best situated as part of the

teacher’s vernacular, not the students’. A rule of thumb for students’ vocabulary may be to reinforce language often heard in public discourse, or what we may call terms for *functional rhetoric*. These terms may include, but are not limited to *context, appeals, purpose, audience, attitude, diction, and syntax*.

### READING LEVEL OF COURSE TEXTS AND VOLUME OF READING

The College Board does not prescribe specific texts for an AP English Language and Composition course. That said, several guidelines are useful in determining the appropriateness of texts used in this course. These guidelines include the following:

- Texts that represent a clear rhetorical situation (e.g., topical nonfiction)
- Texts that speak to one another through a variety of genres
- Texts that could be read in an introductory composition class in college
- Texts that require teacher direction for students to discern meaning
- Texts that rate as upper high school level on a Lexile chart<sup>1</sup>

Neither does the College Board prescribe an amount of reading for an AP English Language and Composition course. Several questions, however, are useful in assessing the volume of reading students should be assigned in this course:

- Are students reading challenging texts every day?
- Do students employ rereading as an interpretive strategy?
- Do students gain sufficient practice to develop skills in reading purposefully and rhetorically?
- Do students write on a regular basis about what others have written?
- Do the selected readings provoke responses from multiple perspectives and thus generate public discussion?

<sup>1</sup>For more information on Lexile scores for upper high school, visit [www.lexile.com](http://www.lexile.com).

- Are students given the opportunity to immerse themselves in substantive texts—ones that require several days or weeks to read—as well as texts that can be read and reread within a single class period?
- Are students spending at least eight hours per week (both inside and outside of class) engaged in their reading and writing? Is there a clear connection between their reading and writing?
- Are students reading texts that require teacher involvement or scaffolding, or can the texts be read independently?

### CONTROVERSIAL TEXTUAL CONTENT

Issues that might, from particular social, historical, or cultural viewpoints, be considered controversial, including references to ethnicities, nationalities, religions, races, dialects, gender, or class, may be addressed in texts that are appropriate for the AP English Language and Composition course. Fair representation of issues and peoples may occasionally include controversial material. Since AP students have chosen a program that directly involves them in college-level work, participation in this course depends on a level of maturity consistent with the age of high school students who have engaged in thoughtful analyses of a variety of texts. The best response to controversial language or ideas in a text might well be a question about the larger meaning, purpose, or overall effect of the language or idea in context. AP students should have the maturity, skill, and will to seek the larger meaning of a text or issue through thoughtful research.

### GENERAL AND TOPICAL READERS

Some AP English Language and Composition teachers may want students to explore ways that people inquire, argue, and deliberate on a variety of topics and questions. For this kind of course, many textbook publishers design “readers” that are divided into units, each featuring a collection of responses to a question that generates public controversy.

### TRADE BOOKS

Contemporary trade books (investigative journalism, designed for the reading public instead of for the classroom) give students practice in reading complex, extended arguments that are historically and culturally situated. Unlike readers, which contain a collection of short texts offering various perspectives on a single topic, trade books generally provide a single, in-depth argument on a single topic. Authors of texts appropriate for study in this course include the following: Nicholas Carr, Dave Eggers, Jonathan Safran Foer, Jane Goodall, Malcolm Gladwell, Peter Singer, Rebecca Skloot, and E.O. Wilson. A good way to search for possible texts is to look at the *New York Times* Nonfiction Best Seller list.

### EXTENDED TEXTS

Books by important writers of past eras also provide students with practice in deciphering and responding to complex and extended arguments from historical and cultural settings different from their own. Authors of texts that might be used in the AP English Language and Composition course include Mary Wollstonecraft, Henry David Thoreau, Charles Darwin, and Rachel Carson.

### SPEECHES

Because speeches emerge from particular rhetorical occasions, they are especially good for illustrating how arguments are successfully or unsuccessfully crafted to target particular audiences in particular situations in an effort to accomplish particular purposes. Authors of speeches suitable for the AP English Language and Composition course include Abraham Lincoln, Sojourner Truth, Chief Joseph, King George IV of England, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Martin Luther King Jr., Robert Kennedy, Indira Gandhi, Hillary Clinton, and Barack Obama.

### ESSAYS

From 18th-century journalists and pamphleteers to present-day essayists whose writing appears in newspapers, journals, and essay collections, the essay is a historically favored genre for the conduct of public conversation about consequential questions. Students should learn to distinguish between essays that serve primarily as personal expression or autobiographical narration and those that serve primarily as instruction, inquiry, or political or social advocacy. Students should also consider how essayists of all kinds participate in public discussion of consequential topics and questions. Well-known political and literary essayists appropriate for AP English Language and Composition reading lists include Samuel Johnson, Thomas Paine, Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Muir, Virginia Woolf, Martin Luther King Jr., Annie Dillard, John McPhee, Susan Sontag, Charles Lamb, Thomas De Quincey, Richard Rodriguez, Oscar Wilde, Scott Russell Sanders, Joyce Carol Oates, Alice Walker, David Sedaris, and Wendell Barry. However, contributions of less canonical “literary” essayists also have a place in the course and may come from opinion pages in newspapers and magazines, personal blogs, and organizational websites.

### POPULAR CULTURE TEXTS

Because the AP English Language and Composition course seeks to cultivate rhetorical reading skills, texts with persuasive purposes drawn from popular culture are suitable for inclusion in the course reading list. Advertisements, propaganda, advice columns, television and radio talk shows and interviews, newspaper columns, cartoons, political commentaries, documentary films, TED Talks, and YouTube videos

are only a few examples of texts that represent contributions to public discussion of consequential topics and questions.

### IMAGINATIVE LITERATURE

Although public conversations about consequential topics and questions never unfold exclusively in poetry, short stories, novels, and plays, these forms of imaginative literature often play a part in public discussion. Since the AP English Language and Composition course emphasizes argumentation and rhetorical analysis, works of imaginative literature are appropriate for use in the course only if they were composed to accomplish a rhetorical purpose (e.g., George Herbert's *carpe diem* poetry, George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*) or are excerpts that enact particular rhetorical functions within literary texts (e.g., Marc Antony's "I Come to Bury Caesar" speech in *Julius Caesar*).

### Images as Texts

Writing teachers have expanded their understanding of *texts* to include more than written words. Teachers of writing imagine how images, among other modes of communication, should be taught and included as part of authentic composing processes and contexts. Historically, visual texts predate alphabetic literacies; however, composing with images is ubiquitous in almost all writing contexts outside of school, where the double-spaced, one-inch-margin essay containing only written words is still the dominant genre. In order to prepare students for writing contexts outside of school, writing teachers are expanding their notion of literacy to include a larger range of texts and technologies. In the AP English Language and Composition course, students should learn to analyze and evaluate the rhetorical use of images, graphics, video, film, and design components of print- and web-based texts.

Visual texts are most commonly understood as images that either stand alone or can be combined with other modalities to communicate much like written texts.

Images can be used to make or support arguments, as in the case of editorial cartoons or photographic journalism. Other images such as charts, graphs, and tables are effective in presenting large amounts of information in ways that make it accessible to readers. Such images are also particularly good at showing or suggesting cause-and-effect relationships or comparisons that can be meaningful to contemporary audiences. A quick internet search of "infographics" yields a wide range of creative ways to present information, and 21st-century writers with increasing access to imaging software have the ability to create high-quality visuals to accompany written texts.

Images are not the only alternative to written texts finding their way into writing classrooms. Gunther Kress and the New London School<sup>2</sup> are famous for coining the term *multiliteracies* and advocating an approach to communication that includes written, visual, oral, gestural, spatial, and multimodal communication. Kress claims that these modalities do not all function the same way; they are not interchangeable, and he challenges us to consider how authentic communication in the world draws on different modes to communicate a message. Therefore, classroom writing assignments that focus exclusively on written texts ignore other commonly available means of persuasion and provide too limited a range of texts for students who need a much broader understanding of communication to function in the world.

Written texts without images still have a visual component because writers are often charged with considering how the layout and design of the page will affect audiences. Layout and design elements include fonts, text size, spacing, color, margins, and paper size and shape. While random or nonstrategic use of these features can be distracting, rhetorical choices of layout and design can be an important tool for writers of authentic texts and should be connected with genre and audience expectations.

<sup>2</sup>Cazden, C. "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures." *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(1) (1996): 60–92.

# Argumentation

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While the AP English Language and Composition course should offer students several opportunities to write in a variety of modes of discourse, teachers should allow a significant amount of time to foster student understanding of the intricacies of argumentation through critical thinking experiences that allow students to:

- Read and analyze different kinds of arguments (definitional arguments, arguments of evaluation, causal arguments, proposals).
  - Examine different structures of argumentative writing (classical argument, Rogerian argument, Toulmin argument) that help move an argument forward.<sup>3</sup>
  - Analyze the unique rhetorical features of arguments that demonstrate how language performs social action that accomplishes particular purposes or intents. Such features include appeals (e.g., ethos, pathos, logos), structural choices (e.g., inductive vs. deductive reasoning, author’s purpose), and argumentative moves (e.g., concession, rebuttal).
  - Examine the appropriateness of using different kinds of evidence to support a claim. Such evidence could include anecdotes and observations, facts and statistics from experts in a variety of fields of study, arguments of respected authorities, other outside sources, or personal experience.
- Assess the critical role of audience in writing an effective argument. Students need to learn to challenge their own assertions and to provide substantial evidence to explain and justify a position to an often skeptical audience.
  - Effectively synthesize information and perspectives from research sources to enter an intellectual conversation and develop one’s own position on the topic.
  - Develop the habit of thinking about argument as a way to participate in a conversation of an unresolved question, instead of engaging the issue as an adversary.<sup>4</sup>

The goal is for students to construct a clear, rhetorically sound argument that supports an assertion with convincing evidence, using a structure that advances the argument logically and persuasively.

<sup>3</sup>Lunsford, Andrea A., and John J. Ruszkiewicz. *Everything’s an Argument*. 6th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2013.

<sup>4</sup>Graff, Gerald, Cathy Birkenstein, and Russell Durst. *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 2012.

# Synthesis

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The rhetorical analysis of multiple sources in the inquiry process we know as *research* presents the same demands as the rhetorical analysis of a single speech, letter, or essay, with one large exception: the development of a much fuller context. While the analysis of a single text in isolation certainly benefits from an understanding of the context in which it was composed and published or delivered, the analysis of multiple sources in concert with one another broadens the context, provided that these sources represent different, often opposing, stakeholders in a given situation.

The synthesis process may serve various purposes. For example, synthesis may lead to an evaluation of a particular decision, or it may generate an argument for one of several possible options. Alternatively, synthesis may produce not an argument or a judgment but a more comprehensive understanding of the question or problem. This explanatory (or Rogerian) use of synthesis yields a deeper appreciation of the complexity of the topic under examination. Students performing this type of synthesis may conclude by considering the factors, perspectives, investments, and so forth that underlie discussions of a controversial topic. Because synthesis serves a multitude of purposes, synthesis tasks in the AP English Language and Composition course may assume a variety of forms, such as submitting a proposal, developing an original definition, or creating an appropriate plan.

How students approach synthesis depends largely on their ability to read texts rhetorically. By fully understanding relationships among writers, audiences, and purposes, students will recognize writers of the sources they consult as participants in conversations about specific questions. Additionally, students will discover that by attending to a variety of viewpoints and arguments they develop a critical and informed understanding of the controversy and gain the authority to enter the conversation themselves. Students will find that the sources they consult may agree with one another on some points but not on others; that

they may represent different perspectives, values, and assumptions; and that they may support or supplement one another or call one another's positions into question.

There are three distinct manifestations of synthesis:

- **Source-based synthesis:** Body paragraphs feature sources in conversation with one another. Sources agree with, disagree with, or qualify each other, and such an approach toward synthesis is recognizable for both writers and readers. Typically, these sources align based upon content or position.
- **Conceptual synthesis:** Students determine the key factors, concepts, or categories of a particular issue. They may see, for example, that one source is representative of a Keynesian approach toward economics, or that another source represents a more conservative or liberal approach toward a topic. Typically, such writers have had prior experience in the process of rhetorical invention.
- **Synthesis of voice:** Writers have adopted the vernacular and cadence of those involved with the existing conversation.

The following are suggested steps for engaging students in the synthesis process.

## Step 1: Authentic Inquiry

Synthesis of sources should be a process of authentic inquiry motivated by questions for which readers genuinely want answers, not by desire to affirm preexisting positions. While it is entirely possible, and perhaps even worthwhile, for readers to commence research with some inclination or predisposition about a given topic, successful synthesis means proceeding with an open mind and finding an array of sources that satisfactorily broadens the context of one's research question. Part of authentic inquiry is an understanding of *rhetorical invention*, or the processes by which students—while they are thinking and reading—determine how the issues they are examining can be viewed from multiple perspectives.

What students experience in responding to the synthesis question on the AP English Language and Composition exam is not authentic inquiry; the source materials that accompany the prompt may be seen as products of authentic inquiry representing multiple perspectives that students must consider and weigh against one another—or synthesize—in order to compose a response that is informed by the sources and situated in the conversation they represent. To promote authentic inquiry in the AP English Language and Composition classroom, teachers should offer students the experience of creating authentic original questions, searching for answers, and developing informed responses to these questions. Students should have the experience of entering into unfamiliar conversations: Transformative research encourages students to change or develop their positions, while transactional research merely affirms the opinions that students already hold.

## Step 2: Linking the Sources

In source-informed argument, the predominant (though by no means only) mode of college writing, effective synthesis begins with understanding others' positions, views, or arguments. Students should comprehend the major claims in the texts they consult, understand how these claims are substantiated, and identify how they might appeal to intended or unintended audiences. Students then need to know how to develop their own original arguments by acknowledging and responding to the claims they've encountered in their sources. Students should be careful to avoid misattributing claims or oversimplifying an argument. Such an approach reflects a superficial reading of the sources or a refusal to consider points of view that conflict with a writer's preconceived position.

## Step 3: The Source-Informed Argument

Strong arguments developed through synthesis of multiple sources generally exhibit the following qualities:

- **Sophistication of thought:** Sometimes referred to as *complexity*, sophistication means looking at multiple perspectives, arguments and counter-arguments, and broader implications of particular events or decisions. Implications of arguments or positions are important for students to consider, as they often rely upon hypothetical examples abstracted from the real world of cause and effect; the challenge for students is to present implications as concretely as possible, based upon available evidence.
- **Effectiveness (development) of argument:** The completeness of an argument's development enhances its persuasiveness. Such development may mean an in-depth analysis of a few sources or a broad review of a wide range of sources.
- **Unity/coherence:** Coherent, or unified, arguments—with or without sources—develop logically; the writer's own position emerges from a thoughtful consideration of the sources. An important marker of coherence is the use of idea-based transitions, often topic sentences of body paragraphs that move the argument forward in ways alluded to in "sophistication of thought." Another marker of coherence is the careful selection of the sources that "speak to one another." A coherent approach to synthesis requires students to consider the conversation among sources rather than regarding individual sources in isolation.



# Developing Course Skills

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Throughout the course, students will develop skills that are fundamental to the discipline of rhetoric. Since these skill categories represent the complex skills that adept rhetoricians demonstrate, students will benefit from multiple opportunities to develop these skills in a scaffolded manner. Skills in this course are organized by reading and writing, and students can benefit from opportunities to write about the texts they read and read texts that emulate the kind of writing they want to develop. Furthermore, throughout the course, students should engage in all stages of the writing process to develop proficiency in course composition skills, to deepen their understanding of writing as a recursive process, and to build their ability to think critically about their own and others' writing in order to make writerly choices.

## Big Idea: Rhetorical Situation

Individuals write within a particular situation and make strategic writing choices based on that situation.

The table that follows provides examples of questions to guide students' exploration of rhetorical situations. (**Note: The texts referenced in this section are not course requirements but are used here simply to offer a context for examples.**)

### Skill Category 1: Rhetorical Situation – Reading *Explain how writers' choices reflect the components of the rhetorical situation.*

Skills	Key Questions	Sample Instructional Activity
<b>1.A:</b> <i>Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Who or what is the writer, audience, message, purpose, and context that comprise this rhetorical situation?</li><li>What provoked or inspired the writer to develop this text?</li><li>What is the writer's purpose for developing this text?</li><li>How does the writer consider the rhetorical situation when crafting their message?</li><li>What perspectives on the subject might the audience have due to their shared and/or individual beliefs, values, needs, and backgrounds?</li><li>How do the writer's choices in the text reflect both the constraints and the available means of persuasion within the context?</li><li>How do the writer's rhetorical choices in the introduction and/or conclusion not only reflect their purpose and context but also address the intended audience's needs and perspective on the subject?</li></ul>	Lead students through a guided reading of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," but first provide them with a brief historical reading about the 1963 Birmingham Campaign and King's incarceration. Then provide students with "A Call for Unity," the open letter in the <i>Birmingham News</i> that King read while in jail. Ask students to begin analyzing "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" by identifying and describing the writer, audience, message, purpose, exigence, genre, and context of the text, using evidence from the text as support.

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## Skills

## Key Questions

## Sample Instructional Activity

**1.B:** *Explain how an argument demonstrates understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs.*

- How does the writer anticipate and address the audience's values, beliefs, needs, and background, particularly as they relate to the subject of the argument?
- How do the writer's rhetorical choices achieve their purpose and relate to the audience's emotions and values?
- In their argument, how does the writer seek to persuade or motivate action through appeals—the modes of persuasion?
- How does the writer make comparisons (e.g., similes, metaphors, analogies, or anecdotes) in order to relate to the audience and advance the writer's purposes?
- How does the writer's choices in diction and syntax influence how the audience perceives the writer and the degree to which an audience may accept the writer's argument?
- How does the writer's word choice reflect their biases and possibly affect their credibility with a particular audience?
- How does the writer tailor the evidence, organization, and language of their argument in consideration of both the context of the rhetorical situation and the intended audience's perspectives on the subject and the audience's needs?

Lead students through a close reading of "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." Have them examine how and why King's rhetorical choice of alluding to the Apostle Paul and then making an analogy between Paul's mission work and King's own actions addresses his audience and his claim that his presence in Birmingham is justified.

**Skill Category 2: Rhetorical Situation – Writing** *Make strategic choices in a text to address a rhetorical situation.*

Skills	Key Questions	Sample Instructional Activity
<p><b>2.A:</b> <i>Write introductions and conclusions appropriate to the purpose and context of the rhetorical situation.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ What are the components of your rhetorical situation?</li><li>▪ What are the particular circumstances of the context in which you write, and how do these circumstances inform your writing choices?</li><li>▪ What are your audience’s knowledge, beliefs, values, and perspective regarding the subject?</li><li>▪ What is your relationship with the audience, and how do you want the audience to perceive you?</li><li>▪ What is the relationship between your introduction and conclusion and your thesis?</li><li>▪ Will presenting your thesis in the introduction or conclusion more effectively accomplish your purposes?</li><li>▪ When writing an introduction to an argument, which rhetorical choices might you make to orient, engage, and/or focus the audience?</li><li>▪ What are the boundaries placed on the writing choices you can make in your context?</li><li>▪ When writing a conclusion to an argument, which rhetorical choices might you make to engage and/or focus the audience?</li><li>▪ What should your introduction and conclusion accomplish?</li></ul>	<p>Before students write introductions for arguments, ask them to engage in prewriting activities in which they consider their audience’s familiarity with the subject, and the purpose(s) the students are trying to accomplish through their introductions. Then, have them draft introductions that consider the audience and the students’ purposes.</p> <p>For example, if you ask students to write an article about the value of social media, a student might decide to write an opinion article for their school newspaper about the effects of social media on teenagers. She might brainstorm what she knows about her audience—her high school student body—and determine that because her audience is so familiar with the subject of her argument, in her introduction she will juxtapose an anecdote of typical social media use that her audience will find relatable and a statistic that her audience might find surprising. This would engage her audience while also illustrating the conflict surrounding social media use.</p>

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Skills	Key Questions	Sample Instructional Activity
<p><b>2.B:</b> <i>Demonstrate an understanding of an audience’s beliefs, values, or needs.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Who is the intended audience of your argument?</li> <li>▪ What do you know or assume about your audience’s values, beliefs, needs, and background, particularly as they relate to the subject of your argument?</li> <li>▪ What rhetorical choices might you make to achieve your purpose and relate to your audience’s emotions and values?</li> <li>▪ In your argument, how might you seek to persuade or motivate action through appeals—the modes of persuasion?</li> <li>▪ How might you make comparisons (e.g., similes, metaphors, analogies, or anecdotes) that your audience will understand in order to relate to them and advance your purposes?</li> <li>▪ What diction and syntax choices should you make in order to influence not only how your audience perceives you but also the degree to which they may accept your argument?</li> <li>▪ How do you choose words that increase your credibility with a particular audience?</li> <li>▪ How do you recognize your own biases and then make word choices in your argument in consideration of those biases?</li> </ul>	<p>Before students begin writing arguments, ask them to engage in prewriting exercises in which they identify what they know and assume about the audiences for whom they write.</p> <p>For example, the student writing about the value of social media might consider her audience—her high school student body—and determine that she will write the article in a more conversational style but avoid unnecessary slang in order to emphasize the seriousness of the issue and to establish a persona of authority on the subject. She might also decide not to define social media terms that her peers would already understand because they use social media extensively.</p>

## Big Idea: Claims and Evidence

Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments.

The table that follows provides examples of questions to guide students' exploration of claims and evidence. **(Note: The text referenced in this section is not a course requirement but is used here simply to offer a context for examples.)**

### Skill Category 3: Claims and Evidence – Reading *Identify and describe the claims and evidence of an argument.*

Skills	Key Questions	Sample Instructional Activity
<b>3.A:</b> <i>Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What claim does the writer attempt to defend, and how does that claim convey the writer's position on the subject?</li><li>Where in the text does the writer establish a claim?</li><li>How does the writer use particular sentences and words to establish a claim?</li><li>What kind of evidence (e.g., facts, anecdotes, analogies, statistics, examples, details, illustrations, expert opinions, personal observations, personal experiences, testimony, or experiments) does the writer use to defend their claim?</li><li>How does the writer's choice of evidence reflect the rhetorical situation and advance their purposes?</li><li>What is the function (e.g., to illustrate, to clarify, to set a mood, to provide an example, to associate, to amplify or qualify a point) of particular evidence in the writer's argument, and how do they convey that function?</li><li>How does the writer's commentary establish a logical relationship between evidence and the claim it supports?</li><li>How and why does the writer consider, explain, and integrate others' arguments into their own argument?</li><li>How does the writer acknowledge others' intellectual property in their argument?</li><li>How does a writer's consideration of a source's credibility or reliability and the use of that source in the writer's argument affect both the writer's credibility and their argument's persuasiveness?</li></ul>	When examining "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," have students determine the kind of evidence King uses when referencing St. Thomas Aquinas and Adolph Hitler when discussing just and unjust laws. Then ask students to analyze how the evidence King uses reflects his rhetorical situation and supports his claim about the distinction between just and unjust laws.

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## Skills

## Key Questions

## Sample Instructional Activity

**3.B:** *Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument's structure.*

- What is the writer's thesis (i.e., the main, overarching claim they seek to defend or prove by using reasoning supported by evidence)?
- Is the writer's thesis explicitly stated in the argument, or is it implicit?
- How does the writer's thesis reflect their position and perspective on the subject?
- How does the writer's syntactical and word choices in their thesis reflect their rhetorical situation and the scope of their argument?
- How does the writer's thesis preview their argument's line of reasoning?
- Where in the argument does the writer present their thesis, and why might they have chosen this particular placement?

After reading "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," have students work in small groups and articulate King's thesis. In those same small groups, have students return to the text to evaluate whether the thesis they proposed adequately represents his overarching claim for the entire letter. During this small-group discussion, students may revise their initial articulation of King's thesis. Next, students should examine the text to determine whether King presents an explicit thesis statement that resembles the group's thesis or whether King's thesis is implicit. Ask students to mark the text if they find a statement in King's argument that resembles the thesis that the group articulated. Finally, have small groups share their observations with the whole group, and the entire class participates in a discussion to reach a consensus on King's thesis and how it is presented in the text.

**3.C:** *Explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives.*

- What is the scope of the writer's claim?
- How does the writer contextualize the claim by establishing boundaries or limitations?
- How does the writer select modifiers—specific words, phrases, or clauses—to qualify claims?
- To what degree does the writer's claim support, complement, or contrast with others' claims on this subject?
- How does the writer respond to an ongoing conversation about a subject?
- How and why does the writer concede, rebut, and/or refute another's claim?
- How might conceding, rebutting, and/or refuting alternative perspectives on a subject affect the writer's credibility?

Have students analyze "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" to:

- Identify where King addresses others' claim about "outsiders coming in" to protest.
- Determine whether King's argument supports, complements, or contrasts with others' claim about "outsiders coming in" to protest.
- Analyze how and why, through concession, rebuttal, or refutation, King chooses to respond to others' claim about "outsiders coming in" to protest.

**Skill Category 4: Claims and Evidence – Writing** *Analyze and select evidence to develop and refine a claim.*

Skills	Key Questions	Sample Instructional Activity
<p><b>4.A:</b> <i>Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ What claim are you attempting to defend, and how does that claim convey your position on the subject?</li><li>▪ Where in your argument might you establish a claim?</li><li>▪ How might you use particular sentences and words to establish a claim?</li><li>▪ What kind of evidence (e.g., facts, anecdotes, analogies, statistics, examples, details, illustrations, expert opinions, personal observations, personal experiences, testimony, or experiments) might you use to defend your claim?</li><li>▪ How does your choice of evidence reflect the rhetorical situation and advance your purposes?</li><li>▪ What is the function (e.g., to illustrate, to clarify, to set a mood, to provide an example, to associate, to amplify or qualify a point) of particular evidence in your argument, and how do you convey that function?</li><li>▪ How does your commentary establish a logical relationship between evidence and the claim it supports?</li><li>▪ How and why might you consider, explain, and integrate others' arguments into your own argument?</li><li>▪ How might you acknowledge others' intellectual property in your argument?</li><li>▪ How might your consideration of a source's credibility or reliability and the use of that source in your argument affect both your credibility and your argument's persuasiveness?</li></ul>	<p>To help students establish a position on the subject of their arguments and develop a claim, guide them in generating questions that provoke their critical thinking about the subject. Then guide them to developing a claim and selecting evidence that defends it.</p> <p>For example, the student writing about the value of social media might generate and answer questions about the value of social media, how she and her peers think about and use social media, and the effects of social media use on various aspects of her life and that of her peers. Then, the student might decide to claim that social media is detrimental to teenagers' self-esteem. The student's own experiences with social media, observations from the experiences of other students at her high school, and research on the subject inform her establishment of this claim and serve as potential evidence to defend it.</p>

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Skills	Key Questions	Sample Instructional Activity
<p><b>4.B:</b> Write a thesis statement that requires proof or defense and that may preview the structure of the argument.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is your perspective on the subject?</li> <li>▪ How do you consider your perspective on the subject and narrow ideas to establish a position on the subject?</li> <li>▪ How can you consider your perspective and position on a subject to develop a thesis (i.e., the main, overarching claim you seek to defend or prove by using reasoning supported by evidence)?</li> <li>▪ How do you develop a thesis of appropriate scope for the rhetorical situation and avoid oversimplifying complex subjects?</li> <li>▪ What syntactical and word choices might you make to develop a thesis statement?</li> <li>▪ How might you preview your argument’s line of reasoning in your thesis statement?</li> <li>▪ Where might you strategically present your thesis statement in your argument?</li> <li>▪ How might you revise your thesis statement in light of new evidence?</li> </ul>	<p>To prepare students for writing thesis statements, guide them through a variety of prewriting strategies, such as brainstorming, a quickwrite, or generating questions, to gather ideas for developing a thesis statement that conveys their overarching claim. Next, ask students to highlight ideas and parts of ideas that they think should be included in their thesis statements. Then have them synthesize the highlighted ideas into one or more sentences to create their thesis statement.</p> <p>For example, the student writing about social media might develop the following thesis statement: <i>Social media proves to be a negative influence on teenagers.</i></p>
<p><b>4.C:</b> Qualify a claim using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternative perspectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is the scope of your claim?</li> <li>▪ In what context(s) is your argument plausible?</li> <li>▪ How might you contextualize your claim by establishing boundaries or limitations?</li> <li>▪ How might you select modifiers—specific words, phrases, or clauses—to qualify your claim?</li> <li>▪ To what degree does your claim support, complement, or contrast with others’ claims on this subject?</li> <li>▪ How do you respond to an ongoing conversation about a subject?</li> <li>▪ How and why might you concede, rebut, and/or refute another’s claim?</li> <li>▪ How might conceding, rebutting, and/or refuting alternative perspectives on a subject affect your credibility?</li> </ul>	<p>Have students draft portions of their argument and engage in a peer review focusing on the scope of their claims.</p> <p>For example, the student writing about social media might receive feedback from a peer indicating that the scope of her claim seems too narrow and doesn’t consider or respond to clearly beneficial influences of social media on teenagers’ social behavior. The student then qualifies her claim and revises the thesis statement to the following: <i>Although many individuals would like to claim that social media is either beneficial or detrimental to teenagers, social media’s influence on teenagers is both positive and negative because it merely amplifies the positive and negative social interactions that exist already.</i></p>



## Big Idea: Reasoning and Organization

Writers guide understanding of a text’s line of reasoning and claims through that text’s organization and integration of evidence.

The table that follows provides examples of questions to guide students’ exploration of reasoning and organization. **(Note: The text referenced in this section is *not* a course requirement but is used here simply to offer a context for examples.)**

### **Skill Category 5: Reasoning and Organization – Reading** *Describe the reasoning, organization, and development of an argument.*

Skills	Key Questions	Sample Instructional Activity
<b>5.A:</b> <i>Describe the line of reasoning and explain whether it supports an argument’s overarching thesis.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What premise(s) does the writer explicitly communicate, and how does the premise fit into a logical progression of ideas that justifies the thesis?</li><li>Does the writer’s reasoning proceed from an established claim, or does the reasoning advance toward a claim?</li><li>How does the writer’s reasoning through commentary logically connect chosen evidence to a claim?</li><li>How does a particular body paragraph not only establish relationships among the claim, evidence, and commentary but also contribute to the reasoning of the writer’s argument?</li><li>How does the writer’s sequencing of paragraphs reveal the argument’s line of reasoning?</li><li>Does the writer demonstrate any flaws in their reasoning, and if so, how does this flawed reasoning affect the argument?</li><li>To what degree does the writer’s quantity and quality of evidence provide apt support for their line of reasoning?</li></ul>	Have students analyze King’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” to trace the progression of ideas that create a distinction between just and unjust laws. Then ask them to analyze how King’s reasoning about the differences between just and unjust laws justifies his claim that one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws.

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Skills	Key Questions	Sample Instructional Activity
<p><b>5.B:</b> <i>Explain how the organization of a text creates unity and coherence and reflects a line of reasoning.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How does the writer organize and arrange their ideas to develop a coherent argument?</li> <li>▪ How does the writer use repetition, synonyms, pronoun references, or parallel structure to indicate or develop a relationship between elements of a text?</li> <li>▪ How does the writer use transitional elements (e.g., words, phrases, clauses, sentences, or paragraphs) to show relationships among ideas and create coherence among sentences, paragraphs, or sections of their argument?</li> <li>▪ How does the writer achieve coherence at different levels of their argument: clause, sentence, paragraph, section, etc.?</li> <li>▪ How does the writer use transitional elements to introduce evidence or indicate its relationship to other ideas or evidence?</li> </ul>	<p>After reading “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” have students chunk the text into several sections, choosing sections according to how ideas seem to work together or seem to be achieving the same purpose. Then ask them to analyze the argumentative function of each section and determine how the organization reflects the reasoning of King’s argument and demonstrates coherence among the sections.</p>
<p><b>5.C:</b> <i>Recognize and explain the use of methods of development to accomplish a purpose.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Which method(s) of development does the writer select to develop their ideas?</li> <li>▪ How and why does the writer select and use a particular method of development to advance their purpose?</li> <li>▪ What is the relationship between the method of develop a writer uses and their line of reasoning?</li> <li>▪ How does the writer organize ideas when using a particular method of development?</li> </ul>	<p>Have students use “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” to identify methods of development that King uses throughout his argument, such as using comparison when King likens himself to the Apostle Paul and classification to differentiate just from unjust laws. As students identify a method of development that King employs, they should analyze why King selects the method of development to accomplish his purpose (e.g., drawing a distinction between just and unjust laws advances King’s purpose of persuading the clergymen that segregation is an unjust law worthy of defying). They should also analyze how he uses the method of development to do so (e.g., by describing characteristics and qualities of just and unjust laws and using various relevant examples to illustrate those attributes, King advances his purpose of persuading the clergymen that segregation is an unjust law worthy of defying).</p>

**Skill Category 6: Reasoning and Organization – Writing** *Use organization and commentary to illuminate the line of reasoning in an argument.*

Skills	Key Questions	Sample Instructional Activity
<b>6.A:</b> <i>Develop a line of reasoning and commentary that explains it throughout an argument.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ What premise(s) might you explicitly communicate, and how might the premise fit into a logical progression of ideas that justifies your thesis?</li><li>▪ What premise(s) should you implicitly communicate or leave unsaid because you assume the audience knows are shares it?</li><li>▪ How do you address the subject’s complexities in your reasoning and avoid oversimplifications and generalizations?</li><li>▪ Does your reasoning proceed from an established claim, or does your reasoning advance toward a claim?</li><li>▪ How does the reasoning in your commentary logically connect chosen evidence to a claim?</li><li>▪ How does a particular body paragraph not only establish relationships among the claim, evidence, and commentary but also contribute to the reasoning of your argument?</li><li>▪ How might you sequence the paragraphs of your argument to enhance your line of reasoning?</li><li>▪ How might you evaluate your reasoning to avoid flaws that might negatively affect an audience’s acceptance of your argument?</li><li>▪ To what degree do the quantity and quality of your evidence provide apt support for your line of reasoning?</li></ul>	<p>After a guided-writing activity in which you demonstrate how to develop and organize a line of reasoning for an argument, have students use a graphic organizer to develop ideas for their reasoning. Then ask them to consider the organization of that reasoning.</p> <p>For example, after a particular guided-writing activity, a student might determine to lead readers through their reasoning and present the thesis statement near the end of a piece. In that case, have the student develop an outline, organizing their reasoning and rearranging ideas so that they proceed logically and conclude with the thesis statement.</p>

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## Skills

## Key Questions

## Sample Instructional Activity

**6.B:** *Use transitional elements to guide the reader through the line of reasoning of an argument.*

- How might you organize and arrange your ideas to develop a coherent argument?
- How might you use repetition, synonyms, pronoun references, or parallel structure to indicate or develop a relationship between elements of a text?
- How might you select and use transitional elements (e.g., words, phrases, clauses, sentences, or paragraphs) to show relationships among ideas and create coherence among sentences, paragraphs, or sections of your argument?
- How might you use transitional elements to achieve coherence at different levels of your argument: clause, sentence, paragraph, section, etc.?
- How might you use transitional elements to introduce evidence or indicate its relationship to other ideas or evidence?

Ask students to work in pairs. Have them read their peer's argument aloud while the writer listens to ensure that the argument is coherent throughout, identifying any sections of the argument that seem misplaced or disjointed by marking those places in the draft. Then ask students to revise their drafts on their own and add transitional elements and conjunctions or rearrange sentences to better convey coherent relationships among ideas.

For example, the student writing about social media might decide she wants to transition from commentary about a series of statistics to her claim that social media can diminish one's self-esteem. She wants a transition that establishes that her claim is a conclusion based on her reasoning about the statistical evidence. As a result, the student selects the word *therefore* as a transition between her commentary and claim.

**6.C:** *Use appropriate methods of development to advance an argument.*

- Considering your line of reasoning, which methods of development might you use to develop your ideas and advance your purposes?
- How do you organize your ideas when using particular methods of development?

Before having students draft arguments, ask them to outline their drafts and note their purposes in each section. Then ask them to consider and note which methods of development they will use to accomplish these purposes. Finally, have students note how ideas are organized when using these methods of development to offer them strategies for organizing their own ideas.

For example, the student writing about social media determines that she wants a portion of her argument to claim that social media can have positive effects. Therefore, she uses description and cause-effect methods of development to explain how social media has helped people to organize social movements in different countries, which resulted in positive change in those countries.

## Big Idea: Style

The rhetorical situation informs the strategic stylistic choices that writers make.

The table that follows provides examples of questions to guide students' exploration of style. (**Note: The text referenced in this section is not a course requirement but is used here simply to offer a context for examples.**)

### **Skill Category 7: Style – Reading** *Explain how writers' stylistic choices contribute to the purpose of an argument.*

Skills	Key Questions	Sample Instructional Activity
<b>7.A:</b> <i>Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>How does the writer strategically choose words based on not only their denotations and connotations but also their potential effect in the rhetorical situation?</li><li>How does the writer choose descriptive words and words with particular connotations to create a tone?</li><li>How does the writer's precise word choice reduce potential confusion and affect how the audience perceives the writer's perspective?</li><li>How do the word choice, syntax, and conventions employed by the writer contribute to their writing style?</li><li>How does the writer's style and tone contribute to a complex, ironic, and/or changing perspective on the subject?</li></ul>	When reading "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," ask students to analyze how King's strategic word choices, comparisons, and syntactical choices convey his tone toward the notion of his being an "extremist."
<b>7.B:</b> <i>Explain how writers create, combine, and place independent and dependent clauses to show relationships between and among ideas.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>How does the writer convey main ideas through independent clauses?</li><li>How does the writer convey clear relationships between ideas within and across sentences?</li><li>How does the writer arrange clauses, phrases, and words to emphasize ideas?</li><li>How does the writer arrange sentences in a text to emphasize ideas?</li></ul>	Using "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," have students analyze how King conveys his ideas about why he is in Birmingham through his construction of independent clauses. Then ask students to analyze how King uses coordination and subordination to combine and place details, phrases, and clauses to emphasize ideas relating to the opposing forces in the African American community regarding segregation.
<b>7.C:</b> <i>Explain how grammar and mechanics contribute to the clarity and effectiveness of an argument.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>How does the writer use punctuation and text features to achieve a purpose and/or create an effect (e.g., clarify, organize, emphasize, indicate purpose, supplement information, contribute to a tone)?</li></ul>	As students read "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," have them trace how King uses quotation marks in various ways throughout the text to advance specific purposes and to create specific effects.

**Skill Category 8: Style – Writing** *Select words and use elements of composition to advance an argument.*

Skills	Key Questions	Sample Instructional Activity
<p><b>8.A:</b> <i>Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Which words might you choose in your argument after considering not only the words’ denotations and connotations but also their potential effect in the rhetorical situation?</li> <li>▪ How might you choose descriptive words and words with particular connotations to create a tone?</li> <li>▪ How might more precise word choices reduce potential confusion and affect how the audience perceives your perspective?</li> <li>▪ How do the word choices, syntax, and conventions that you employ contribute to your writing style?</li> <li>▪ How do your style and tone contribute to your complex, ironic, and/or changing perspective on the subject?</li> </ul>	<p>Review students’ arguments to provide feedback on whether the language they chose appropriately reflects their rhetorical situations.</p> <p>For example, in the case of the student writing about the value of social media, you might review her draft and identify a couple of places where she could reconsider her word choice. As a result, the student might agree that her audience could find her tone too harsh, and substitute a few word choices to soften the tone.</p>
<p><b>8.B:</b> <i>Write sentences that clearly convey ideas and arguments.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How do you write sentences that convey a main idea?</li> <li>▪ How do you convey clear relationships between ideas within and across sentences?</li> <li>▪ How might you arrange clauses, phrases, and words to emphasize ideas?</li> <li>▪ How might you arrange sentences in a text to emphasize ideas?</li> </ul>	<p>After students have written arguments and received peer feedback, have them revise their arguments, paying particular attention to whether sentences convey a main idea and how they convey clear relationships with other ideas.</p> <p>For example, during a peer review of the student’s piece on social media, a fellow student comments that certain ideas in adjacent sentences seem related, but their relationships could be clearer. As a result, the writer edits the sentences, coordinating them to clarify the relationship.</p>

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Skills	Key Questions	Sample Instructional Activity
<p><b>8.C:</b> <i>Use established conventions of grammar and mechanics to communicate clearly and effectively.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How might you use punctuation and text features to achieve a purpose and/or create an effect (e.g., clarify, organize, emphasize, indicate purpose, supplement information, contribute to a tone)?</li> </ul>	<p>Give students a checklist of writing considerations to evaluate and have them proofread their arguments carefully to ensure that ideas are presented clearly and that the arguments use punctuation to communicate clearly.</p> <p>For example, the student writing about social media knows this evaluation is an important step before publishing her article. She wants her peers and other students in the school and beyond to respect her perspective on social media, so she carefully evaluates and proofreads her argument to identify and correct any errors in punctuation that might hinder communication due to unclear relationships between ideas. Also, she identifies an opportunity in her argument to emphasize an idea by revising a sentence so that it employs a dash.</p>

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**AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION**

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# Exam Information



# Exam Overview

The AP English Language and Composition Exam assesses student understanding of the skills and essential knowledge outlined in the course framework. The exam is 3 hours and 15 minutes long and includes 45 multiple-choice questions and 3 free-response questions. The details of the exam, including exam weighting and timing, can be found below:

Section	Question Type	Number of Questions	Exam Weighting	Timing
<b>I</b>	<b>Multiple-choice questions</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>60 minutes</b>
	Reading questions	23–25		
	Writing questions	20–22		
<b>II</b>	<b>Free-response questions</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>2 hours, 15 minutes</b> (includes one 15-minute reading period)
	Question 1: Synthesis (6 points)			40 minutes recommended per essay
	Question 2: Rhetorical Analysis (6 points)			
	Question 3: Argument (6 points)			

The exam assesses the following four big ideas for the course, as detailed below:

Big Ideas
Rhetorical Situation
Claims and Evidence
Reasoning and Organization
Style

# How Student Learning Is Assessed on the AP Exam

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## Section I: Multiple-Choice

The eight AP English Language and Composition skill categories are assessed in the multiple-choice section, with the following weighting:

<b>Skill Category</b>	<b>Exam Weighting</b>
<i>1: Rhetorical Situation – Reading</i>	<b>11–14%</b>
<i>2: Rhetorical Situation – Writing</i>	<b>11–14%</b>
<i>3: Claims and Evidence – Reading</i>	<b>13–16%</b>
<i>4: Claims and Evidence – Writing</i>	<b>11–14%</b>
<i>5: Reasoning and Organization – Reading</i>	<b>13–16%</b>
<i>6: Reasoning and Organization – Writing</i>	<b>11–14%</b>
<i>7: Style – Reading</i>	<b>11–14%</b>
<i>8: Style – Writing</i>	<b>11–14%</b>

The multiple-choice section will include five sets of questions, as detailed below:

Set	Number of Questions Per Set	Skills Assessed
1	11–14	Reading skills (1,3,5,7)
2	11–14	Reading skills (1,3,5,7)
3	7–9	Writing skills (2,4,6,8)
4	7–9	Writing skills (2,4,6,8)
5	4–6	Writing skills (2,4,6,8)

## Section II: Free-Response

The second section of the AP English Language and Composition Exam includes three questions.

### FREE-RESPONSE QUESTION 1: SYNTHESIS

Free-response question 1 presents students with six sources organized around a specific topic. Two of the provided sources are visual, including at least one quantitative source. The remaining sources are text-based excerpts containing about 500 words per source. Students are asked to write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the provided sources and develops their own position on the topic. This question assesses students' ability to do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
- Select and use evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support the line of reasoning. Indicate clearly the sources used through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. Sources may be cited as Source A, Source B, etc., or by using the description in parentheses.
- Explain how the evidence supports the line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating the argument.

All Synthesis essay questions will be worded in a similar way. A sample question and the stable prompt wording are provided below.

#### Sample Question

Eminent domain is the power governments have to acquire property from private owners for public use. The rationale behind eminent domain is that governments have greater legal authority over lands within their dominion than do private owners. Eminent domain has been instituted in one way or another throughout the world for hundreds of years.

Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the sources and develops your position on the notion that eminent domain is productive and beneficial.

### Stable Prompt Wording

The text in italics will vary by question, while the remainder of the prompt will be consistently used in all Synthesis essay questions.

[*Subject introduction*].

Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source.

Write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the sources and develops your position on [*specific subject from the introduction*].

### FREE-RESPONSE QUESTION 2: RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

Free-response question 2 presents students with a passage of nonfiction prose of approximately 600 to 800 words. Students are asked to write an essay that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices. This question assesses students’ ability to do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices.
- Select and use evidence to develop and support the line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports the line of reasoning.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the rhetorical situation.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating the argument.

All Rhetorical Analysis essay questions will be worded in a similar way. A sample question and the stable prompt wording are provided below.

#### Sample Question

In 1997, then United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright gave the commencement speech to the graduating class of Mount Holyoke College, a women’s college in Massachusetts.

Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Albright makes to convey her message that perseverance can make a difference.

#### Stable Prompt wording

The text in italics will vary by question, while the remainder of the prompt will be consistently used in all Rhetorical Analysis essay questions.

[*Background on the rhetorical situation*]. Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices [*the writer*] makes to [*develop/achieve/convey*] [*his/her*] [*argument . . . /purpose . . . /message . . .*].

### FREE-RESPONSE QUESTION 3: ARGUMENT

Free-response question 3 presents students with a literary or rhetorical concept or idea. Students are asked to write an essay that argues their position using evidence. This question assesses students’ ability to do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
- Provide evidence to support the line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports the line of reasoning.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the rhetorical situation.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating the argument.

All Argument essay questions will be worded in a similar way. A sample question and the stable prompt wording are provided on the following page.

**Sample Question**

In her book *Gift from the Sea*, author and aviator Anne Morrow Lindbergh (1906–2001) writes, “We tend not to choose the unknown which might be a shock or a disappointment or simply a little difficult to cope with. And yet it is the unknown with all its disappointments and surprises that is the most enriching.”

Write an essay that argues your position on the value of exploring the unknown.

**Stable Prompt Wording**

The text in italics will vary by question, while the remainder of the prompt will be consistently used in all Argument essay questions.

*[Topical discussion/introduction/quotation(s) and background].*

Write an essay that argues your position on *[specific subject from the introduction]*.

# Task Verbs Used in Free-Response Questions

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The following task verbs are commonly used in the free-response questions:

**Analyze:** Examine methodically and in detail the structure of the topic of the question for purposes of interpretation and explanation.

**Argue your position:** Formulate a claim and support it with evidence.

**Read:** Look at or view printed directions and provided passages.

**Synthesize:** Combine different perspectives from sources to form a support of a coherent position.

**Write:** Produce a response in writing.



# Sample Exam Questions

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The sample exam questions that follow illustrate the relationship between the course framework and the AP English Language and Composition Exam and serve as examples of the types of questions that appear on the exam. After the sample questions is an answer key and alignment table that shows how the questions relate to the course framework.

## Section I: Multiple-Choice

The first set of questions assess reading skills and the second set of questions assess writing skills.

**Questions 1 through 7 refer to the following. Read the following carefully before you choose your answers.**

*The following passage is an excerpt from a speech delivered by a leading women’s rights activist in 1913.*

If I were a man and I said to you, “I come from a country which professes to have representative institutions and yet denies me, a taxpayer, an inhabitant  
*Line* of the country, representative rights,” you would at once  
5 understand that that human being, being a man, was justified in the adoption of revolutionary methods to get representative institutions. But since I am a woman it is necessary in the twentieth century to explain why women have adopted revolutionary methods in order to win the  
10 rights of citizenship.

You see, in spite of a good deal that we hear about revolutionary methods not being necessary for American women, because American women are so well off, most of the men of the United States quite calmly acquiesce in  
15 the fact that half of the community are deprived absolutely of citizen rights, and we women, in trying to make our case clear, always have to make as part of our argument, and urge upon men in our audience the fact—a very simple fact—that women are human beings.  
20 It is quite evident you do not all realize we are human beings or it would not be necessary to argue with you that women may, suffering from intolerable injustice, be driven to adopt revolutionary methods. We have, first of all to convince you we are human beings, and I hope to  
25 be able to do that in the course of the evening before I sit down, but before doing that, I want to put a few political arguments before you—not arguments for the suffrage,\* because I said when I opened, I didn’t mean to do that—but arguments for the adoption of  
30 militant methods in order to win political rights.

A great many of you have been led to believe, from the somewhat meager accounts you get in the newspapers, that in England there is a strange manifestation taking place, a new form of hysteria being swept across part of the feminist population of those Isles, and this manifestation takes the shape of irresponsible breaking of windows, burning of letters, general inconvenience to respectable, honest business people who want to attend to their business. It is very irrational you say: even if these women had sufficient intelligence to understand what they were doing, and really did want the vote, they have adopted very irrational means for getting the vote. “How are they going to persuade people that they ought to have the vote by breaking their windows?” you say. Now, if you say that, it shows you do not understand the meaning of our revolution at all, and I want to show you that when damage is done to property it is not done in order to convert people to woman suffrage at all. It is a practical political means, the only means we consider open to voteless persons to bring about a political situation, which can only be solved by giving women the vote.

Suppose the men of Hartford had a grievance, and they laid that grievance before their legislature, and the legislature obstinately refused to listen to them, or to remove their grievance, what would be the proper and the constitutional and the practical way of getting their grievance removed? Well, it is perfectly obvious at the next general election, when the legislature is elected, the men of Hartford in sufficient numbers would turn out that legislature and elect a new one: entirely change the personnel of an obstinate legislature which would not remove their grievance. It is perfectly simple and perfectly easy for voting communities to get their grievances removed if they act in combination and make an example of the legislature by changing the composition of the legislature and sending better people to take the place of those who have failed to do justice.

But let the men of Hartford imagine that they were not in the position of being voters at all, that they were governed without their consent being obtained, that the legislature turned an absolutely deaf ear to their demands, what would the men of Hartford do then? They couldn't vote the legislature out. They would have to choose; they would have to make a choice of two evils: they would either have to submit indefinitely to an unjust state of affairs, or they would have to rise up and adopt some of the antiquated means by which men in the past got their grievances remedied.

the right of voting

1. Which of the following best describes the writer's exigence in the passage?
  - (A) The lack of interest among eligible voters in the political process
  - (B) The limited resources available to women for changing existing power structures
  - (C) Widening disparities in the socioeconomic circumstances of American and British women
  - (D) Public resentment of the high tax rate imposed by the government
  
2. In the opening paragraph (lines 1–10), the writer contrasts a hypothetical rhetorical situation with her own primarily to
  - (A) illustrate the double standards for men and women in the political realm
  - (B) explain why women are more reluctant to adopt revolutionary methods than men
  - (C) emphasize the influence of women on democratic culture in the United States
  - (D) suggest that American women's civil rights have been eroded in the twentieth century
  
3. In the second paragraph (lines 11–30), which of the following best characterizes the writer's position on the relevance of her topic for American women?
  - (A) Because American women are “so well off” (line 13), it is unnecessary for them to adopt the methods described by the writer.
  - (B) Because American women are “so well off” (line 13), they have access to methods other than those described by the author.
  - (C) Although the methods described by the writer are best suited for American men, American women could adapt such methods for use in the domestic sphere.
  - (D) Although American women are perceived as “well off” (line 13), they should nonetheless consider adopting the methods described by the writer.
  
4. In context, lines 11–23 (“You see . . . revolutionary methods”) could be used to support which of the following claims about the writer's tone?
  - (A) Her tone when discussing American women is patronizing.
  - (B) Her tone when discussing American men is ingratiating.
  - (C) She adopts a bold, forthright tone in approaching her subject.
  - (D) She adopts a reverent, admiring tone in dealing with her subject.

5. In the third paragraph, the writer criticizes the logic of those who dismiss the methods of British feminists as “irrational” (line 42) on the grounds that they have
- (A) misconstrued the feminists’ reasons for employing the strategies they have chosen to employ
  - (B) overlooked accounts that present a less provocative view of feminist activism in Britain
  - (C) ignored a key distinction between American feminists and British feminists
  - (D) assumed that feminists do not understand the normal political process
6. In the fourth paragraph (lines 52–67), the writer introduces a hypothetical scenario primarily to
- (A) question the motives of those who demand immediate changes to the status quo
  - (B) underscore the efficiency of voting as a means of addressing political discontents
  - (C) spotlight the special political privileges recently accorded to the men of Hartford
  - (D) encourage women’s rights activists to emulate the example of the men of Hartford
7. At the end of the passage, the writer uses the “either . . . or” construction in lines 75–78 (“they would either . . . grievances remedied”) in order to
- (A) provide two possible explanations for why American women have not yet won the right to vote
  - (B) offer two alternative methods of accomplishing the same goal
  - (C) assert that patience is critical to smooth political transitions
  - (D) imply that disruptive action may be the only way of resisting oppression in certain situations

**Questions 8 through 15 refer to the following. Read the following carefully before you choose your answers.**

*The following passage is a draft.*

(1) After an unsuccessful search, NASA determined that instead of following a trajectory that would allow the Orbiter to enter orbit around Mars, it came too close to the planet, causing it to enter and disintegrate in Mars's atmosphere. (2) The culprit was a discrepancy in the software that controlled the spacecraft's thrusters: one team of engineers had calculated the force needed from the thrusters in *pounds*, an imperial unit, while another team calculated the force in *newtons*, a metric unit.

(3) The Orbiter mission failure is just one reason, albeit an extremely expensive one, that the United States needs to abandon future Mars survey missions. (4) Most of the world uses the metric system, a decimal measurement system that allows for simple scaling and calculations by adding the relevant prefixes: one kilometer, for example, is 1,000 meters, and one kilogram is 1,000 grams. (5) The imperial measurement system used in the United States assigns values haphazardly: one mile is 5,280 feet long, while one pound is 16 ounces.

(6) The United States is one of only three countries—the others are Liberia and Myanmar—that have not fully adopted the metric system. (7) Not only are conversion errors such as the Orbiter one costly, they can be deadly.

(8) Wrong dosing of medicine due to unit confusion (teaspoons versus milliliters) results in trips to the emergency room each year. (9) Switching to the metric system would also benefit United States industries; the European Union, for example, has been requiring its member states to standardize their metric systems since 1971.

(10) Converting to metric may seem difficult, but the United States already uses it more than you might think, from races (that 5K you're running) to soft drinks (that 2-liter bottle you bought) to high school science classes (those 250-milliliter beakers you used in chemistry). (11) It's time for the United States to make the leap to metric in everything else it measures.

8. Which of the following sentences, if placed before sentence 1, would both capture the audience's interest and provide the most effective introduction to the topic of the paragraph?
- (A) NASA's Mars Climate Orbiter was launched on December 11, 1998, from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida.
  - (B) On September 23, 1999, NASA officials were aghast when the \$125 million Mars Climate Orbiter vanished as it prepared to enter the red planet's orbit.
  - (C) As part of a new set of missions intended to survey the planet Mars, the Mars Climate Orbiter was launched by NASA scientists to study Mars's climate and weather.
  - (D) When NASA officials lost contact with their Mars Climate Orbiter on September 23, 1999, they immediately instigated a search for the spacecraft using NASA's Deep Space Network of radio antennae.

9. In sentence 2 (reproduced below), the writer wants an effective transition from the introductory paragraph to the main idea of the passage.

*The culprit was a discrepancy in the software that controlled the spacecraft's thrusters: one team of engineers had calculated the force needed from the thrusters in pounds, an imperial unit, while another team calculated the force in newtons, a metric unit.*

Which of the following versions of the underlined text best achieves this purpose?

- (A) (as it is now)
  - (B) thrusters; the data from the spacecraft and the data from NASA's computers on the ground had not been matching up for months since the launch of the Orbiter
  - (C) thrusters—software that was used to calculate the trajectory the Orbiter needed to take in order to enter Mars's orbit successfully
  - (D) thrusters: four thrusters were used for trajectory correction maneuvers as well as pitch and yaw control, while another four were used for roll control
10. In sentence 3 (reproduced below), which of the following versions of the underlined text best establishes the writer's position on the main argument of the passage?

*The Orbiter mission failure is just one reason, albeit an extremely expensive one, that the United States needs to abandon future Mars survey missions.*

- (A) (as it is now)
  - (B) should consider privatizing space exploration
  - (C) needs to adopt the metric system
  - (D) should partner with other countries on future missions to outer space
11. The writer wants to add a phrase at the beginning of sentence 5 (reproduced below), adjusting the capitalization as needed, to set up a comparison with the idea discussed in sentence 4.

*The imperial measurement system used in the United States assigns values haphazardly: one mile is 5,280 feet long, while one pound is 16 ounces.*

Which of the following choices best accomplishes this goal?

- (A) Furthermore,
- (B) For example,
- (C) Similarly,
- (D) By contrast,

12. In sentence 9 (reproduced below), the writer wants to provide a convincing explanation for why switching to the metric system would benefit United States industries.

*Switching to the metric system would also benefit United States industries; the European Union, for example, has been requiring its member states to standardize their metric systems since 1971.*

Which version of the underlined text best accomplishes this goal?

- (A) (as it is now)
- (B) industries: since most of the world already uses the metric system, it is likely to be the only measuring system in the future
- (C) industries; in fact, the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988, passed by Congress and signed into law by President Ronald Reagan, encouraged United States industries to adopt the metric system
- (D) industries: those with products in both domestic and international markets would no longer need to design in and produce to two different measurement systems, reducing both product overlap and manufacturing inefficiencies
13. The writer wants to add the following sentence to the third paragraph (sentences 6–9) to provide additional explanation.
- This means that the United States must convert to metric units whenever it is dealing with the rest of the world.*
- Where would the sentence best be placed?
- (A) After sentence 6
- (B) After sentence 7
- (C) After sentence 8
- (D) After sentence 9
14. In the fourth paragraph (sentences 10–11), the writer wants to expand on the concession that converting to the metric system may seem difficult. Which of the following claims would best achieve this purpose?
- (A) Many attempts to make the United States adopt the metric system have already been made.
- (B) The units in the imperial system were first officially defined by the Office of the Exchequer in Great Britain in 1824, but they have existed as the Winchester Standards since 1588.
- (C) Some people in Great Britain, which adopted the metric system decades ago, want to return to the imperial system.
- (D) It would be extremely costly as well as confusing for the United States to manage the overwhelming task of converting everything from road signs to measuring cups to the metric system.

15. In the fourth paragraph (sentences 10–11), the writer wants to provide further evidence to rebut the claim that converting to the metric system might be difficult. Which of the following pieces of evidence would best achieve this purpose?
- (A) A 2012 petition, signed by over 25,000 people, urging the White House to adopt the metric system in the United States
  - (B) An interview from an opponent of adopting the metric system in the United States
  - (C) A description of the successful adoption of the metric system by Great Britain, which had previously used the imperial system
  - (D) A United States government report estimating the cost of converting highway signs on state roads at \$334 million dollars



## Section II: Free-Response

The following are examples of the kinds of free-response questions found on the exam.

### Synthesis (Free-Response Question 1 on the AP Exam)

**As the Internet age changes what and how people read, there has been considerable debate about the future of public libraries. While some commentators question whether libraries can stay relevant, others see new possibilities for libraries in the changing dynamics of today’s society.**

Carefully read the [six sources](#), found on the AP English Language and Composition Classroom Resources Page, including the introductory information for each source. Write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the sources and develops your position on the role, if any, that public libraries should serve in the future.

Source A (Kranich interview)

Source B (calendar from Orland Park Public Library)

Source C (Shank article)

Source D (charts from Rainie)

Source E (Siegler article)

Source F (ALA report)

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
- Select and use evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support your line of reasoning. Indicate clearly the sources used through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. Sources may be cited as Source A, Source B, etc., or by using the description in parentheses.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

### Rhetorical Analysis (Free-Response Question 2 on the AP Exam)

**In May 2012 former United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who was the first African American woman to hold that position, gave a commencement speech to the graduating class of Southern Methodist University, a private university in Dallas, Texas. The passage below is an excerpt from that speech. Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Rice makes to convey her message to her audience.**

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the rhetorical situation.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

[W]hat do I mean by human progress? I believe that all human beings share certain fundamental aspirations. They want protections for their lives and their liberties. They want to think freely and to worship as they wish. They want opportunities to educate their children, both boys and girls. And they want the dignity that comes with having to be asked for their consent to be governed.

All too often, difference has been used to divide and dehumanize. I grew up in Birmingham, Alabama—a place quite properly called the most segregated city in America—and I know how it feels to hold aspirations when half your neighbors think that you're incapable of or uninterested in anything higher. And I know there are some in this audience who have perhaps faced the same.

And in my professional life, I have listened in disbelief as it has been said of men and women in Asia and Africa and Latin America and Eastern Europe and Russia, from time to time, that they did not share the basic aspirations of all human beings. Somehow these people were just “different.” That meant “unworthy of what we enjoy.” “Maybe they're just not ready for democracy,” it would be said. But of course this was once said even about black people. We were just too childlike. We didn't care about rights or citizenship or the vote. We didn't care about freedom and liberty.

Well, today in the Middle East, the last bastion of that argument, people are putting a nail in the coffin of that idea. They are not just seeking their freedom, they are seizing it. But freedom and democracy are not the same thing. Freedom and rights have to be institutionalized into rule of law, into constitutions. And if you don't think constitutions matter, just remember this: When Martin Luther King Jr. wanted to say that segregation was wrong, in my hometown of Birmingham, he didn't have to say that the United States had to be something else—only that the United States had to be what it said it was. That is why the creed matters.

But stable democracy requires more than just the institutionalization of freedom. It requires that there can be no tyranny of the majority. And most importantly, it requires that the strong cannot exploit the weak. Indeed, democracy is only as strong as its weakest link. And indeed, if every life is equal before the law, and within the eyes of God, then every life is worthy. Every life is capable of greatness. And it truly doesn't matter where you came from, it matters where you are going.

At SMU, you have been taught the importance of service. You have been taught to serve those who are less fortunate. And yes, it will help them, but it will help you more. Because when you encounter those who are less fortunate, you cannot possibly give way to grievance—“Why do I not have?”—or its twin brother, entitlement—“Why don't they give me?” In fact, you will ask instead, not “Why do I not have?” but “Why have I been given so much?” And from that spirit, you will join the legions of impatient patriots and optimists who are working toward a better human future. And yes, sometimes it seems very hard indeed. But always remember in those times of trial, that what seems impossible seems inevitable in retrospect.

I read one summer the biographies of the Founding Fathers, when things weren't going very well for us in the Bush Administration.\* And by all rights, the United States of America should actually never have come into being—what with a third of George Washington's troops down with smallpox on any given day, the Founding Fathers squabbling among themselves, and against the greatest military power of the time—but we did come into being.

And then we fought a civil war, brother against brother, hundreds of thousands dead on both sides—and yet we emerged a more perfect Union.

And those of us who live in the West and have ever come across the Continental Divide know that they did it in covered wagons. And they had to be optimists, because they didn't even know what was on the other side and they kept going anyway.

And in Birmingham, Alabama, a little girl whose parents can't take her to a movie theater or to a restaurant—her parents nonetheless have her convinced that she may not be able to have a hamburger at Woolworth's lunch counter, but she can be president of the United States if she wanted to be, and she becomes the Secretary of State. You see, things that seem impossible very often seem inevitable in retrospect.

\*Rice was Secretary of State from 2005 to 2009 under George W. Bush.

### **Argument (Free-Response Question 3 on the AP Exam)**

**The late Barbara Jordan, a former United States representative, once warned, "[T]his is the great danger America faces—that we will cease to be one nation and become instead a collection of interest groups: city against suburb, region against region, individual against individual; each seeking to satisfy private wants."**

**Write an essay that argues your position on Jordan's claim that "private wants" threaten national identity.**

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
- Provide evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

# Answer Key and Question Alignment to Course Framework

Multiple-Choice Question	Answer	Skill	Essential Knowledge
1	B	1.A	RHS-1.B
2	A	3.A	CLE-1.C
3	D	3.A	CLE-1.A
4	C	7.A	STL-1.E
5	A	5.A	REO-1.F
6	B	5.C	REO-1.J
7	D	7.B	STL-1.L
8	B	2.A	RHS-1.I
9	A	6.B	REO-1.P
10	C	4.B	CLE-1.I
11	D	6.B	REO-1.Q
12	D	6.A	REO-1.D
13	A	6.A	REO-1.D
14	D	4.C	CLE-1.AB
15	C	4.C	CLE-1.AC

Free-Response Question	Question Type	Skills
1	Synthesis	2.A, 4.A, 4.B, 4.C, 6.A, 6.B, 6.C, 8.A, 8.B, 8.C
2	Rhetorical Analysis	1.A, 2.A, 4.A, 4.B, 4.C, 6.A, 6.B, 6.C, 8.A, 8.B, 8.C
3	Argument	2.A, 4.A, 4.B, 4.C, 6.A, 6.B, 6.C, 8.A, 8.B, 8.C

The scoring information for the questions within this course and exam description, along with further exam resources, can be found on the [AP English Language and Composition Exam Page](#) on AP Central.



# Scoring Guidelines

## Question 1: Synthesis Essay

**6 points**

As the Internet age changes what and how people read, there has been considerable debate about the future of public libraries. While some commentators question whether libraries can stay relevant, others see new possibilities for libraries in the changing dynamics of today's society.

Carefully read the six sources, found on the AP English Language and Composition Classroom Resources page, including the introductory information for each source. Write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the sources and develops your position on the role, if any, that public libraries should serve in the future.

Source A (Kranich interview)

Source B (calendar from Orland Park Public Library)

Source C (Shank article)

Source D (charts from Rainie)

Source E (Siegler article)

Source F (ALA report)

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
- Select and use evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support your line of reasoning. Indicate clearly the sources used through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. Sources may be cited as Source A, Source B, etc., or by using the description in parentheses.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p><b>Row A</b></p> <p><b>Thesis</b></p> <p><b>(0-1 points)</b></p> <p><b>4.B</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b></p> <p>For any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no defensible thesis.</li> <li>The intended thesis only restates the prompt.</li> <li>The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim.</li> <li>There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt.</li> </ul>	<p><b>1 point</b></p> <p>Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.</p>
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>		
<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only restate the prompt.</li> <li>Do not take a position, or the position is vague or must be inferred.</li> <li>Equivocate or summarize other’s arguments but not the student’s (e.g., some people say it’s good, some people say it’s bad).</li> <li>State an obvious fact rather than making a claim that requires a defense.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respond to the prompt by developing a position on the role that public libraries should serve in the future, rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt. Clearly take a position rather than just stating there are pros/cons.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Restate the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Some people question whether libraries can stay relevant, others say there are new possibilities for them.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Addresses the topic of the prompt, but do not take a position</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Maybe libraries will become collaborative environments with more newer technologies; maybe they will disappear as people become more rely more on their phones.”</i></li> <li><i>“Libraries are the places that spark the educational fire in individuals, which is crazy to think there might be an end to them.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Address the topic of the prompt but is state an obvious fact as a claim</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Libraries been around for hundreds of years.”</i></li> </ul>		<p><b>Examples that earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Present a defensible position that responds to the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Libraries will only benefit and develop our society greatly in the long run.”</i></li> <li><i>“Although some may believe that libraries are no longer necessary, they are essential to the success of the US democratic system.”</i></li> <li><i>“In the future, public libraries should be upkeep with love and embrace other cultures and languages in the regional community.”</i></li> <li><i>“Given that no person alive today has ever known a world without public libraries, discontinuity them would do a disservice to many, and hinder the education of all those that rely on them.”</i></li> <li><i>“Tradition is being pushed aside in a technology-based world. However due to the educational benefits and the comfort libraries provide when in need and the historical implications, it is essential to society to keep these public reading spaces alive.”</i></li> <li><i>“Libraries serve vital roles in society: they hold historical significance and teach people how to properly engage with civics, they help build and reinforce communities, and libraries provide resources for the less fortunate. All in all, libraries should be funded and should continue to serve these roles in the future.”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity.</li> <li>The thesis may be anywhere within the response.</li> <li>For a thesis to be defensible, the sources must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point.</li> <li>The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn’t do so to earn the thesis point.</li> <li>A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.</li> </ul>		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
<p><b>Row B</b> <b>Evidence</b> <b>AND</b> <b>Commentary</b> <b>(0-4 points)</b></p> <p><b>2.A</b> <b>4.A</b> <b>6.A</b> <b>6.B</b> <b>6.C</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b></p> <p>Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or references fewer than two of the provided sources.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b></p> <p><b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides evidence from or references at least two of the provided sources.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>COMMENTARY:</b> Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student’s argument.</p>	<p><b>2 points</b></p> <p><b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides evidence from or references at least three of the provided sources.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>COMMENTARY:</b> Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.</p>	<p><b>3 points</b></p> <p><b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides specific evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>COMMENTARY:</b> Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p>	<p><b>4 points</b></p> <p><b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides specific evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>COMMENTARY:</b> Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p>
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>					
<p><b>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are incoherent or do not address the prompt.</li> <li>• May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 1 point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tend to focus on summary or description of sources rather than specific details.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities.</li> <li>• May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument.</li> <li>• May make one point well but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim.</li> <li>• Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 3 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uniformly offer evidence to support claims.</li> <li>• Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the sources to build an argument.</li> <li>• Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims.</li> <li>• Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 4 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uniformly offer evidence to support claims.</li> <li>• Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the sources to build an argument.</li> <li>• Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row.</li> </ul>					

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p><b>Row C</b> <b>Sophistication</b> <b>(0-1 points)</b></p> <p><b>2.A</b></p> <p><b>4.C</b></p> <p><b>6.B</b></p> <p><b>8.A</b></p> <p><b>8.B</b></p> <p><b>8.C</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b></p> <p>Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b></p> <p>Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.</p>
	<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>	
	<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attempt to contextualize their argument, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>In a world where...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time...</i>”).</li> <li>Only hint at or suggest other arguments (“<i>While some may argue that...</i>” OR “<i>Some people say...</i>”).</li> <li>Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the argument.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn this point may demonstrate sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation by doing any of the following:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crafting a nuanced argument by consistently identifying and exploring complexities or tensions across the sources.</li> <li>Articulating the implications or limitations of an argument (either the student’s argument or arguments conveyed in the sources) by situating it within a broader context.</li> <li>Making effective rhetorical choices that consistently strengthen the force and impact of the student’s argument throughout the response.</li> <li>Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference.</li> </ul>		



## Question 2: Rhetorical Analysis

6 points

In May 2012 former United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who was the first African American woman to hold that position, gave a commencement speech to the graduating class of Southern Methodist University, a private university in Dallas, Texas. The full speech, and a transcript are available on the Southern Methodist University website (<https://www.smu.edu/News/2012/commencement-Condoleezza-Rice-speech>). The relevant passage for analysis begins with the sentence “What do I mean by human progress?” and ends with the sentence “You see, things that seem impossible often seem inevitable in retrospect.” Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Rice makes to convey her message to her audience.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the rhetorical situation.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p><b>Row A</b> <b>Thesis</b> <b>(0-1 points)</b></p> <p><b>1.A</b></p> <p><b>4.B</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b></p> <p>For any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no defensible thesis.</li> <li>The intended thesis only restates the prompt.</li> <li>The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim.</li> <li>There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt.</li> </ul>	<p><b>1 point</b></p> <p>Responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices.</p>
	<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>	
	<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only restate the prompt.</li> <li>Fail to address the rhetorical choices the writer of the passage makes.</li> <li>Describe or repeat the passage rather than making a claim that requires a defense.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respond to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt <u>and</u> clearly articulate a defensible thesis about the rhetorical choices Rice makes to convey her message.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Restate the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“In her speech to Southern Methodist University, she successfully uses different rhetorical strategies to convey her point to the audience.”</i></li> <li><i>“Rice uses several effective rhetorical strategies in her speech.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Make a claim, but do not address the writer’s rhetorical choices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Rice makes a sophisticated speech to her audience in an attempt to encourage them.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Repeat provided information from the passage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“In certain parts of her speech, Condoleeza Rice’s hits on the key points of segregation and how it divides our nation.”</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples that earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Present a defensible thesis that analyzes the writer’s rhetorical choices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Rice’s main point was to get the message accross that regardless of our differences, we are all capable of anything. She did this successfully in her speech by relating to the audience and talking about key figures in history, though she could’ve made it even stronger by integrating more personal experiences/stories.”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity.</li> <li>The thesis may be anywhere within the response.</li> <li>For a thesis to be defensible, the passage must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point.</li> <li>The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn’t do so to earn the thesis point.</li> <li>A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.</li> </ul>		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
<p><b>Row B</b></p> <p><b>Evidence AND Commentary (0-4 points)</b></p> <p><b>1.A</b></p> <p><b>2.A</b></p> <p><b>4.A</b></p> <p><b>6.A</b></p> <p><b>6.B</b></p> <p><b>6.C</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b></p> <p>Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b></p> <p><b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides evidence that is mostly general.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>COMMENTARY:</b> Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student’s argument.</p>	<p><b>2 points</b></p> <p><b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides some specific, relevant evidence.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>COMMENTARY:</b> Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.</p>	<p><b>3 points</b></p> <p><b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>COMMENTARY:</b> Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Explains how at least one rhetorical choice in the passage contributes to the writer’s argument, purpose, or message.</p>	<p><b>4 points</b></p> <p><b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>COMMENTARY:</b> Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Explains how multiple rhetorical choices in the passage contribute to the writer’s argument, purpose, or message.</p>
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>					
<p><b>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are incoherent or do not address the prompt.</li> <li>• May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 1 point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tend to focus on summary or description of a passage rather than specific details or techniques.</li> <li>• Mention rhetorical choices with little or no explanation.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities.</li> <li>• May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument.</li> <li>• May make one point well but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim.</li> <li>• Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 3 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uniformly offer evidence to support claims.</li> <li>• Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage to build an argument.</li> <li>• Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims.</li> <li>• Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 4 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uniformly offer evidence to support claims.</li> <li>• Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the passage to build an argument.</li> <li>• Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained.</li> <li>• Explain how the writer’s use of rhetorical choices contributes to the student’s interpretation of the passage.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row.</li> <li>• To earn the fourth point in this row, the response may observe multiple instances of the same rhetorical choice if each instance further contributes to the argument, purpose, or message of the passage.</li> </ul>					

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p><b>Row C</b></p> <p><b>Sophistication</b></p> <p><b>(0-1 points)</b></p> <p><b>2.A</b></p> <p><b>4.C</b></p> <p><b>6.B</b></p> <p><b>8.A</b></p> <p><b>8.B</b></p> <p><b>8.C</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b></p> <p>Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b></p> <p>Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.</p>
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>		
<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attempt to contextualize the text, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>In a world where...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time...</i>”).</li> <li>• Only hint at or suggest other arguments (“<i>While some may argue that...</i>” OR “<i>Some people say...</i>”).</li> <li>• Examine individual rhetorical choices but do not examine the relationships among different choices throughout the text.</li> <li>• Oversimplify complexities in the text.</li> <li>• Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the analysis.</li> </ul> <p><b>Responses that earn this point may demonstrate sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation by doing any of the following:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explaining the significance or relevance of the writer’s rhetorical choices (given the rhetorical situation).</li> <li>2. Explaining a purpose or function of the passage’s complexities or tensions.</li> <li>3. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.</li> </ol>		
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.</li> </ul>		

### Question 3: Argument Essay

6 points

The late Barbara Jordan, a former United States representative, once warned: “[T]his is the great danger America faces—that we will cease to be one nation and become instead a collection of interest groups: city against suburb, region against region, individual against individual; each seeking to satisfy private wants.”

Write an essay that argues your position on Jordan’s claim that “private wants” threaten national identity.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
- Provide evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p><b>Row A</b> <b>Thesis</b> <b>(0-1 points)</b></p> <p><b>4.B</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b></p> <p>For any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no defensible thesis.</li> <li>The intended thesis only restates the prompt.</li> <li>The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim.</li> <li>There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt.</li> </ul>	<p><b>1 point</b></p> <p>Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.</p>
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>		
<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only restate the prompt.</li> <li>Do not take a position, or the position is vague or must be inferred.</li> <li>State an obvious fact rather than making a claim that requires a defense.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respond to the prompt by taking a position on Jordan’s claim that “private wants” threaten national identity, rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt. Clearly take a position rather than just stating that there are pros/cons.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Do not take a position</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Jordan claims that ‘region against region’ and ‘individual against individual’ is harmful to our country. This may be true.”</li> </ul> <p><b>Address the topic of the prompt but are not defensible—it is an obvious fact stated as a claim</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“People want what they want and a society is made-up of people.”</li> </ul>		<p><b>Examples that earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Present a defensible position that responds to the prompt.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“While Barbara Jordan correctly depicts an era of growing tension, she omits the significant fact that private wants and national identity both exist throughout history, neither completely occluding the other.”</li> <li>“We as a nation have become too regionalist. We no longer work for the best of this nation. We have begun to focus on our own region and ourselves instead of the American people as a whole. I agree with Jordan’s claim that ‘private wants’ threaten our national security.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity.</li> <li>The thesis may be anywhere within the response.</li> <li>The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn’t do so to earn the thesis point.</li> <li>A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.</li> </ul>		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
<p><b>Row B</b></p> <p><b>Evidence AND Commentary (0-4 points)</b></p> <p><b>2.A</b></p> <p><b>4.A</b></p> <p><b>6.A</b></p> <p><b>6.B</b></p> <p><b>6.C</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b></p> <p>Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b></p> <p><b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides evidence that is mostly general.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>COMMENTARY:</b> Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the argument.</p>	<p><b>2 points</b></p> <p><b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides some specific, relevant evidence.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>COMMENTARY:</b> Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student’s argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.</p>	<p><b>3 points</b></p> <p><b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>COMMENTARY:</b> Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p>	<p><b>4 points</b></p> <p><b>EVIDENCE:</b> Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>COMMENTARY:</b> Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning.</p>
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>					
<p><b>Typical responses that earn 0 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are incoherent or do not address the prompt.</li> <li>• May be just opinion with no evidence or evidence that is irrelevant.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Typical responses that earn 1 point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tend to focus on summary of evidence rather than specific details.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 2 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities.</li> <li>• May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don’t strengthen the argument.</li> <li>• May make one point well but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim.</li> <li>• Do not explain the connections or progression between the student’s claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 3 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uniformly offer evidence to support claims.</li> <li>• Focus on the importance of specific details to build an argument.</li> <li>• Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims.</li> <li>• Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Typical responses that earn 4 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uniformly offer evidence to support claims.</li> <li>• Focus on the importance of specific details to build an argument.</li> <li>• Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row.</li> </ul>					

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p><b>Row C</b> <b>Sophistication</b> <b>(0-1 points)</b></p> <p><b>2.A</b></p> <p><b>4.C</b></p> <p><b>6.B</b></p> <p><b>8.A</b></p> <p><b>8.B</b></p> <p><b>8.C</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b></p> <p>Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b></p> <p>Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.</p>
	<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>	
	<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attempt to contextualize their argument, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>In a world where...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time...</i>”).</li> <li>Only hint at or suggest other arguments (“<i>While some may argue that...</i>” OR “<i>Some people say...</i>”).</li> <li>Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because they do not enhance the argument.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn this point may demonstrate sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation by doing any of the following:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crafting a nuanced argument by consistently identifying and exploring complexities or tensions.</li> <li>Articulating the implications or limitations of an argument (either the student’s argument or an argument related to the prompt) by situating it within a broader context.</li> <li>Making effective rhetorical choices that consistently strengthen the force and impact of the student’s argument.</li> <li>Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference.</li> </ul>		



**AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION**

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# Appendix



# Appendix: AP English Language and Composition Conceptual Framework

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A conceptual framework for AP English Language and Composition can be found online.

The conceptual framework organizes content according to the big ideas, which enables teachers to trace a particular big idea and its related enduring understanding, its course skills, and all the essential knowledge statements associated with those skills. This resource may be helpful in better understanding how conceptually related skills and content are scaffolded across the units.

Teachers who would like to print and add a copy of this resource to their course and exam description binder can find the [AP English Language and Composition Conceptual Framework](#) on AP Central.

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