AP® English Language and Composition

About the Advanced Placement Program® (AP®)

The Advanced Placement Program® has enabled millions of students to take college-level courses and earn college credit, advanced placement, or both, while still in high school. AP Exams are given each year in May. Students who earn a qualifying score on an AP Exam are typically eligible, in college, to receive credit, placement into advanced courses, or both. Every aspect of AP course and exam development is the result of collaboration between AP teachers and college faculty. They work together to develop AP courses and exams, set scoring standards, and score the exams. College faculty review every AP teacher's course syllabus.

AP English Program

The College Board offers two courses in English studies, each designed to provide high school students the opportunity to engage with a typical introductory-level college English curriculum.

The AP English Language and Composition course focuses on the development and revision of evidence-based analytic and argumentative writing and the rhetorical analysis of nonfiction texts.

The AP English Literature and Composition course focuses on reading, analyzing, and writing about imaginative literature (fiction, poetry, drama) from various periods.

There is no prescribed sequence of study, and a school may offer one or both courses.

AP English Language and Composition Course Overview

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.

RECOMMENDED PREREQUISITES

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

AP English Language and Composition Course Content

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.

The following big ideas serve as the foundation of the course, enabling students to create meaningful connections among concepts. Each big idea correlates with an enduring understanding, a long-term takeaway related to the big idea:

- **Rhetorical Situation:** Individuals write within a particular situation and make strategic writing choices based on that situation.
- **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.
- **Reasoning and Organization:** Writers guide understanding of a text's lines of reasoning and claims through that text's organization and integration of evidence.
- **Style:** The rhetorical situation informs the strategic stylistic choices that writers make.

Course Skills

The following skill categories, tied to the big ideas, describe what skills students should develop during the course:

- **Rhetorical Situation – Reading:** Explain how writers' choices reflect the components of the rhetorical situation.
- **Rhetorical Situation – Writing:** Make strategic choices in a text to address a rhetorical situation.
- **Claims and Evidence – Reading:** Identify and describe the claims and evidence of an argument.
- **Claims and Evidence – Writing:** Analyze and select evidence to develop and refine a claim.
- **Reasoning and Organization – Reading:** Describe the reasoning, organization, and development of an argument.
- **Reasoning and Organization – Writing:** Use organization and commentary to illuminate the line of reasoning in an argument.
- **Style – Reading:** Explain how writers' stylistic choices contribute to the purpose of an argument.
- **Style – Writing:** Select words and use elements of composition to advance an argument.

AP English Language and Composition Exam Structure

AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION EXAM:
3 HOURS, 15 MINUTES

Assessment 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.

Format of Assessment

Section I:	Multiple-choice | 45 Questions | 60 Minutes | 45% of Exam Score
	• Includes 23–25 Reading Questions • Includes 20–22 Writing Questions
Section II:	Free-response | 3 Questions | 2 Hours, 15 Minutes | 55% of Exam Score
	• Question 1: Synthesis **(6 points)** • Question 2: Rhetorical Analysis **(6 points)** • Question 3: Argument **(6 points)**

Exam Components

Sample Multiple-Choice Questions

Students are given a passage of writing and asked to respond to a set of questions based on the passage. Below are two examples.

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

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 <u>needs to abandon future Mars survey missions</u>.

(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

Exam Components *Continued*

Sample Free-Response Question

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.

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