

INTRODUCTION

A. INTRODUCING THE TIP MANUAL

What are the contents of the TIP manual for AP English Literature and Composition?

TIP's *Teacher's Manual for an Advanced Placement Course in English Literature and Composition* was originally published in 1987, and was revised in 1990. This 1999 edition retains much of the content of the earlier editions, but formats and organization have changed and new material has been added. Whereas earlier editions relied on pagination from a particular edition of Laurence Perrine's *Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense* as a major text for the genre approach, this edition recommends several different anthologies from which teachers can choose specific selections. Including page numbers for a particular edition is not practical since these editions change frequently, and different teachers have access to different texts. Recommended readings can be found not only in the anthologies listed but also in many other collections. It is highly recommended that teachers of AP English Literature and Composition have access to all of the resources listed. The teachers can then select those texts and selections that seem best suited to their students and their own teaching style.

The 1999 edition of the *Manual for an Advanced Placement Course in English Literature and Composition* is divided into five sections:

- **Introduction**, introducing this manual, broad issues of AP English instruction, and the AP Literature and Composition examination;
- **Part I. Writing Instruction**, recommendations and resources for writing instruction,
- **Part II. Literary Genres**, an approach to teaching AP English Literature and Composition organized around the literary genres with sections on short fiction, poetry, drama, and the novel, with resources,
- **Part III. Texts and Traditions: The British Heritage**, an approach to teaching AP English Literature and Composition organized as a thematic/chronological survey of British literature.
- **Part IV. Resources for Texts and Traditions**, a collection of **Study Guides**, often with writing assignments, for specific literary works as well as a student guide for conducting literary research and developing a documented literary analysis essay. This section also includes a guide for writing documented literary analysis and a model student essay.

Neither Part II nor Part III is intended to serve as a sequence of lesson plans to be followed prescriptively. Instead, Parts II and III offer models for approaching instruction. Part II presents approaches to teaching short fiction, poetry, drama, and the novel. Part III is organized as a somewhat chronological survey of British literature from the Anglo-Saxon period to the present; the course organization is also built around four themes: The Heroic Code, The Romantic Code, The Moral Code, and The Aesthetic Code. These four units do not adhere to strict chronological structure, but mix thematically relevant materials from different time periods, even though the overall structure of the course has a chronological framework.

It is not recommended that an entire year's course be organized around the four genres in sequence, since students will lose interest if one genre is dwelt on too long. Such an approach, however, may be appropriate for a semester-long, block course. Teachers should devise a course organization suitable to the students they teach, with enough variety in approach to maintain interest and enough focus on meaningful themes to offer a coherent sequence of study. Relying on an anthology alone, even an excellent one, is also not the best approach. Students need to read books, and editions of novels and plays, not only because these are easily portable and comfortable to read but also because they stand as independent, complete works of art that should be studied as a whole. Exposing students only to short selections or excerpts does not educate students adequately as readers.

What text does the manual recommend?

Two anthologies are especially highly recommended if the genre approach is chosen. The first is *Perrine's Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense*, a text widely used in colleges. The introductions, study questions, and the accompanying *Instructor's Manual* for this volume are extremely helpful. *The Bedford Introduction to Literature* provides similar resources. A special advantage of the *Bedford* text is its inclusion of reprints of short critical excerpts and essays, introducing students to the resources of scholarly literary criticism, an excellent tool for improving their appreciation of and understanding of literary devices and themes. It is important, however, that students achieve skill and confidence in articulating their own critical analyses of literary works rather than relying on secondary sources. The AP examination requires independent thinking, and students do not have access to the ideas of others in responding to multiple-choice and essay questions on literary selections and authors which they have usually never before encountered. Instead, each student must be able to think through and give articulate expression to an original reading and analysis of the passages and questions of the examination. Using text aids or critical articles should not replace emphasis on independent thinking.

Since the second semester is built around works of British literature, which many high schools already own, no specific editions of these works are assumed. For many of the major works of British literature, the manual includes study guides that can be used in a variety of ways. The questions can be used to guide students in the skills of close reading as they encounter the text for the first time. The same questions can be used to structure small group and class discussions or selected questions can be the basis for writing assignments. Finally, the study guide questions provide an excellent resource as students review their reading for assessments.

What kinds of writing assignments are included in the manual?

The essay section of the AP English Literature and Composition Examination demands that students be able to write persuasively as well as read critically. Students should write the kinds of essays required by the examination frequently, at least once a week. Therefore, this manual includes many suggestions for both in-class and out-of-class writing. Old AP examination questions make superb writing assignments, and not simply because they familiarize the student with the types of questions they will encounter on the test. These questions are superbly crafted to evoke thoughtful, analytical responses that deepen the student's understanding of reading passages and literary devices. The questions are useful as introductions to literary works and authors, and

they offer opportunities for students to engage in the kind of critical thinking that should be practiced regularly in the AP classroom.

In addition to timed impromptu writings, students who expect to place out of college English need adequate instruction to help them write effective prepared essays in college. This manual includes examples of typical college-level writing assignments for literature courses — literary analysis essays that depend on close reading and independent interpretation as well as documented literary analysis essays that require students to use secondary sources appropriately and responsibly.

B. INTRODUCING THE ADVANCED PLACEMENT PROGRAM

How can your English Department establish and foster an Advanced Placement English program?

If you are establishing an AP English program or adding one of the two English examinations to your curriculum, you should keep in mind that in addition to offering a new curriculum, you are also asking your clientele—students and parents—to make a significant shift in how they think of English courses. Therefore, you should become as familiar as possible with the expectations and policies of the AP English program.

As students are going through preregistration activities, the AP teacher should visit the classes of prospective students. That teacher should carry the books that will be used in the course (a stack of 10-14 novels and plays has enormous visual and psychological impact) and should provide prospective students with a list of the works and a list of the types of writing assignments that will be demanded in the course. (Both of these lists may be tentative.) Students moving from an eleventh-grade college-preparatory course to AP English the next year should understand that they will be expected to elevate their work, their concentration, and their conceptual frameworks several notches higher than they would expect to do when they progress to the next grade level of high-school English.

Parent meetings are another way of disseminating the information about the conceptual requirements of the AP course. Parents should be informed as part of a registration open house by having a separate area staffed by AP teachers (of all subjects) to which parents and students can go in order to find out more specifics about AP demands and expectations. After the academic course begins, parents should also be encouraged to attend an AP open house, where they can ask specific questions about homework assignments, writing and reading requirements, and preparation for the May examination.

What role should summer reading play in an Advanced Placement English program?

Summer reading insures that students understand the elevated expectations of the AP English course. By continuing their academic studies over the summer, students grow in their reading comprehension and their ability to formulate ideas. They expand the repertoire from which they might draw a work for the open essay question.

Requiring summer reading to prepare for an academic course sends a strong signal that students will have to grow over their summer break by reading challenging works. In the first year, it is a good idea not to overwhelm students with summer reading; provide a reasonable amount of reading that students can readily manage. Initially, your goal is to establish the expectation that summer reading is a fundamental part of the AP English course. In addition to the reading assignment, give a writing assignment that will illustrate to you the student's mastery of the work. Inform students that they will be tested on the works in the first week of their return to school.

As you get to know your clientele better, and as you see how summer reading works in your learning community, you can adjust the level of pages and works assigned as needed. Take names of all the students who have received the summer reading assignment, and, if possible,

check that list against the list of students enrolled in the course. If there are any discrepancies, get the information to those students whom you have not yet contacted. Furthermore, leave the summer reading assignment with the office at your school that will register new students moving into the district over the summer.

What if students fail to complete their summer reading? Provide an option: allow students six or nine weeks to complete the summer reading for differentiated credit. Provide reading afternoons for them. Leave word with the parents that a student has not completed the summer reading assignments. In some cases, the student, parents, teacher, and counselor may decide that the AP course is not in the student's best interest.

What are the ingredients of an effective AP English program and course?

The most effective AP courses are built on a strong pre-AP program in which students are regularly asked to

- read extensively and master a wide range of types of literary works,
- read closely for detail as well as literary devices and structures,
- read challenging works of recognized literary merit,
- respond to their reading with thoughtful inquiry,
- articulate their responses orally in rich discussions conducted in an atmosphere of open exploration and acceptance of alternative interpretations, and
- write intelligent, insightful, and sensitive critical analyses of literary passages and works in both impromptu and prepared essays.

Students who have the benefit of this kind of exploration of literary works as well as opportunities to write about literature in their English classes from middle school forward are in the best position to benefit from instruction in an AP English course. Strong AP courses must be built on a strong pre-AP program. Consult the College Board for information about developing Vertical Teams that connect middle and high school teachers for the purpose of improving pre-AP and AP instruction.

The AP teacher should make clear from the beginning of the course the expectations of the school's English department for AP classes as well as the demands of the AP examinations. Students enrolled in AP courses have the opportunity to earn college credit, and they should expect the workload to be demanding and the standards high. Students should also be informed from the beginning about the school's or teacher's policies on the completion of reading assignments, the rules for in-class and at-home impromptu essays, and policies about the submission of written work and testing. Frequent timed impromptu essay writing is extremely helpful to students because this is the format for half of the AP examination. Develop a policy for timed impromptu essay writing at home. Asking the parent to time and sign an at-home impromptu essay assignment is a good way to supervise student work and to inform parents about the challenges AP students face regularly in their classes.

A syllabus listing required reading and writing assignments should be distributed at the beginning of the course and each unit of study, along with a supplementary list of major works likely to serve as sources for the free response essay questions on the AP examination. Although specific questions cannot be anticipated nor the specific works the question will recommend

known, AP publications do provide lists of works that have previously appeared on the examinations and many of these works will apply and can be used for the open question.

What is the climate of an effective AP class?

An effective AP class is a community of learners. The daily activities of reading, discussing, and writing are the crucial modes of learning and expressing learning for Advanced Placement English. Students should experience an open atmosphere where guessing, speculation, trial interpretations, and mistakes are welcomed as resources upon which valid and insightful interpretations can be built. Alternative interpretations must be assessed by a community of readers who evaluate their own and their classmates' speculations on the basis of the content and structures of the text under discussion. As the community of readers responds to and evaluates the interpretations expressed in discussions, class members will grow in their ability to read closely, to report accurately on the contents of the text, and to respond with creative and intelligent readings, interpretations, and insights.

These reading and discussion skills are the necessary foundation for effective AP writing. Good writing about literature arises from knowledge and insight about a particular text. Without this essential understanding of the text, the student will be at a loss in developing appropriate content for writing. Once content knowledge and intelligent interpretation are secure, the student can focus on improving the quality of writing by developing correctness, effective sentence style, and coherent, meaningful organization and structure. The task of improving writing must be accomplished individually, but the community of learners can contribute to each student's progress. Student writing that is shared through peer review and editing and through published models and samples can provide valuable instruction for the class. Sharing writing gives students an opportunity to evaluate their own progress against models and samples. This is an effective way to motivate writers to make the effort necessary for growth.

C. INTRODUCING THE AP EXAMINATION

What types of questions are asked on the examination?

The *AP English Literature and Composition Examination* consists of two sections, one multiple-choice reading section and one essay section. The first section lasts one hour and has a series of multiple-choice questions that assess the accuracy of the student's reading and interpretation of both prose and poetry passages that appear on the test. Three impromptu essays make up the second portion of the examination. For the first two essays, students must read unfamiliar passages, one prose and the other poetry, and write responses. The third question is an open essay, usually based on a novel or play that the student chooses as appropriate for the question. Students are given estimated times for each of these questions, usually 40 minutes for each question, but they are in control of the amount of time they spend on each question. Generally, the examination provides a list of appropriate works from which the student can choose for the last question.

What resources are available from the College Board for preparing students for the examination?

Multiple-choice and impromptu essay practices based on old AP examination questions should be used as an instructional tool throughout the AP course. For samples of AP multiple-choice and essay questions, teachers can order from the College Board current editions of *AP English Literature and Composition Examination and Key*, *Multiple-choice Testing in Literature*, and *Grading the AP Examination in English Literature and Composition*. These booklets provide sample multiple-choice reading questions with answers as well as student answers to recent essay questions, along with commentaries on them and the reasons for the grades the essays received. *The Teacher's Guide to AP Courses in English Language and Literature* provides outlines for AP courses offered at a number of schools. With the permission of the College Board, free response and essay sections of a number of recent AP exams are included in this manual.

What skills do the multiple-choice questions require?

The multiple-choice reading portion of the test focuses on materials students have probably not studied in high school. Students are asked to read and analyze unfamiliar texts in order to test their ability to

- read and interpret independently,
- apply critical thinking and close reading skills to a new text, and
- demonstrate their ability to read, assess, and interpret a text without relying on a secondary source.

Passages from different literary selections appear on the test with a total of 50-60 multiple-choice questions, which students must answer during the first hour of the examination. When this hour has expired, students turn in this portion of the examination, both the questions and their answers. Therefore, students need to move through the sequence of questions fairly rapidly at the same time that they focus on a careful, accurate reading. Students need to learn to average one question per minute, including the time allowed for reading the passages.

The multiple-choice section of the examination requires students to read closely but quickly and to determine a best answer from a series of alternatives. The optional answers are specifically designed to identify superficial and inaccurate readings. Therefore, the student cannot merely read for the literal, direct, denotative meanings of the words of the text but must read for the connotations of words and for implied and metaphorical meanings.

How are multiple-choice questions graded?

Multiple-choice questions comprise 45% of the student's reported grade. Their three essays make up the remaining 55%.

When the College Board releases tests, they provide a page that explains how the final AP score (1-5) was obtained from calculations performed on the multiple-choice score and the scores from the three essays (scored on a scale of 1-9). By plugging in sample scores, students can see what their multiple-choice scores in combination with their essay scores would have yielded, on that particular year's test, a certain score on the 1-5 scale. All wrong answers result in subtracting one-quarter (.25) point from the student's score of correct answers (+1 point each).

Students do not have to answer every multiple-choice question correctly to do well on the AP English test. However, students who read very well and score highly on the multiple-choice section have advantages over their peers who score less well. On the examination in English Literature and Composition, students can expect four or five reading passages from different chronological periods, from different nations, from different genres (poetry, fiction, and nonfiction), and from different categories such as gender, race, or social class. Such a variety ought to signal to a teacher the breadth of reading practice that should be offered in the course.

What tips can I give my students about the multiple-choice questions?

Different teachers and advisors will suggest different tips that may help students with multiple-choice questions. Students will have different approaches to managing the section. Some do better by reading the passage before answering the questions, others by skimming the questions first. Students should have enough practice to determine which type of test reader they are. The following suggestions can be shared with your students to help them prepare for the multiple-choice section of the examination.

1. **Read for the whole drift first.** The student must grasp the overall purpose, tone, authorial attitude, and content of the whole text in order to interpret specific passages and lines accurately.
2. **Move through the questions rapidly, making temporary guesses.** Any questions that are clear-cut and can be answered on the basis of a first reading should be answered quickly. Time is limited for this portion of the test; if the student moves too slowly, time may run out and easy questions that might appear near the end of a sequence will be missed solely because the student does not get to them.
3. **Realize the questions are your allies.** In a sequence of questions about a passage, the questions themselves can help the reader grasp more accurately the overall purpose, tone, authorial attitude, and content of the passage. It is wise for the student to skip

questions that seem completely impossible to answer and to go on to new questions. The process of reading the series of questions will help the student see what to look for and how to read the passage. The student should also be taught to read the content of the question carefully, for the question points to both the text segment and the approach needed for the accurate reading required to answer the question.

4. **Read for implications.** It is extremely important to realize that literary passages typically make use of metaphorical language, irony, and ambiguity to convey implied meanings. Therefore, the reader is required to distinguish the elements of the text that should be read literally for facts and those elements that must be read for implications, implications that are developed through literary techniques such as figurative language, rhetorical devices, symbolism, and other language devices. Obviously, many experiences in reading and discussing complex, sophisticated literary texts for implications are necessary to develop this level of reading skill. Complexity and ambiguity in passages are features that the College Board test designers use to differentiate those students ready to place out of college English.
5. **Analyze and interpret specific lines or segments of the text, using the question as a guide but keeping the context of the whole passage in mind.** Some questions will ask the test-taker to interpret a particular phrase, line, or short segment of the passage. For these questions, the test-taker must look specifically at this segment of the text and read it accurately. However, it is extremely important to keep in mind the drift of the whole, since the way the particular passage is read may depend on the overall purpose of the passage. A segment can easily be misread if the test-taker does not keep the context of the segment in mind.
6. **Master literary terms in advance and use this knowledge to interpret accurately.** Some multiple-choice questions will include specific literary terms. Although it is certainly necessary to know the meanings of such terms, simply reciting definitions is not sufficient. It is extremely important that literary terms be understood in the context of text passages that exemplify their use. Using terms provides a way to articulate a particular literary effect and meaning. Thus, the definition must be sufficiently well understood so that knowledge of the term becomes a means of analyzing and interpreting the implications of the text and the literary effect created by the device.
7. **Allow enough time to answer the questions.** Most multiple-choice tests contain 50-60 questions drawn from four or five reading passages. Easy questions count just as much as difficult ones. Therefore, students who have difficulty and are running out of time should identify the easier questions (unlike the SAT, such questions could appear anywhere) and make sure that they have been addressed.
8. **Make reasonable guesses.** If students can eliminate one answer, they have a statistical advantage in guessing. Remember that all wrong answers result in subtracting one-quarter (.25) point from the student's score of correct answers (+1 point each).

What skills do the essay questions require?

Three impromptu essays make up the second portion of the examination. For the first two essays, students must read unfamiliar passages, one prose and the other poetry, and write responses. Students are given estimated times for each of these questions, usually 30 to 40 minutes for each question. The third question is an open essay. Rather than writing on a specific text passage appearing on the examination, students are asked to respond to an open question about a

full-length work, usually a novel or play. Suggested titles appropriate for use in answering the question are usually provided.

To perform at the highest level on the essay section, student writing should have the following characteristics:

- Responses should focus on the prompt, addressing as many aspects of the prompt as is reasonably possible in a timed writing.
- Responses should reflect an accurate reading of the text.
- Writing should be as grammatically correct as is reasonable in a timed draft.
- Variety, effective use of subordination, economy, precision, and a fluent flow of thought should characterize sentence style.
- Writing should be coherently organized and shaped to present an effective response to the prompt.
- The response should be intellectually stimulating and offer significant insights into the content of the text, the literary techniques and language resources used by the author, and the central purpose and themes of the passage.

It is extremely important for both teachers and students to realize that not only writing but also reading are evaluated in the essay portion of the examination. Essays based on or including inaccurate readings of the text or faulty interpretations are penalized in the scoring process. Therefore, it is just as important that students read accurately, carefully, and intelligently for the writing portion of the examination as it is for the reading portion.

How are essay questions graded?

The essay portion of the examination is graded by teaching professionals—high school AP and college English teachers—who are trained to evaluate each essay according to a prescribed rubric and whose work is constantly monitored by a table leader who is an experienced AP examination grader. A team of leaders establishes the rubric for each individual essay question and monitors the work of the table leaders during the reading of the examination. The question leader makes final decisions about essay scores.

Though each AP essay question has its own unique rubric designed to reflect and assess each element of the prompt, a general rubric can reflect the issues that are generally the determining factors in assigning scores. Essay questions are graded on a 1-9 scale, with scores of 7, 8, and 9 regarded as “high,” scores of 4, 5, and 6 regarded as “middle,” and scores of 1, 2, and 3 regarded as “low” scores.

Can teachers compose a suitable rubric for use in Advanced Placement classes?

The following rubric was created after exposure to College Board rubrics at AP examination readings over several years. Reflecting the principles of those rubrics, as well as the directions and comments of table and question leaders, this general rubric has been used with Duke TIP Summer Residence Program students. A general rubric is very useful in guiding students toward writing improvement and in communicating with parents about student achievement in relation to Advanced Placement expectations. This rubric has also been shared with other teachers

over the last decade in TIP AP workshops. The goal of the rubric is to articulate for students, teachers, and parents the qualities of writing and levels of progress important for Advanced Placement students to know.

It is a general policy of the College Board that writers should be rewarded for what they do well in response to a question. At the same time, a poorly written essay must not be given a score higher than 4. The grade for a well-written essay which does not fully meet the assignment may be raised one point.

Teachers may want to create a scale for translating rubric scores to number and then letter grades. With a grading system of 93-100 = A; 86-92 = B; 78-85 = C; 70-77 = D in a state where AP courses are awarded two extra quality points beyond the quality point credit for a regular high school course and one quality point above honors courses, grade equivalents for rubric scores might be: 9=99; 8=94; 7=90; 6=86; 5=82; 4=78; 3=74; 2=68; 1=65 or below. Many teachers adjust these scores during the course of the year; for example, a “5” score might earn a “90” at the beginning of the course. Then as students have more opportunities to practice AP impromptu essays, study AP model essays, and learn what is expected in an AP impromptu essay, the scoring system can be altered to reflect grades comparable to a college course.

The following numbers assigned as scores are modeled on the system used by the College Board at Advanced Placement examination readings:

- 9-8:** These scores are for essays in which excellent content and impressive writing reveal the writer’s ability to reason with perception and to express ideas clearly and skillfully with stylistic maturity. They accomplish all of the following:
- Demonstrate an understanding of the assignment/question,
 - Reveal depth of analysis supported by appropriate, specific references to the text and the student’s ability to apply knowledge of literary techniques to a valid interpretation of content,
 - Reflect consistent control over the elements of effective writing, particularly diction, syntax, and structure.
- 7-6:** These scores are for essays that are somewhat similar to but not as strong as the **9-8** essay. These essays demonstrate the writer’s ability to express ideas clearly but with less maturity and control than the top papers and sometimes with minor flaws in interpretation or writing.
- 5:** This score is for those essays that demonstrate any or all of the following:
- An understanding of the question but not a full analysis, often with vague, superficial, limited answers which reflect a simplistic approach and flaws in interpretation;
 - Little specific support from the text;
 - Writing that adequately conveys the writer’s thoughts but which is not as well-conceived, organized, or developed as the upper level papers; writing that lacks stylistic maturity.

- 4-3:** This score is for essays that compound the weaknesses of the 5 essays in any or all of the following areas:
- Weak control over the elements of good writing including diction, syntax, or structure;
 - Failure to demonstrate a complete understanding of the question or assignment;
 - Mostly plot summary with little analysis;
 - Incomplete response to the prompt;
 - Recurrent stylistic flaws;
 - Lack of specific, persuasive evidence from the text for support.
- 2-1:** These scores are for essays that fail to respond adequately to the question. They may exhibit any or all of the following:
- Distortion or misapplication of the work or assignment;
 - Serious problems in diction, syntax, or structure;
 - Mere summary of the plot;
 - Lack of clarity, organization, or supporting evidence.
 - Such a brief answer that the student’s writing ability cannot be identified.

How does a teacher-created general rubric compare to an actual rubric used by the College Board to grade a specific examination essay?

The following rubric was used for grading the essay question on John Updike’s poem “The Great Scarf of Birds,” Question 2 on the 1989 English Literature and Composition examination. A comparison to the General Rubric above will help you devise more specific rubrics of your own for specific questions.

Question: Read the following poem (“The Great Scarf of Birds”) carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how the poem’s organization, diction, and figurative language prepare the reader for the speaker’s concluding response.

General Directions: This scoring guide will be useful for most of the essays you read, but for cases in which it seems inadequate, consult your Table Leader. The score you assign should reflect your judgment of the quality of the essay as a whole. Reward the writers for what they do well. The score for a particularly well-written essay may be raised by one point from the score otherwise appropriate. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than 4.

- 9-8:** These well-written essays analyze accurately how the organization, diction, and figurative language of the poem prepare the reader for the speaker’s concluding response. Superior papers will define this response clearly and support and illustrate their comments with specific examples of how the organization and language of the poem contribute to its effect. Writers of these essays demonstrate stylistic maturity by an effective command of sentence structure, diction, and organization. The writing need not be without flaws, but it

reveals the writer's ability to choose from and control a wide range of the elements of effective writing.

- 7-6:** These essays reveal an understanding of the poem and the use of organization, diction, and figurative language to prepare the reader for the conclusion. They are, however, less precise, less thorough, or less convincing than the best papers. These essays are well written in an appropriate style, but with less maturity and control than the top papers. Some lapses in diction or syntax may appear, but the writing demonstrates sufficient command of the elements of composition to present the writer's ideas clearly.
- 5:** These essays address the topic of the preparation for the conclusion of the poem, but they may make superficial or immature comments on the organization and language of the poem, or they may deal ineffectively with all the required elements of the question. These essays are adequately written, but may demonstrate inconsistent control over the elements of composition. Organization is evident, but it may not be fully realized or particularly effective.
- 4-3:** These essays may discuss the conclusion of the poem but do so inadequately or inaccurately. They may paraphrase the poem, fail to show how the organization and language of the poem prepare for the conclusion, or they may discuss only one of the required elements. The writing can convey the writer's ideas, but it reveals weak control over diction, syntax, or organization. These essays may contain many spelling or grammatical errors. Statements are seldom supported with specific or persuasive evidence.
- 2-1:** These papers fail to respond adequately to the question. They may misrepresent the speaker's concluding response, or they may fail to discuss how it is prepared for by the organization, diction, or figurative language of the poem. They may misrepresent elements of the poem or fail to provide examples to support their assertions. Generally these essays are unacceptably brief or poorly written on several counts. The writing reveals consistent weaknesses in grammar or another of the basic elements of composition. Although some attempt to answer the question may have been made, the writer's view has little clarity and only slight evidence in its support.
- 0:** This score is for blanks or off-topic responses.

What tips can I give my students about the essay questions?

The following advice has seemed helpful to many generations of AP students and has been shared with AP teachers in workshops. Although these issues should be stressed throughout the year, AP students listen in an unusually attentive way in the last month before the examination. Sharing the following statements in writing shortly before the examination is most helpful.

AP Essays: From the Small to the Large Issues

I. Present yourself as a mature person and writer.

- A. Your handwriting communicates who you are; it is a form of self-presentation. AP readers certainly see beyond handwriting to the larger issues of style and content, but handwriting can reflect problems in these areas. Consider your handwriting style as a possible mirror of potential problems:
1. Is the handwriting so excessively large or small that it is difficult to decipher? Does such handwriting reflect insecurity about writing? Work on free writing to develop fluency.
 2. Is yours an excessively florid handwriting? Such handwriting suggests that you may be thinking more about your handwriting and how it looks than what you are saying—or that you are focusing on handwriting to avoid thinking. Excessively neat, controlled handwriting can reflect a similar problem.
 3. If you have poor, difficult-to-read handwriting, strive to be certain the writing is clear enough to be read. AP readers must read 15 or more essays an hour and poor handwriting may affect attentiveness. Don't make it difficult for the reader to "see" your thinking.
- B. Brief, scant responses are the worst error you can make because the AP reader is left with no way to evaluate your ability. Brief answers also indicate that the test taker does not take the examination seriously and is unwilling to make an effort to communicate.
- C. Avoid comments that deprecate the examination, the literary passages on the exam, or the task of interpretation. A great deal of serious thought and dedicated work go into creating an AP exam. Only intelligently written text passages of recognized literary merit appear on the exam. If a passage seems confusing to you, assume you need to work hard at grasping its point rather than using your space to be unduly critical of the writing. Show that you take the process of interpretation seriously; do not use the examination as an occasion for sarcasm or inappropriate humor about serious literary passages or the process of interpretation.

II. Avoid those serious errors that will mark you as an "unprepared" college writer.

- A. A very serious error is the repeated occurrence of comma splices—joining two independent clauses together without a conjunction and with only a comma. (Run-on sentences omit the comma and present the same problem.) One occurrence of this error

may simply be the result of working in the drafting mode and will not matter. Repeated occurrences, however, will signal that the writer does not have a good grasp of sentence completeness, a fundamental requirement for competent writing. This kind of error indicates that the writer needs to continue receiving instruction in writing and should not by-pass college English.

- B. Repeated occurrences of sentence fragments reflect this same problem—a poor grasp of sentence sense. Fragments are viewed as an even more serious flaw than comma splices.
- C. Spelling errors are serious, but a few are acceptable; too many may cost points. Spelling errors combined with a lack of sentence control are more apt to count against the test-taker. (Some writers are flawed spellers because of a learning disability. Inaccurate spellings that are decipherable phonetically in the context of well-structured sentences, skilled interpretation, and well-controlled, intelligent writing may not hurt a student's score at all.)
- D. Errors of usage (e.g., affect/effect) will affect the evaluation of language competence. These kinds of errors, along with short, monotonous sentences and awkward wording are indicative of an “immature style.”
- E. Practice economical writing in revision practice to improve sentence clarity.

III. Write sentences that are smooth, flowing, clear, and sensible.

- A. Proofread to make sure that you have not omitted words that render sentences unclear or nonsensical.
- B. Proofread to make sure that your wording is not so confused, awkward, or ineffective that the reader cannot figure out what you're saying.
- C. Avoid short, choppy sentences—make use of subordination.
- D. You should never use your time to copy over an essay during the examination; you can, however, feel free to mark out awkwardly worded phrases or errors and write corrections above them.
- E. Avoid “indefinite reference.” Avoiding this problem will distinguish immediately a writer of clear sentences from a writer of unclear, confused sentences.
- F. Sentences that are sharp, precise, and clear and at the same time show a sense for complexity (by making use of subordination) characterize the best writing. Sentences structured to effectively express intricate, layered understandings will mark you as a mature and capable writer. A fluent, clear style is a primary characteristic of higher-level writing.

- G. Use **Patterns for Sentence Variety (Part I. WRITING INSTRUCTION)** in revision practice to develop a more sophisticated and mature sentence style. Variety in structure and meaningful choices about structure make writing sparkle.

IV. Pay attention to organization and content (the most important issue).

- A. Respond exactly and precisely to the question that is asked. The questions offer a logical and focused approach to the literary passage. The answer you should construct is provided in the question. Accept the guidance the question is offering you—it is designed to help you write an effective response. Therefore, stick to the question, focusing on ways to interpret and illustrate each of its elements.
- B. Plan to spend about five minutes in brainstorming and structuring your response; then write from your outline or list of ideas. Think through the framework for your whole answer before you begin, but also be open to new insights that arise from your process of thinking and writing.
- C. Keep your focus clear throughout your essay; make certain the thoughts are in a logical sequence that is continually connected to the focus, thus yielding a unified essay.
- D. Think constantly as you write, concentrating on the logic of a focused line of thought. Let your writing show that you are a person in the act of thinking about the text and the task of interpretation.
- E. Use specific details both to offer commentary and interpretation about the literary piece and to support and illustrate your points. Explain by giving examples and commenting on the details of the text.
- F. Once you begin writing, try to maintain a continuous, logical, and focused flow. You may have new insights as you proceed, but try to connect continually where you began, where you are, and where you are going with the central ideas of your essay.

In summary, teachers can help students prepare for the AP essay examination by

- teaching students the principles of evaluation of the AP rubric,
- providing frequent opportunities for timed impromptu essay writing,
- assessing student writing according to the principles of the AP rubric,
- offering written comments and feedback about specific aspects of their writing to help students improve, and
- sharing the above general suggestions with students throughout the course and in a written statement in the weeks near the end of the course.

Finally, AP teachers can shape their writing instruction around the principles that have proved successful in their own teaching experience. And, they can share with students the suggestions presented in **Part I. WRITING INSTRUCTION**.

Are there literary terms that students should know before they take the AP examination?

Although knowledge of the definitions of terms is important, it is far more important that students know how to apply the definition to a literary passage and understand how a particular literary device contributes to meaning. Students should be familiar with the following terms that have appeared in AP rubrics and on AP examinations. AP essay questions contain two elements: a “what” element that questions content, and a “how” element that focuses on the way literary devices help reveal content.

Terms drawn from AP English scoring guides:

acknowledge both sides of an argument	metaphor
thematic contrasts	monologue
allusion	narrative elements
ambiguity	naturalistic detail
authorial persona	observation, experience, reading
complex attitude	organization
complexity	paradox
connection between plot and meaning	point of view
connection between theme and style	repetition
consistent control of elements	rhetorical devices
contrast changes in attitude	rhetorical question
defend, challenge, or qualify	rhyme
denotation and connotation	sentence structure
dialogue	simile
diction	style
direct statement	stylistic maturity
dramatic monologue	syntax
emotive imagery	time shifts
figurative language	tone
imagery	understatement
interior	unifying image
irony	writer's attitude toward
language devices	

Other terms drawn from multiple-choice questions:

parallel construction or syntax	personification
extended definition	euphemism
concessions to opposing viewpoints	onomatopoeia
cause and effect relationship	apostrophe
sylogism	antithesis
appeals to authority	narrative pace
<i>ad hominem</i> argument	form
satire	

“How” elements of essay questions: 1994-1998 Examinations:

- how a character affects action, theme, or another character
- how imagery reveals attitude
- analyze how the author uses literary techniques to reveal character
- how a character reveals surrounding society’s assumptions and moral values
- analyze how the narrator reveals character
- selection of detail
- how the poem’s controlling metaphor expresses the speaker’s complex attitude
- how formal elements—structure, syntax, diction and imagery—reveal the speaker’s response
- how changes in perspective and style reflect the narrator’s attitude
- consider literary elements such as point of view, structure, selection of detail, and figurative language
- how wedding, funerals, parties, and other social occasions affect the meaning of the work
- analyze how the poem reveals the speaker’s complex concept
- characterize the narrator’s attitude toward a central character and analyze the literary techniques used to convey this attitude
- explain what constitutes a work’s “uncivilized free and wild thinking” and that thinking is central to the value of the work

What types of questions are asked for the open-ended essay?

The following is a summary of the open-ended questions asked on AP examinations. These questions are a valuable collection of assignments for AP practice essays.

1997 Novels and plays often include scenes of weddings, funerals, parties, and other social occasions. Such scenes may reveal the values of the characters and the society in which they live. Select a novel or play that includes such a scene and, in a focused essay, discuss the contribution the scene makes to the meaning of the work as a whole. You may choose a work from the list below or another novel or play of literary merit.

1996 The British novelist Fay Weldon offers this observation about happy endings: "The writers, I do believe, who get the best and most lasting response from readers are the writers who offer a happy ending through moral development. By a happy ending, I do not mean mere fortunate events: a marriage or a last-minute rescue from death; but some kind of spiritual reassessment or moral reconciliation, even with the self, even at death." Choose a novel or play that has the kind of ending Weldon describes. In a well-written essay, identify the spiritual reassessment or moral reconciliation evident in the ending and explain its significance in the work as a whole.

1995 Writers often highlight the values of a culture or a society by using characters who are alienated from that culture or society because of gender, race, class, or creed. Choose a play or novel in which such a character plays a significant role, and show how that character's alienation reveals the surrounding society's assumptions and moral values. Do NOT write on a short story, poem, or film.

1994 In some works of literature, a character who appears briefly, or does not appear at all, is a significant presence. Choose a novel or play of literary merit and write an essay in which you show how such a character functions in the work. You may wish to discuss how the character affects action, theme, or the development of other characters. Avoid plot summary.

1992 In a novel or play, a *confidant* (male) or *confidante* (female) is a character, often a friend or relative of the hero or heroine, whose role is to be present when the hero or heroine needs a sympathetic listener to confide in. Frequently the result is, as Henry James remarked, that the *confidant* or *confidante* can be as much “the reader’s friend as the protagonist’s.” However, the author sometimes uses this character for other purposes as well. Choose a *confidant* or *confidante* from a novel or play of recognized literary merit and write an essay in which you discuss the various ways this character functions in the work. You may write your essay on one of the following novels or plays or on another of comparable quality. Do not write on a poem or short story.

1993 "The true test of comedy is that it shall awaken thoughtful laughter." (George Meredith) Choose a novel, play, or a long poem in which a scene or character awakens thoughtful laughter in the reader. Write an essay in which you show why this laughter is thoughtful and how it contributes to the meaning of the work.

1991 Many plays and novels use contrasting places (for example, two countries, two cities or towns, two houses, or the land and the sea) to represent opposed forces or ideas that are central to the work. Choose a novel or play that contrasts two such places. Write an essay explaining how the places differ, what each place represents, and how their contrast contributes to the meaning of the work.

1990 Choose a novel or play that depicts a conflict between a parent (or a parental figure) and a son or daughter. Write an essay in which you analyze the sources of the conflict and explain how the conflict contributes to the meaning of the work. Avoid plot summary.

1989 In questioning the value of literary realism, Flannery O'Connor has written, "I am interested in making a good case for distortion because I am coming to believe that it is the only way to make people see." Write an essay in which you make a good case for distortion, as distinct from literary realism. Base your essay on a work from the following list or choose another work of comparable merit that you know well. Analyze how important elements of the work you choose are distorted and explain how these distortions contribute to the effectiveness of the work. Avoid plot summary.

1988 Choose a distinguished novel or play in which some of the most significant events are mental or psychological; for example, awakenings, discoveries, changes in consciousness. In a well-organized essay, describe how the author manages to give these internal events the sense of excitement, suspense, and climax usually associated with external action. Do not merely summarize the plot.

1987 Some novels and plays seem to advocate changes in social or political attitudes or in traditions. Choose a novel or play and note briefly the particular attitudes or traditions that the

author apparently wishes to modify. Then analyze the techniques the author uses to influence the reader's or audience's view. Avoid plot summary.

1986 Some works of literature use the element of time in a distinct way. The chronological sequence of events may be altered, or time may be suspended or accelerated. Choose a novel, an epic, or a play of recognized literary merit and show how the author's manipulation of time contributes to the effectiveness of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

1985 A critic has said that one important measure of a superior work of literature is its ability to produce in the reader a healthy confusion of pleasure and disquietude. Select a literary work that produces this healthy confusion. Write an essay in which you explain the sources of the pleasure and disquietude experienced by the readers of the work. You may base your essay on a work from the list below or choose another work of comparable literary merit. Do not base your essay on a movie, television program, or other adaptation of a work.

1984 Select a line or so of poetry, or a moment or scene in a novel, epic poem, or play that you find especially memorable. Write an essay in which you identify the line or the passage, explain its relationship to the work in which it is found, and analyze the reasons for its effectiveness. Do not base your essay on a work that you know about only from having seen a television or movie production of it. Select a work of recognized literary merit.

1983 From a novel or play of literary merit, select an important character who is a villain. Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze the nature of the character's villainy and show how it enhances meaning in the work. Do not summarize plot.

1982 In great literature, no scene of violence exists for its own sake. Choose a work of literary merit that confronts the reader or audience with a scene or scenes of violence. In a well-organized essay, explain how the scene or scenes contribute to the meaning of the complete work. Avoid plot summary.

1981 The meaning of some literary works is often enhanced by sustained allusion to myths, the Bible, or other works of literature. Select a literary work that makes use of such a sustained reference. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain the allusion that predominates in the work and analyze how it enhances the work's meaning.

1980 A recurring theme in literature is the classic war between passion and responsibility. For instance, a personal cause, a love, a desire for revenge, a determination to redress a wrong, or some other emotion or drive may conflict with moral duty. Choose a literary work in which a character confronts the demands of a private passion that conflicts with his or her responsibilities. In a well-written essay, clearly show the nature of the conflict, its effects upon the character, and its significance to the work. Avoid plot summary.

1979 Choose a complex and important character in a novel or a play of recognized literary merit who might, on the basis of the character's actions alone, be considered evil or immoral. In a well-organized essay, explain both how and why the full presentation of the character in the work makes us react more sympathetically than we otherwise might. Avoid plot summary.

1978 Choose an implausible or strikingly unrealistic incident or character in a work of fiction or drama of recognized literary merit. Write an essay that explains how the incident or character is related to the more realistic or plausible elements in the rest of the work. Avoid plot summary.

1977 A character's attempt to recapture or to reject the past is important in many plays, novels, and poems. Choose a literary work in which a character views the past with such feelings as reverence, bitterness, or longing. Show with clear evidence from the work how the character's view of the past is used to develop a theme in the work.

1976 The conflict created when the will of an individual opposes the will of the majority is the recurring theme of many novels, plays, and essays. Select the work of an essayist who is in opposition to his or her society; or, from a work of recognized literary merit, select a fictional character who is in opposition to his or her society. In a critical essay analyze the conflict and discuss the moral and ethical implications for both the individual and the society. Do not summarize the plot or action of the work you choose.

1975 (Q1 of 2) Although literary critics have tended to praise the unique in literary characterization, many authors have employed the stereotyped character successfully. Select a work of acknowledged literary merit and, in a well-written essay, show how the conventional or stereotyped character or characters function to achieve the author's purpose.

1975 (Q2 of 2) Unlike the novelist, the writer of a play does not use his own voice and only rarely uses a narrator's voice to guide the audience's responses to character and action. Select a play you have read and write an essay in which you explain the techniques the playwright uses to guide his audience's responses to the central characters and the action. You might consider the effect on the audience of things like setting, the use of comparable and contrasting characters, and the characters' responses to each other. Support your argument with specific references to the play. Do not give a plot summary.

1974 Choose a work of literature written before 1900. Write an essay in which you present arguments for and against the work's relevance for person [today]. Your own position should emerge in the course of the essay. You may refer to works of literature written after 1900 for the purpose of contrast or comparison.

1973 An effective literary work does not merely stop or cease; it concludes. In the view of some critics, a work that does not provide the pleasure of significant closure has terminated with an artistic fault. A satisfactory ending is not, however, always conclusive in every sense; significant closure may require to the reader to abide with or adjust to ambiguity and uncertainty. In an essay discuss the end of a novel or play of acknowledged literary merit. Explain precisely how and why the ending appropriately or inappropriately concludes the work. Do not merely summarize the plot.

1972 In retrospect the reader often discovers that the first chapter of a novel or the opening scene of a drama introduces some of the major themes of the work. Write an essay about the opening scene of a drama or the first chapter of a novel in which you explain how it functions in this way. In your essay do not merely summarize the plot of the work you are discussing.

1971 The significance of a title such as *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is easy to discover. However, in other works the full significance of the title becomes apparent to the reader only gradually. Choose two works and show how the significance of their respective titles is developed through the author's use of devices such as contrast, repetition, allusion, and point of view.

What titles might students expect to see as suggested works to write about in the open-ended question?

Although new titles continually appear in this section of the examination, many titles are repeated from year to year. The following titles have appeared over the last decade or so and are, therefore, a starting place for developing an AP curriculum.

<i>1984</i>	<i>House Made of Dawn</i>	<i>The Awakening</i>	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
<i>A Doll's House</i>	<i>J. B.</i>	<i>The Bear</i>	<i>Vanity Fair</i>
<i>A Farewell to Arms</i>	<i>Invisible Man</i>	<i>The Birthday</i>	<i>Victory</i>
<i>A Long Day's Journey Into Night</i>	<i>Jane Eyre</i>	<i>The Birthday Party</i>	<i>Volpone</i>
<i>A Passage to India</i>	<i>Joseph Andrews</i>	<i>The Bluest Eye</i>	<i>Waiting for Godot</i>
<i>A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man</i>	<i>Jude the Obscure</i>	<i>The Book of Job</i>	<i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?</i>
<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	<i>The Centaur</i>	<i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i>
<i>A Separate Peace</i>	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>The Color Purple</i>	<i>Winter in the Blood</i>
<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>	<i>Light in August</i>	<i>The Crucible</i>	<i>Wise Blood</i>
<i>A Tale of Two Cities</i>	<i>Lord Jim</i>	<i>The Dead</i>	<i>Women in Love</i>
<i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>	<i>Lord of the Flies</i>	<i>The Diviners</i>	<i>Wuthering Heights</i>
<i>Agamemnon</i>	<i>Love Medicine</i>	<i>The Eumenides</i>	<i>Zoot Suit</i>
<i>All the King's Men</i>	<i>M. Butterfly</i>	<i>The Fall (Camus)</i>	
<i>All the Pretty Horses</i>	<i>Madame Bovary</i>	<i>The French Lieutenant's Woman</i>	
<i>America is in the Heart</i>	<i>Major Barbara</i>	<i>The Frogs</i>	
<i>An American Tragedy</i>	<i>Man and Superman</i>	<i>The Glass Menagerie</i>	
<i>An American Tragedy</i>	<i>Medea</i>	<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>	
<i>An Enemy of the People</i>	<i>Middlemarch</i>	<i>The Heart of Darkness</i>	
<i>Anna Karenina</i>	<i>Moby-Dick</i>	<i>The Homecoming</i>	
<i>Another Country</i>	<i>Moll Flanders</i>	<i>The Iliad</i>	
<i>Antigone</i>	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>	
<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	<i>Mrs. Warren's Profession</i>	<i>The Joy Luck Club</i>	
<i>Arms and the Man</i>	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	<i>The Mayor of Casterbridge</i>	
<i>As I Lay Dying</i>	<i>Murder in the Cathedral</i>	<i>The Member of the Wedding</i>	
<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Native Son</i>	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	
<i>Billy Budd</i>	<i>No Exit</i>	<i>The Mill on the Floss</i>	
<i>Bleak House</i>	<i>No-No Boy</i>	<i>The Misanthrope</i>	
<i>Bless Me, Ultima</i>	<i>Obasan</i>	<i>The Natural</i>	
<i>Brighton Rock</i>	<i>Oedipus Rex</i>	<i>The Optimist's Daughter</i>	
<i>Candida (Shaw)</i>	<i>Othello</i>	<i>The Piano Lesson</i>	
<i>Candide</i>	<i>Our Mutual Friend</i>	<i>The Playboy of the Western World</i>	
<i>Cat's Eye</i>	<i>Our Town</i>	<i>The Portrait of a Lady</i>	
<i>Catch-22</i>	<i>Pere Goriot</i>	<i>The Power and the Glory</i>	
<i>Ceremony</i>	<i>Phèdre</i>	<i>The Return of the Native</i>	
<i>Crime and Punishment</i>	<i>Prin</i>	<i>The Scarlet Letter</i>	
<i>Cry, the Beloved Country</i>	<i>Portrait of a Lady</i>	<i>The Sea Gull</i>	
<i>Daisy Miller</i>	<i>Praisesong for the Widow</i>	<i>The Second Shepherd's Play</i>	
<i>Death of a Salesman</i>	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	<i>The Shipping News</i>	
<i>Delta Wedding</i>	<i>Pygmalion</i>	<i>The Sound and the Fury</i>	
<i>Desire under the Elms</i>	<i>Rabbit, Run</i>	<i>The Stone Angel</i>	
<i>Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant</i>	<i>Red Badge of Courage</i>	<i>The Stranger</i>	
<i>Doctor Faustus (Marlowe)</i>	<i>Richard III</i>	<i>The Sun Also Rises</i>	
<i>Don Quixote</i>	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>The Tempest</i>	
<i>Emma</i>	<i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead</i>	<i>The Turn of the Screw</i>	
<i>Equus</i>	<i>Saint Joan</i>	<i>The Warden</i>	
<i>Ethan Frome</i>	<i>She Stoops to Conquer</i>	<i>The Waste Land</i>	
<i>Everyman</i>	<i>Siddhartha</i>	<i>The Way of the World</i>	
<i>Fathers and Sons</i>	<i>Sister Carrie</i>	<i>The Zoo Story</i>	
<i>Ghosts</i>	<i>Six Characters in Search of an Author</i>	<i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>	
<i>Great Expectations</i>	<i>Song of Solomon</i>	<i>Things Fall Apart</i>	
<i>Gulliver's Travels</i>	<i>Sons and Lovers</i>	<i>The School for Scandal</i>	
<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Sula</i>	<i>To the Lighthouse</i>	
<i>Hard Times</i>	<i>Tartuffe</i>	<i>Tom Jones</i>	
<i>Heart of Darkness</i>	<i>Tess of the D'Urbervilles</i>		
<i>Hedda Gabler</i>	<i>The Age of Innocence</i>		
<i>Henry IV, Parts I and II</i>	<i>The American</i>		
	<i>The Apprenticeship of Duddy Dravitz</i>		