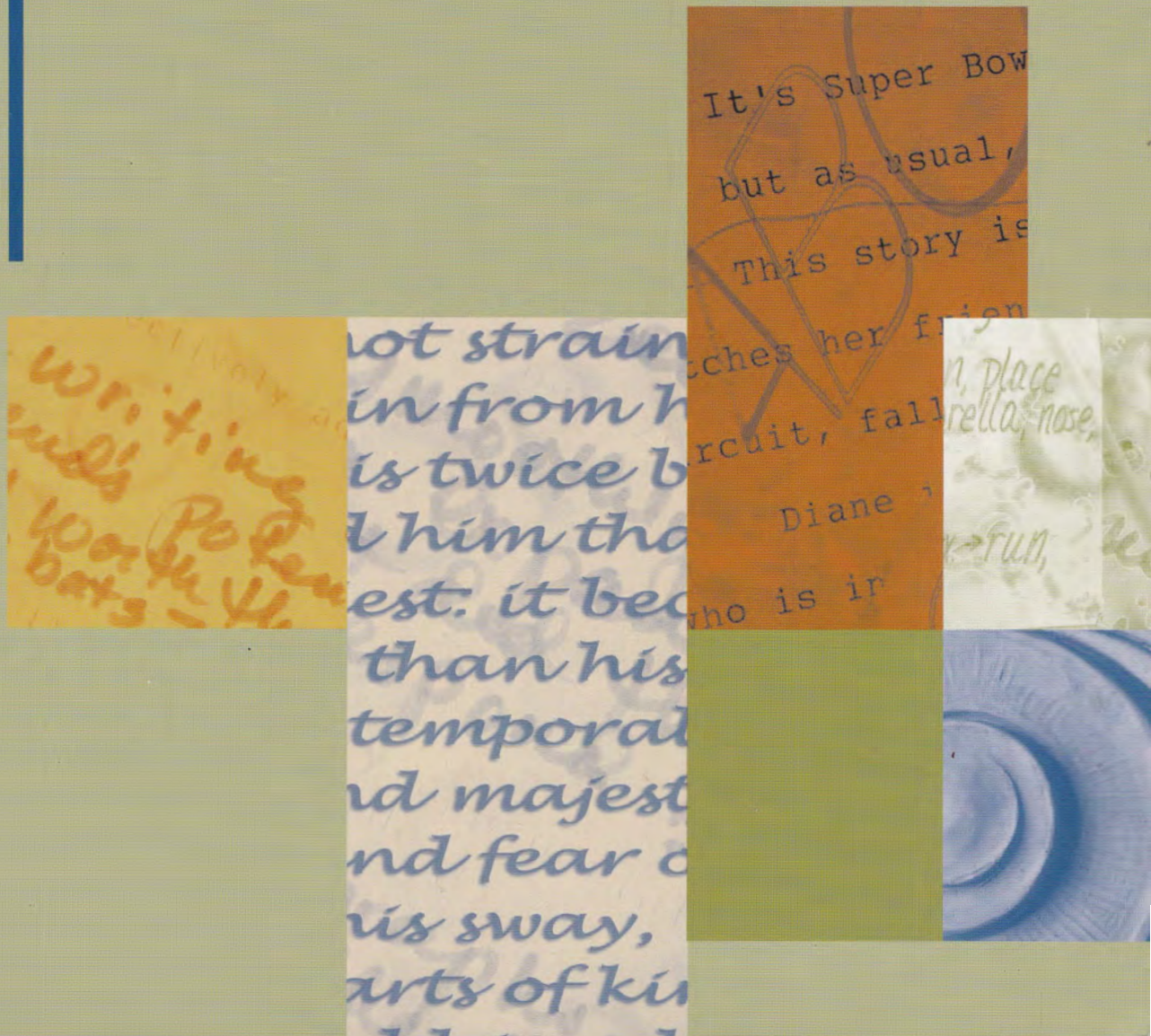
The College Board **Pre-AP**™

SKIP NICHOLSON

The AP Vertical Teams™ Guide for

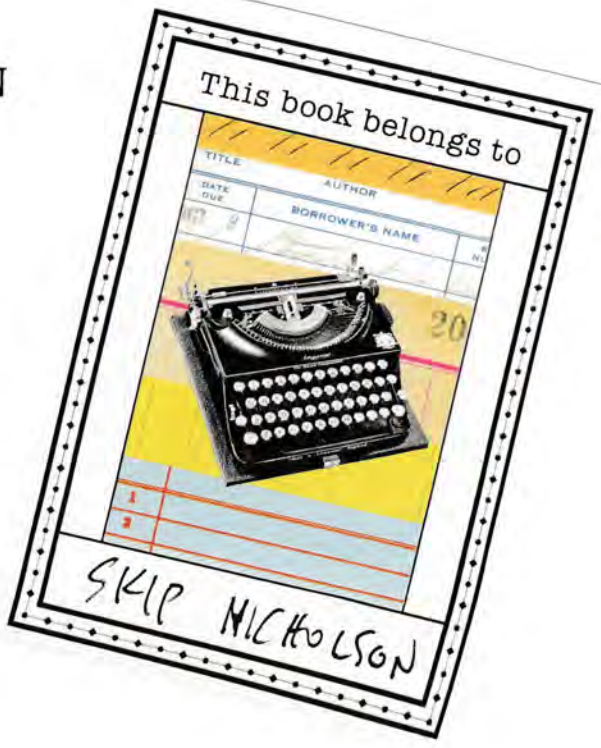
ENGLISH



The College Board **Pre-AP**™

The AP Vertical Teams™ *Guide for English*

SECOND EDITION



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Foreword

Although the Advanced Placement Program® (AP®) Examination provides a valuable snapshot of a student's abilities and competencies, the power of the AP Program lies in the AP course, which benefits students through a coordinated, demanding curriculum. It is the AP Vertical Team that can make the AP Program accessible to more students by creating a directed and focused approach through the collaboration of teachers at multiple grade levels.

Teachers who have already established AP Vertical Teams™ have been impressed with the impact of team planning on the overall curriculum. Students at each level are better prepared, and there is an overall rise in the level of skills, creating a more efficient, more inclusive, and more challenging English program.

—*The AP Vertical Teams Guide for English* Development Committee

Preface

THE ADVANCED PLACEMENT PROGRAM® (AP®)

Since 1955, the College Board's Advanced Placement Program (AP) has offered high school students the opportunity to complete college-level courses while still in high school. The Advanced Placement Program currently consists of 33 courses and exams in 19 subject areas (Art, Biology, Calculus, Chemistry, Computer Science, Economics, English, Environmental Science, French, German, Geography, Government and Politics, History, Latin, Music, Physics, Psychology, Spanish, and Statistics). Course descriptions for Advanced Placement classes are developed by committees composed of university professors and experienced AP teachers. End-of-course examinations provide students an opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge they have acquired, the skills they have developed, and the concepts they comprehend.

Participation in the Advanced Placement Program offers students many benefits. They are introduced to a rich and rigorous college-level curriculum. In addition, those who successfully complete an Advanced Placement Examination in May have the opportunity to receive college credit or advanced standing depending on the credit policy of the college they choose to attend. Finally, numerous former Advanced Placement students speak of their easy transition from high school to college owing to the strong academic skills, knowledge, and academic confidence they gained through participation in the Advanced Placement Program.

Many educators believe that more students could reap the benefits of participation in AP courses if they were introduced earlier to the essential academic skills and habits of mind necessary for success in the Advanced Placement Program. The concept of AP Vertical Teams responds to this belief.

THE AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION COURSE AND EXAMINATION

An AP course in English Language and Composition engages students in becoming skilled readers of prose written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts and in becoming skilled writers who compose for a variety of purposes. Both their writing and their reading should make students aware of the interactions among a writer's purposes, audience expectations, and subjects as well as the way generic conventions and the resources of language contribute to effectiveness in writing.

The English Language course allows students to write in a variety of forms—narrative, exploratory, expository, and argumentative—and on a variety of subjects from personal experiences to public policies, from imaginative literature to popular culture. The purpose of the course is to enable students to read complex texts with understanding and to write prose of sufficient richness and complexity to communicate effectively with mature readers.

The AP Exam in English Language and Composition is a three-hour examination that employs multiple-choice questions in order to test the student's skills in analyzing the rhetoric of prose passages (one-hour part of the exam). Students also demonstrate their skill in composition by writing three essays in various rhetorical modes (two-hour part of the examination). Performance on the essay section of the examination counts for 55 percent of the total grade; performance on the multiple-choice section, 45 percent.

The free-response sections of the AP Exams in English Language and Literature are distributed annually by the College Board. These online publications consist of the various writing topics given in the exams in past years. The multiple-choice sections of the two English examinations (Language and Literature) are released somewhat less frequently; however, sample tests are available in documents published by the College Board. For further information about College Board publications, please visit our Web site: www.collegeboard.com.

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What Is Pre-AP™?

In the Advanced Placement Program, Pre-AP™ professional development is available to teachers through AP Vertical Teams conferences and workshops and through Building Success workshops. A broad overview of the concept of AP Vertical Teams in English and a plan for beginning, developing, and assessing the effectiveness of teams are discussed in the next section of this guide.

Building Success is a two-day workshop for schools serving students traditionally underrepresented in the college-bound and the Advanced Placement Program population. It explores teaching strategies designed to help students acquire analytical thinking and communication skills necessary for success in AP courses. Building Success also encourages collaboration among teachers across grade levels. These features of Building Success are parallel to AP Vertical Teams. Consequently, AP Vertical Teams or individual team members who attend a Building Success workshop find it to be directly relevant to their mission.

Pre-AP is a suite of K–12 professional development resources and services. The purpose of the Pre-AP Initiatives is to equip all middle and high school teachers with the strategies and tools they need to engage their students in active, high-level learning, thereby ensuring that every middle and high school student develops the skills, habits of mind, and concepts they need to succeed in college. Pre-AP Initiatives is a key component of the College Board's K–12 Professional Development unit.

Pre-AP rests upon a profound hope and heartfelt esteem for teachers and students. Conceptually, Pre-AP is based on the following two important premises. The first is the expectation that all students can perform at rigorous academic levels. This expectation should be reflected in curriculum and instruction throughout the school such that all students are consistently being challenged to expand their knowledge and skills to the next level.

The second important premise of Pre-AP is the belief that we can prepare every student for higher intellectual engagement by starting the development of skills and acquisition of knowledge as early as possible. Addressed effectively, the middle and high school years can provide a powerful opportunity to help all students acquire the knowledge, concepts, and skills needed to engage in a higher level of learning.

Since Pre-AP teacher professional development supports explicitly the goal of college as an option for every student, it is important to have a recognized standard for college-level academic work. The Advanced Placement Program (AP) provides these standards for Pre-AP. Pre-AP teacher professional development resources reflect topics, concepts, and skills found in AP courses.

The College Board does not design, develop, or assess courses labeled Pre-AP. Courses labeled Pre-AP that inappropriately restrict access to AP and other college-level work are inconsistent with the fundamental purpose of the Pre-AP Initiatives of the College Board.

As in all its programs, the College Board is deeply committed to equitable access to rigorous academic experiences. We applaud the efforts of our many colleagues making that happen in so many different ways in classrooms around the world.

Introduction

This guide provides direction, models, and training to AP Vertical Teams in English in order to help the team members organize a series of productive activities, meetings, and workshops leading to a comprehensive, coordinated English program that is planned and implemented by the teachers themselves. There is not, nor is this guide proposing, one ideal English program or one rigidly set curriculum that is right for all schools.

The guide is structured so that information and definitions are provided for those teachers who would like to review the background information pertaining to each discussion topic. Then, activities are provided for various grade levels, which should help students learn more about that particular topic. These activities vertically align the curriculum concept that is being emphasized.

Most of the concepts and much of the material can be used in other English classes as well.

The concept of AP Vertical Teams for English incorporates the idea that AP English should not be an isolated course but rather a planned program of teaching skills and concepts over several years and that a planned program is best achieved by the vertical cooperation of teachers working together to coordinate their teaching efforts. An intended outcome of a successful vertical team is the development of a continuum of skill building from one grade level to the next. Team communication leads to a greater understanding of what has been taught in the preceding years, which helps teachers organize strategies and eliminate potential insistence from students that they have never been introduced to a particular concept before. This knowledge serves to reduce repetition and allows teachers to encourage students to apply past instruction to new and more challenging material.

The concept of AP Vertical Teams reflects the spirit of the AP Program, a philosophy that is inclusive rather than exclusive and incorporates the belief that *all students* can benefit from the skills taught in the program. The AP Vertical Team concept also encourages individual teaching choices and styles.

Prior to the inception of the idea of Pre-AP, when a school decided to offer an AP English course, it typically made the leap from a traditional or honors high school course to a college-level course taught in the high school. But the skills a student develops are built over the entire years of formal education. All teachers of English in a school system offering AP courses are essential in helping to develop analytical thinking and writing skills in students that are necessary for success in the AP Program.

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AP VERTICAL TEAM FOR ENGLISH

Every teacher of English realizes the need for vertical cooperation among teachers, and the AP teacher, perhaps more than others, recognizes how important previous teachers' instruction is for the success of AP students. An administrator may also notice that, in an unstructured manner, change begins to occur in schools after an AP course is in place. Often, the AP English teacher has been to AP workshops to learn new teaching strategies and to gather materials to improve the AP course, but that teacher is likely to teach only one or two sections of AP English. While developing approaches for the AP class, the teacher realizes that most of the concepts and much of the material can be used in other classes as well (to the advantage of students who are not officially participating in AP.)

Some teachers may make the mistake of introducing more demanding selections of literature to an earlier grade instead of changing the way the current, more appropriate selections are taught.

Informal discussions may let one teacher know what is happening in the classroom of another. A common response to hearing that the twelfth-grade class is performing a certain kind of activity is that the eleventh-grade teacher considers what changes can be made to improve preparation for the next level. The process usually moves slowly into the other grade levels and across the classes, gradually improving the quality of instruction for all students.

School personnel involved in improving curricula note several inherent problems in this process. First and foremost, the informal network is very slow. The process may take several years before the ninth-grade teacher hears about and responds to the changing expectations at the twelfth-grade level, and the sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers, who are likely to be working in another building, may never be informed about the changes.

Also, misinformation or misinterpreted information can be just as unproductive as no information at all. Rather than seeing the changes that AP courses bring to a school as movement toward improving students' reasoning and analytical skills, some teachers may make the mistake of introducing more demanding selections of literature into an earlier grade instead of changing the way the current, more appropriate selections are taught. For example, the seventh grader needs to analyze and write about a short story that is suitable for a seventh grader.

Each teacher on the team should be allowed to pursue the goals in an individual style with the freedom to select specific materials and classroom methods.

Organizing an AP Vertical Team for English takes advantage of what may already exist in an informal manner and structures the dialogue among teachers into a series of useful meetings. These meetings give the team the opportunity to plan an English program that best suits the needs of the students. School circumstances vary considerably, and understanding the dynamics of each situation and resolving the problems will be the challenge and the reward for the teachers entrusted with the responsibility of teaching English as a vertical team.

Successful AP Vertical Teams for English will recognize that once the seventh-grade teacher understands the goals of the program, it is that teacher who is the expert in what material should be taught and how it should be taught in that grade. In the AP Program, there is no prescribed reading list or curriculum. EVT members should be given the opportunity to select suitable literary works that are most appealing to them and most appropriate for their students. Each teacher on the team should be allowed to pursue the goals in an individual style with the freedom to select specific materials and classroom methods.

The essence of the concept is that the skills taught in the AP Program are important to all students in all English classes at all grade levels.

Although one primary goal of the AP Vertical Team for English concept is to prepare students for the AP course and ultimately the AP English Language and Literature Exams, the essence of the concept is that the skills taught in the AP Program are important to all students in all English classes at all grade levels. AP instruction, with its emphasis on developing critical thinking skills, is important to the student who earns college credit for a course taken in high school and to the student who is successful later in the course taken in college. The instruction is also important to a student who does not choose to go to college because thinking, analyzing, and problem solving are fundamental skills for every career.

WHAT IS AN AP VERTICAL TEAM?

- An AP Vertical Team is a group of educators from different grade levels (with the emphasis on middle school participation) in a given discipline who work cooperatively to develop and implement a vertically aligned program that is anchored in the Advanced Placement Program.
- The concept of an AP Vertical Team carries one principal goal—to increase the quality of instruction in a particular subject at all grade levels by improving communication among teachers.

WHY CREATE AN AP VERTICAL TEAM?

- **To increase standards**—Since student achievement is ultimately measured by success in the Advanced Placement Program, a nationally recognized method of promoting educational excellence, the bar is almost always raised in classes preceding the Advanced Placement course. In addition, many teachers involved in AP Vertical Teams introduce some of the innovative strategies they have developed into all of their classes, further affecting the overall academic standards of a school.
- **To foster greater inclusion**—When AP Vertical Teams introduce students to the essential academic skills necessary for success in AP courses in a timely, coordinated, and systematic manner, a greater number of students have the opportunity to develop patterns of thought necessary to succeed in the Advanced Placement Program. Advanced Placement courses cease to be isolated classes only available to a small number of students and become academic opportunities for many students willing and able to accept the challenge of completing college-level work while in high school.
- **To encourage innovation**—In order to develop the independent learning skills crucial to success in AP courses, teachers generally create and implement instructional strategies that develop higher level analytical and communication skills as well as place greater responsibility on the student for his or her academic progress. In addition, teachers involved with AP Vertical Teaming quickly recognize that curricular creativity and ingenuity are essential to the process of designing and delivering a vertically aligned curriculum.
- **To bring about coordination**—By promoting frequent communication among educators about instructional standards and strategies, AP Vertical Teams foster the development of an educational community committed to improving student performance through the creation of a continuum of learning among classes and across grade levels. This process can help reduce repetition and enable teachers to encourage students to apply previously gained skills and knowledge to new and more challenging material. Increased coordination can also enable administrators, teachers, and students to develop a clearer vision of how the curriculum unfolds, enhancing their ability to understand its objectives.
- **To allow for empowerment**—Owing to the collaborative nature of an AP Vertical Team and its linkage to the standards and expectations of the Advanced Placement Program, educators generally have a greater chance of realizing and sustaining meaningful curricular reform. No longer is one individual trying to move a mountain. Rather, a concerted effort involving numerous individuals can be made to foster curricular reform. The fact that AP Vertical Teams encourage the growth of critical thinking skills and improved communication skills also empowers students to become independent learners. These independent learners possess the skills necessary to play an active role in and take significant responsibility for their own education.

- **To stimulate enthusiasm**—A more stimulating, challenging, coordinated, and relevant curriculum aimed at giving students the tools and knowledge to succeed in the present and the future excites many students about learning. The clearer sense of purpose and community that many teachers experience as members of an AP Vertical Team also promotes greater enthusiasm for teaching and learning.

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION FOR AP VERTICAL TEAMS™ FOR ENGLISH

Raise awareness and understanding of the Advanced Placement Program within the school.
This goal can be accomplished in several different ways. A current AP teacher or another well-informed speaker could be invited to present an overview of the Advanced Placement Program to interested administrators and teachers. Depending on the interest level, several overview sessions may need to be held. Sending teachers and administrators to College Board sponsored workshops and conferences designed to introduce and explore the Advanced Placement Program is another efficient method of gathering important information about AP. These workshops vary in length from a one- or two-day conference during the school year to a summer institute of one week or more in duration.

To receive specific information about AP conferences and publications, contact the College Board Office in your region (see page x).
The importance of including guidance counselors in this process cannot be overestimated. If guidance counselors do not understand the basic goals of the Advanced Placement Program and AP Vertical Teams, they may be unable to support them when they meet with students and parents. Their ability to explain the process and to encourage students to take the most challenging options available will be critical to the success of an AP Vertical Team.

Counselors must also be sensitive to the needs of students who may have problems adjusting to a more rigorous course load and must be certain that support mechanisms are in place to assist students in need of more guidance. Through the efforts of dedicated counselors, students who in the past may have been assigned low-level courses will find their options increasing as they continue through middle school and high school.

Work with administrators to provide support for an AP Vertical Team.
Creating a cohesive and productive AP Vertical Team and facilitating the development of a clearly articulated, vertically aligned, and well-implemented skills continuum require a great deal of time and effort on the part of team members. The more support that both central office and building administrators provide, the more AP Vertical Team members will understand that their efforts are not just an additional assignment, but rather a coordinated and comprehensive attempt at districtwide reform.

Administrators can assist an AP Vertical Team by:

- Creating time for AP Vertical Teams for English to meet before, during, or after school
- Coordinating meetings involving educators from several different campuses
- Providing central meeting rooms, supplies, resources, and technical support
- Supporting ongoing professional development where AP Vertical Team members have a chance to meet with colleagues from other schools to discuss the standards and expectations of their programs, to share strategies for motivating and supporting students, and to explore innovative classroom teaching techniques

Organize a group of interested educators and select a leader.
Interested teachers and administrators should begin by meeting and identifying the standards and expectations of the Advanced Placement Program. To establish a common vision, educators should review College Board publications such as *AP Program Course Description for English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition* and recently released AP Examinations.

The group should also select an AP Vertical Team leader whose responsibilities might include conducting the meetings, keeping detailed notes of the meetings, distributing these notes in a timely fashion to team members, and scheduling future meetings. There is no typical AP Vertical Team leader. All AP Vertical Team members are potential leaders, as successful AP Vertical Teams are currently led by middle school teachers, high school teachers, department chairs, AP teachers, and administrators.

Create and implement a curricular reform action plan.
The curricular work of an AP Vertical Team begins with identifying the skills and concepts necessary for success in English courses. Once these skills and concepts are identified, the AP Vertical Team should adopt a timeline for designing and implementing the necessary changes in the curriculum and present a plan to administrators seeking monetary support for resources, professional development, and release time.

After receiving administrative approval, the AP Vertical Team can examine how each of the identified skills will successfully be developed in students enrolled in courses preceding the AP English Language or Literature courses. Through this process, a design for curriculum reform should emerge and implementation can begin.

As part of the implementation process, the AP Vertical Team for English should create procedures that provide feedback on the effects of the curricular changes implemented by AP Vertical Team members. This feedback can help the AP Vertical Team determine if additional curricular, instructional, and/or assessment revisions are necessary.

Cultivate important team-building and leadership skills.
Even if administrative support for AP Vertical Teams exists and an enthusiastic team has formed, problems can arise within the team that may hinder its effectiveness. AP Vertical Team members need to practice certain habits that enable the team to work together toward common goals while respecting each other's individual needs. This is especially important as the team begins the challenging work involved in designing a coordinated program.

Individual habits that should enable a team to work together more effectively include:

- Attending meetings regularly and promptly.
- Ensuring that all viewpoints are explored.
- Acting in a positive and constructive manner.
- Viewing criticism as an opportunity to learn.
- Giving praise and recognition when warranted.
- Sharing ideas freely and enthusiastically.
- Encouraging others to express their ideas openly.
- Asking one another for opinions.
- Listening intently to the opinions of others.
- Criticizing ideas—not people.

Having an AP Vertical Team generate its own list of habits can be an important action. Since standard operating procedures have been created by, not imposed upon, the AP Vertical Team, the likelihood of long-term commitments to these habits is much greater.

In addition to cultivating essential team-building skills, leadership skills also need to be fostered. These skills should be encouraged in as many individuals as possible so that the potential departure of a leader will not result in the collapse of the AP Vertical Team. Effective AP Vertical Teams have leaders who possess the ability to:

- Set agendas to continue timely program development.
- Keep the group focused.
- Follow through on goals.
- Listen to feedback and answer questions clearly.
- Ensure meeting minutes are recorded and preserved.
- Keep meetings on schedule.
- Create an atmosphere of trust, respect, candor, and fairness.
- Give praise and recognition.
- Criticize constructively and address problems as needed.
- Work with administrators to continue and expand the necessary support.

Develop community-wide support for the AP Vertical Team for English.
AP Vertical Teams are new in many districts, and they may not be well understood by all of the groups affected by them. In district publications, parent meetings, and other forums, administrators need to demonstrate how AP Vertical Teams support the goal of providing a more challenging curriculum for all students. Parental support, in particular, can play a vital role in the success of an AP Vertical Team.

Since the curriculum developed by an AP Vertical Team almost always results in more challenging content coupled with more sophisticated assignments for students, some parents may become concerned because their children, who struggle at first, are being asked to do something that is too rigorous. Occasionally, parents respond by requesting that teachers simplify assignments or, at least, be less demanding in their grading of assignments. Parents and teachers should discuss these concerns to come to an understanding that some academic struggle is inevitable and, indeed, is at the core of the learning process.

TEAM SIZE AND MEMBERSHIP

Each school must make individual decisions about team size and membership because every situation is different. All grades should be represented on the team; ideally, all English teachers would participate on the team.

When schools are extremely large, it might be useful to form more than one team, each with representation from grades 6 through 12, thus involving more teachers without creating teams that are too large to function effectively.

To be effective, AP Vertical Team meetings must be regular and prescheduled, with the team setting an agenda for each meeting.

Teachers who understand the need for AP Vertical Teams and who volunteer for a team will create a stronger vertical team. Ideally, teachers themselves will request to start a team and participate in it. Teams can also be formed by an administrator asking a teacher to be part of a team.

Of prime importance is that the leadership within a school provides an atmosphere that makes team membership attractive to teachers. One reason the AP Program has lasted and grown so rapidly is that it has encouraged creativity in the classroom. The program does not dictate, demand, restrict, or prescribe an inflexible approach that teachers must follow. That same regard for a teacher as the expert must be part of the development of a coordinated curriculum through the AP Vertical Teams, and that sense of professionalism will contribute to teachers' eagerness to be on a team.

Teachers often respond positively to having opportunities for social involvement with other teachers and to having their views considered and implemented. Also, teachers usually react with enthusiasm when given opportunities to attend conferences. Choosing to send the whole team to an AP conference provides practical information for the team to discuss in subsequent meetings. It also provides social interaction and a sense of purpose and unity for the team. In addition, the interaction with teachers and teams from other schools may broaden a team's perspective and create new possibilities for thinking and planning.

Middle school teachers are a vital part of the team, and special consideration should be given to their involvement. Meeting times and locations are often inconvenient for middle school teachers and, sometimes unwittingly, high school teachers may dominate the discussions and presentations. The team leadership can improve this situation by holding some meetings in the middle school building and by planning meetings where middle school teachers present the approaches and materials that have proven to be most successful within their classes.

Sample Agenda for First AP Vertical Teams Meeting

1. Identify the audience. Who are the potential members of the AP Vertical Team?
2. Conduct an opening activity. Determine what you have in common with the other members. Use an ice-breaking, team-building activity. It is important that the group bonds.
3. Provide an overview of the Advanced Placement Program and the Pre-AP concept.
4. Outline the benefits to the schools and to the teachers involved.
5. Define AP Vertical Teams and discuss the formation of an AP Vertical Team for English. Explain how an AP Vertical Team for English works and what is required.
6. Allow time for questions and answers.
7. Establish the next steps. Where does the group go from here?

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

The team chooses its own topics for discussion based on its perception of the instructional needs of the school. At an early meeting, the agenda might be to decide what the most important topics are and to establish which topic to address first. One of the best ways to determine suitable topics for discussion is to review past AP English Language and Literature Exams noting the various literary terms used. Since these terms are important for students to have mastered, teachers will probably want their students to become familiar with the concepts associated with the terms.

Teachers may choose a topic because the subject is difficult to teach or because the concept is one that needs to be developed in a coordinated manner from one grade level to the next. In this guide are several topics that are likely to be useful for AP Vertical Team discussions. Among them are literary analysis, close reading, rhetoric, writing tactics, and modification of AP examination questions to meet classroom objectives.

TERMINOLOGY FROM RECENT AP ENGLISH EXAMS

- diction/word choice
- imagery
- syntax/sentence structure
- style
- tone/attitude
- juxtaposition of ideas
- choice of details
- manipulation of language
- mood
- functions of character
- resources of language
- rhetorical devices/features/strategies/elements/figures of speech
  - argument
  - support
  - challenge
  - qualify
- assumptions/assertions/commentary
- allusion
  - biblical
  - historical
  - mythological
  - literary
- point of view/voice
- speaker/persona
- narrative pace
- theme/purpose
  - the meaning of the work as a whole
  - the understanding of the work
- repetition
- comparison/contrast (contrast implied in comparison)
- parallel structure

POSSIBLE AP VERTICAL TEAMS ACTIVITIES

1. Develop shared terminology.
2. Identify protected texts.
3. Identify areas of frustration for teachers and students, and design shared solutions.
4. Calibrate scoring guides.
5. Modify AP tasks.
6. Identify successful strategies.
7. Publish clear expectations (contract, standards).
8. Design culminating activities.
9. Establish benchmarks.
10. Share best practices and professional development information.
11. Grade student performance (portfolios, presentations, papers).
12. Design action plans based on assessment results (AP grades, other grades).

13. Survey parents, students, and graduates.
14. Troubleshoot difficulties with particular students and design remediation strategies.

EVALUATION OF THE TEAM'S SUCCESS

The concept of an AP Vertical Team carries one principal goal—to increase the quality of instruction at all grade levels. This should be achieved by elevating curriculum and instruction both horizontally and vertically, thus making the benefits of the program available to all students.

Assessment is necessary to evaluate progress, and team members should design a variety of methods to measure growth. Whenever a team decides to implement a topic or a strategy, the team should also devise the means of measuring the success of that strategy. Year-end assessments that are appropriate for each grade level will help determine the intellectual development of students and the effectiveness of the English program designed by the AP Vertical Team.

The external evaluation of the AP Vertical Teams' effectiveness occurs through the results of the AP Exams. Reports from the AP Exams present data that a school can use to chart the results and note the progress of the AP Vertical Team over several years. The team can use the reports to set goals, modify strategies and curriculum, and share pride in the success of their students.

The AP Vertical Team for English process can help:

- Increase enrollment, diversity, and successful participation in upper-level English classes, including Advanced Placement Language and Literature.
- Promote the development of well-aligned, "seamless" English curriculum—a curriculum that presents a thoughtful progression of concepts within courses and from one course to another, thereby avoiding redundancies, gaps, and jarring transitions.
- Actively engage students in English, thereby improving success rates in all English courses.
- Improve success rates on standardized English assessments.
- Facilitate students' transitions from middle school to high school.
- Increase students' attendance rates.
- Improve students' commitment to school in general, thereby having a positive impact on their work in all of their courses.
- Prepare a wider range of students for success in postsecondary education.
- Improve communication among the students, teachers, administrators, counselors, and parents and raise awareness among them about the long-term impact of student choices.
- Create a cohesive teacher community with greater teacher involvement in curriculum and scheduling.

Literary Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Just as painters express ideas and feelings by arranging colors and images on a canvas, literary artists convey emotions and ideas through the skillful arrangement of words. One of the most important concepts for students to understand is that writers make conscious choices about how to use words, phrases, and sentences to communicate meaning and effect.

This section begins with a brief overview of literary terms, is followed by sample analyses of literary passages, and ends with a list of suggestions for possible classroom activities that could be used or adapted by the teacher at various grade levels.

From the time students begin to recognize the elements of imaginative writing, they should develop a literary vocabulary that will enable them to articulate their ideas about literature with increasing confidence and proficiency. Although some of the following literary devices may figure more prominently in poetry, they cross all genres.

LITERARY TERMS

Alliteration is the practice of beginning several consecutive or neighboring words with the same sound: e.g., "The twisting trout twinkled below."

Allusion is a reference to a mythological, literary, or historical person, place, or thing: e.g., "He met his Waterloo."

Antithesis is a direct juxtaposition of structurally parallel words, phrases, or clauses for the purpose of contrast: e.g., "Sink or swim."

Apostrophe is a form of personification in which the absent or dead are spoken to as if present and the inanimate, as if animate. These are all addressed directly: e.g., "Milton! Thou shoulds't be living at this hour."

Assonance is the repetition of accented vowel sounds in a series of words: e.g., the words "cry" and "side" have the same vowel sound and so are said to be in assonance.

Consonance is the repetition of a consonant sound within a series of words to produce a harmonious effect: e.g., "And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds." The "d" sound is in consonance. The "s" sound is also in consonance.

Details are the facts revealed by the author or speaker that support the attitude or tone in a piece of poetry or prose.

Diction is word choice intended to convey a certain effect.

Figures of speech are words or phrases that describe one thing in terms of something else. They always involve some sort of imaginative comparison between seemingly unlike things. Not meant to be taken literally, figurative language is used to produce images in a reader's mind and to express ideas in fresh, vivid, and imaginative ways. The most common examples of figurative language, or figures of speech, used in both prose and poetry, are simile, metaphor, and personification.

Flashback is a scene that interrupts the action of a work to show a previous event.

Foreshadowing is the use of hints or clues in a narrative to suggest future action.

Hyperbole is a deliberate, extravagant, and often outrageous exaggeration: e.g., "The shot heard 'round the world." It may be used for either serious or comic effect.

Imagery consists of the words or phrases a writer uses to represent persons, objects, actions, feelings, and ideas descriptively by appealing to the senses.

Irony occurs in three types. *Verbal irony* occurs when a speaker or narrator says one thing while meaning the opposite. An example of verbal irony occurs in the statement, "It is easy to stop smoking. I've done it many times." *Situational irony* occurs when a situation turns out differently from what one would normally expect—though often the twist is oddly appropriate: e.g., a deep sea diver drowning in a bathtub is ironic. *Dramatic irony* occurs when a character or speaker says or does something that has different meanings from what he or she thinks it means, though the audience and other characters understand the full implications of the speech or action: e.g., Oedipus curses the murderer of Laius, not realizing that he is himself the murderer and so is cursing himself.

Metaphor is a comparison of two unlike things not using "like" or "as": e.g., "Time is money."

Mood is the atmosphere or predominant emotion in a literary work.

Motivation is a circumstance or set of circumstances that prompts a character to act in a certain way or that determines the outcome of a situation or work.

Narration is the telling of a story in writing or speaking.

Onomatopoeia (imitative harmony) is the use of words that mimic the sounds they describe: e.g., "hiss," "buzz," and "bang." When onomatopoeia is used on an extended scale in a poem, it is called *imitative harmony.*

Oxymoron is a form of paradox that combines a pair of opposite terms into a single unusual expression: e.g., "sweet sorrow" or "cold fire."

Paradox occurs when the elements of a statement contradict each other. Although the statement may appear illogical, impossible, or absurd, it turns out to have a coherent meaning that reveals a hidden truth: e.g., "Much madness is divinest sense."

Personification is a kind of metaphor that gives inanimate objects or abstract ideas human characteristics: e.g., "The wind cried in the dark."

Plot is the sequence of events or actions in a short story, novel, play, or narrative poem.

Point of view is the perspective from which a narrative is told.

Prosody is the study of sound and rhythm in poetry.

The *protagonist* is the central character of a drama, novel, short story, or narrative poem. Conversely, the antagonist is the character who stands directly opposed to the protagonist.

Pun is a play on words that are identical or similar in sound but have sharply diverse meanings. Puns can have serious as well as humorous uses: e.g., when Mercutio is bleeding to death in *Romeo and Juliet,* he says to his friends, "Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man."

Repetition is the deliberate use of any element of language more than once—sound, word, phrase, sentence, grammatical pattern, or rhythmical pattern.

Rhyme is the repetition of sounds in two or more words or phrases that appear close to each other in a poem. *End rhyme* occurs at the end of lines; *internal rhyme,* within a line. *Slant rhyme* is approximate rhyme. A *rhyme scheme* is the pattern of end rhymes.

Sarcasm is the use of verbal irony in which a person appears to be praising something but is actually insulting it: e.g., "As I fell down the stairs headfirst, I heard her say, 'Look at that coordination.'"

Setting is the time and place in which events in a short story, novel, play, or narrative poem take place.

Shift or *turn* refers to a change or movement in a piece resulting from an epiphany, realization, or insight gained by the speaker, a character, or the reader.

Simile is a comparison of two different things or ideas through the use of the words "like" or "as." It is a definitely stated comparison in which the poet says one thing is like another: e.g., "The warrior fought like a lion."

Sound devices are stylistic techniques that convey meaning through sound. Some examples of sound devices are *rhyme* (two words having the same sound), *assonance* (repetition of similar vowel sounds), *consonance* (repetition of consonant sounds in the middle or at the end of words), *alliteration* (words beginning with the same consonant sound), and *onomatopoeia* (words that sound like their meaning).

Structure is the framework or organization of a literary selection. For example, the structure of fiction is usually determined by plot and by chapter division; the structure of drama depends upon its division into acts and scenes; the structure of an essay depends upon the organization of ideas; the structure of poetry is determined by its rhyme scheme and stanzaic form.

Style is the writer's characteristic manner of employing language.

Suspense is the quality of a short story, novel, play, or narrative poem that makes the reader or audience uncertain or tense about the outcome of events.

A *symbol* is any object, person, place, or action that has both a meaning in itself and that stands for something larger than itself, such as a quality, attitude, belief, or value: e.g., the land turtle in Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* suggests or reflects the toughness and resilience of the migrant workers.

Synecdoche (metonymy) is a form of metaphor. In synecdoche, a part of something is used to signify the whole: e.g., "All hands on deck." Also, the reverse, whereby the whole can represent a part, is synecdoche: e.g., "Canada played the United States in the Olympic hockey finals." Another form of synecdoche involves the container representing the thing being contained: e.g., "The pot is boiling." In one last form of synecdoche, the material from which an object is made stands for the object itself: e.g., "The quarterback tossed the pigskin." In metonymy, the name of one thing is applied to another thing with which it is closely associated: e.g., "I love Shakespeare."

Syntax means the arrangement of words and the order of grammatical elements in a sentence.

Theme is the central message of a literary work. It is not the same as a subject, which can be expressed in a word or two: courage, survival, war, pride, etc. The theme is the idea the author wishes to convey about that subject. It is expressed as a sentence or general statement about life or human nature. A literary work can have more than one theme, and most themes are not directly stated but are implied. The reader must think about all the elements of the work and use them to make inferences, or reasonable guesses, as to which themes seem to be implied. An example of a theme on the subject of pride might be that pride often precedes a fall.

Tone is the writer's or speaker's attitude toward a subject, character, or audience, and it is conveyed through the author's choice of words and detail. Tone can be serious, humorous, sarcastic, indignant, objective, etc.

Understatement (meiosis, litotes) is the opposite of hyperbole. It is a kind of irony that deliberately represents something as being much less than it really is: e.g., "I could probably manage to survive on a salary of two million dollars per year."

As students become more skilled at recognizing and analyzing how these basic devices and techniques are used in the literary works they are studying, they can begin to add more to their repertoire, gaining a greater understanding and appreciation of how *all* literary devices work together to express tone and theme. *The SIFT Method* is one strategy that may help students derive meaning from a text.

USING THE SIFT METHOD OF LITERARY ANALYSIS

When exploring how a writer uses literary elements and stylistic techniques to convey meaning or theme, teachers may introduce the following technique to help young readers begin to practice literary analysis. This method allows students to "sift" through the parts in order to comprehend the whole.

SIFT Method
Symbol: examine the title and text for symbolism
Images: identify images and sensory details
Figures of speech: analyze figurative language and other devices
Tone and **T**heme : discuss how all devices reveal tone and theme

An example of the *SIFT* Method as applied to John Steinbeck's novel, *The Pearl*, follows. Before reading the book, it would be a good idea for the teacher to engage the students in standard prereading activities such as examining the title for clues as to what the story might be about, making predictions based on the cover illustration, and sharing some information about the author.

Teachers might assign the book ahead of time so that students can read it a week or two before class discussion is scheduled to begin. Then, as the novel is studied in class, students can reread it with closer attention to detail.

Symbol

Steinbeck's writing is rich in the use of symbolism. Since the title of a story or novel often contains symbols that hint at theme, students should first be encouraged to reexamine the title. The teacher might suggest that the pearl is the central symbol of the story and might ask students to reflect on the characteristics of the pearl and speculate about its significance. The teacher might point out that a pearl has often been used in literature to represent spiritual purity and innocence; at this point, the class might debate the issue of whether the pearl is used here in its traditional symbolic sense. For Kino, the pearl seems to symbolize potential wealth, education for his son, and betterment for

his family. A class or small group discussion focused on the ways in which the meaning of the pearl changes throughout the story may reveal additional insights about Steinbeck's use of symbolism and its contribution to theme.

A list of possible interpretations of other symbolic elements in *The Pearl* follows.

The *scorpion* may suggest evil or natural calamity.

The *doctor* may represent willful evil (inhumanity).

The *pearl* dealers may exemplify conspiracy and exploitation.

The *trackers* may symbolize a society bent on destroying an individual.

Kino could represent the common man oppressed by society.

The *canoe* may represent family tradition, something of value which Kino can pass on to his son.

Imagery

Writers use language to create sensory impressions and to evoke specific responses to characters, objects, events, or situations in their works. The writer "shows" rather than "tells," thus allowing the reader to participate in the experience more fully. Therefore, imagery helps to produce mood and tone.

When reading a piece containing imagery, students might ask themselves two questions:

What do I see, hear, taste, smell, or feel?

What effect is the author trying to convey with these images?

The Pearl opens with intense imagery. Students could examine the following excerpt for examples of imagery and discuss how these images and sensory details contribute to meaning and effect. They might ask why the author chose to begin with these descriptive details. What kind of information do they provide about Kino and the society in which he lives?

> Kino awakened in the near dark. The stars still shone and the day had drawn only a pale wash of light in the lower sky to the east. The roosters had been crowing for some time, and the early pigs were already beginning their ceaseless turning of twigs and bits of wood to see whether anything to eat had been overlooked. Outside the brush house in the tuna clump, a covey of little birds chattered and flurried with their wings.
>
> Kino's eyes opened, and he looked first at the lightening square which was the door and then he looked at the hanging box where Coyotito slept. And last he turned his head to Juana, his wife, who lay beside him on the mat, her blue shawl over her nose and over her breasts and around the small of her back. Juana's eyes were open too. Kino could never remember seeing them closed when he awakened. Her dark eyes made

little reflected stars. She was looking at him as she was always looking at him when he awakened.

Kino heard the little splash of morning waves on the beach. It was very good—Kino closed his eyes again to listen to his music. Perhaps he alone did this and perhaps all of his people did it. His people had once been great makers of songs so that everything they saw or thought or did or heard became a song. That was very long ago. The songs remained; Kino knew them, but no new songs were added. That does not mean that there were no personal songs. In Kino's head there was a song now, clear and soft, and if he had been able to speak it, he would have called it the Song of the Family.

Figures of Speech

Writers form images by using figures of speech such as similes, metaphors, and personification. Students can find examples in the story and discuss how these figures of speech help to convey effect and meaning. Students might consider the following questions:

- *What is the significance of Kino's comparing the pearl to his soul?*
- *Why is the town compared to an animal with a nervous system, limbs, and emotions?*
- *What musical metaphors does Steinbeck use, and how are they significant? e.g., "The Song of the Family"*
- *How do these figures of speech enhance meaning?*

Sample quotations for discussion:

"...the great pearl, perfect as the moon..."

"The houses belched people."

"A town is like a colonial animal."

"The essence of pearl mixed with essence of men and a curious dark residue was precipitated...."

"The black distillate was like the scorpion, or like hunger in the smell of food, or like loneliness when love is withheld."

"The poison sacs of the town began to manufacture venom, and the town swelled and puffed with the pressure of it."

Other Devices

Students could also examine other devices used in *The Pearl* such as *irony* and *allusion.*

One example of irony found in this story is Kino's expectation that the pearl will bring wealth and education for his son; instead, it causes destruction and death. Students could find other examples of irony in the story and identify which of the three kinds of irony is being used in each example.

Steinbeck's parable alludes to the biblical story of "The Pearl of Great Price" and to an Indian legend he heard in Baja, California, called "The Pearl of the World." In the Bible story, the "pearl of great price" represents the soul's salvation. When it is found, one is advised to give up everything for it. The Indian legend tells the story of a boy who discovers a valuable pearl of great size and tries to sell it to pearl buyers who offer such a low price that he refuses to sell it to them. Instead, he hides his treasure under a rock and is attacked for three nights in a row. Finally, he removes the pearl from its hiding place and throws it back into the Gulf.

Students might discuss how each of these allusions enhances the meaning or effect of the novel. Does the author retain the original symbolic meaning from "The Pearl of Great Price," or does he alter it? What is the relationship between the Indian legend and Steinbeck's novel?

Tone

A close examination of word choice, imagery, and detail reveals the narrator's attitude or tone and contributes to the reader's understanding. The songs that run through Kino's mind help to convey the tone of the novel. The "Song of the Family" represents Kino's happiness, but the other songs symbolize danger to the family.

With his detailed description of Kino's family's visit to the doctor, Steinbeck effectively portrays evil, social injustice, and the inhumanity of people's treatment of one another. Students could find examples of details in this and other descriptions that reveal the author's sympathetic tone toward the oppressed and his outrage against the oppressors.

Theme

To determine a theme, students might:

- *Summarize* the story.
- *List* the subject or subjects that emerge from their summaries, such as evil, injustice, inhumanity, social protest, corruption, poverty, tradition, individuality, and survival.
- *Write a sentence* about each subject listed based on insights gained from analyzing symbolism, imagery, figurative language, and other devices. Because all rhetorical and literary devices lead to *tone* and *theme*, this process will help students to perceive what insights about life the author is revealing about each subject and to refine the process of determining meaning in a text.

Students should ask themselves what life-lessons the main characters have learned or what lessons they themselves have learned as a result of their reading. They could also look for statements in the story by characters or the narrator that comment on life, the world, or human nature, thereby implying theme.

Students could then discuss each thematic possibility and decide which seems to be most probable based upon evidence from the text and from this "SIFTing" process, keeping in mind the fact that many stories have more than one theme and there is seldom just one "right" answer.

Some of the subjects students might list are *greed, injustice, evil, the individual and society, ambition, social classes, poverty,* and *racism.*

Possible themes arising from the subjects suggested above:

- *Man has no individual identity and cannot exist as a single human person apart from society.*
- *The defeat of an individual is inevitable when society sets out to destroy him.*
- *Even though everything a man possesses may be lost or destroyed, he need not be defeated.*
- *When man becomes a threat to society, that society sets out to destroy him.*
- *When a poor man has an ambition to rise above his station in life, he faces fierce opposition.*
- *Evil forces are always conspiring to defeat the good.*
- *Justice is often withheld from economically deprived racial minorities.*

The Pearl, like all allegorical fiction, can be read by young readers on one level and by older readers on more than one level. Therefore, the above example can be adapted and used effectively with any student population.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

The following activities are not intended to be prescriptive. They are simply examples of ways in which teachers can help students understand some basic literary devices and how those devices are used to enhance effect and meaning. These examples are provided so that teachers can use them as models to design their own activities that will be appropriate for their students.

Students could read the above excerpt from *The Pearl* (or any descriptive passage), find examples of sensory *details,* and make a Sensory Language Chart by listing the five senses down the left-hand side of the paper and writing corresponding images from the text that appeal to each of the senses.

Teachers could ask students to create "Sense Poems" to help them understand the concept of sensory language. One idea for writing a sense poem is to begin the first line with the words *I see,* the second with *I hear,* and so on until each of the five senses has been listed. For each sense, the student writes a sensory detail. An example appears below.

I see the orange-red tongues of fire
I hear the roaring, crackling pyre
I feel warm sand between my toes
I smell the scent of charring oak
I taste the hickory flavored smoke

Students could create "I Am" metaphor poems by starting the first line with the words *I am* and filling in the name of an animal or object to complete the sentence. The second line should describe the qualities they share with that object or animal. The third line should begin with *I am* and be completed by filling in the name of a second object or animal, followed in the fourth line by common characteristics. Following this pattern, the students could make four or more comparisons and end the poem by repeating the first two lines.

Example:

I am the sun
Warming, shining
I am the moon
Beaming, glowing
I am the sea
Flowing, changing
I am a tree
Sharing, shading
I am the sun
Warming, shining

Students may search a story for similes and metaphors. After listing as many as they can find, they can create "Simile Swaps" and "Metaphor Makeovers" using different words to rewrite the comparisons to see how changes in word choice can alter meaning or effect.

Students may work in groups and paraphrase a story, eliminating all examples of simile, metaphor, and personification and replacing them with simple narration. Then students can compare these two versions and discuss why authors choose to use similes and metaphors in a piece of writing. Writers often use figures of speech to make their expressions more vivid while using the fewest words. These activities help students understand and appreciate the author's skillful use of figurative language to convey meaning and effect.

To introduce the concept of symbolism, the teacher could discuss the definition of a symbol with the students and give some examples. Students could then write paragraphs describing animals or objects that symbolize themselves. In the paragraphs, the students will also explain why they chose these symbols.

Students can design heraldic shields with symbols and colors that represent some qualities, characteristics, and life experiences that are important to them and their families. Students should be encouraged to share their shields with the rest of the class and to explain the significance of the designs and colors they have chosen.

Students may discuss the meaning of a particular symbol as introduced in the title of a novel they are reading, considering the following question: "Does the symbol change its meaning during the course of the novel?" Students should explain any changes in meaning and analyze how they contribute to the overall significance and effect of the story. After discussing the central symbol found in the title, students could identify and explain the meaning of other symbols in the piece.

Suggested Novels for Discussion of Symbolic Titles

Hatchet	Gary Paulsen
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry	Mildred Taylor
Dragonwings	Laurence Yep
Summer of the Swans	Betsy Byars
Animal Farm	George Orwell
To Kill a Mockingbird	Harper Lee
Who Has Seen the Wind	W.O. Mitchell
House Made of Dawn	N. Scott Momaday
The Scarlet Letter	Nathaniel Hawthorne
The Farming of Bones	Edwidge Danticat
The Bluest Eye	Toni Morrison
The Color Purple	Alice Walker
The Awakening	Kate Chopin
House of the Spirits	Isabelle Allende
Invisible Man	Ralph Ellison
Lord of the Flies	William Golding
Heart of Darkness	Joseph Conrad
Moby Dick	Herman Melville

After identifying examples of personification in a piece of writing, students could draw pictures that illustrate the human characteristics given to non-human things. The students should explain why the writer chose to use that particular imagery.

Students might enjoy playing a game of "Metaphor Charades." Each person takes a turn acting out a metaphor while the others try to guess what comparison is being made. Whoever supplies the correct metaphor must explain which characteristics the objects or ideas in the comparison share: e.g., act out the metaphor "time is a river" or "love is a rose."

The teacher could explain that an extended metaphor is one in which a whole poem or story compares two things. One example is "The Sea" by James Reeves. After reading and examining the poem, students could discuss how the things being compared are similar and whether or not the comparison helps them see a subject with new understanding. Later, they can write their own extended metaphors.

The Sea
by James Reeves

The sea is a hungry dog,
Giant and gray.
He rolls on the beach all day.
With his clashing teeth and shaggy jaws
Hour upon hour he gnaws
The rumbling, tumbling stones,
And "Bones, bones, bones!"
The giant sea dog moans,
Licking his greasy paws.
And when the night wind roars
And the moon rocks in the stormy cloud,
He bounds to his feet and snuffs and sniffs,
Shaking his wet sides over the cliffs,
And howls and hollos long and loud.
But on quiet days in May or June,
When even the grasses on the dune
Play no more their reedy tune,
With his head between his paws
He lies on the sandy shores,
So quiet, so quiet, he scarcely snores.

Working in pairs, students could define simile, metaphor, and personification. Then the teacher could ask them to choose three natural phenomena, such as sun, rain, fire, or wind, and create one original simile, one metaphor, and one example of personification.

THE INTERPRETATION OF SYMBOL AND ALLEGORY—DANTE'S FOURFOLD METHOD

Students often have difficulty interpreting symbol and allegory; a helpful way to think about the interpretation of allegories was invented by Dante Alighieri, explained in his "Epistle to Can Grande." Dante basically says that allegories may be interpreted on four levels:

- The *literal* or *historical* level: the things that are actually happening in the story on a surface level. For example, in Sophocles' *Antigone,* Antigone chooses to bury her brother despite her uncle's direct orders to the contrary, thus risking execution.
- The *political* level: the level on which human beings relate to others in a community and in the world. In *Antigone,* this level of interpretation shows the reader that Antigone's defiance threatens King Creon's political power and the stability of the *polis.* The rule of law is shaken and the city's order is threatened. The question is this: Which is more important, the state's stability or the individual's conscience?

- The *moral* or *psychological* level: the way in which the self relates to the realm of ethics. In Sophocles' play, Antigone must bury her brother because not doing so would be both a moral crime against the family and an inhuman denial of the brotherhood of man. It is right to show respect for the dead; in this, the law of the gods must prevail.
- The *spiritual* level: the universal level on which a person relates to the cosmos, the way of the pilgrim soul. On this level, Antigone represents any free spirit bound to rebel against the repression of absolute authority. She symbolizes free will and the power of the individual. She shows the reader the idealism of youth that inflexibly seeks martyrdom rather than compromise.

The **Fourfold Method** lends itself to the analysis of drama, fiction, poetry, and nonfiction. Many different types of texts may be allegorical; this technique allows students to go as far up the ladder of interpretation as they would like while grounding their interpretation in the text itself. Each level is valid; each can stand alone. Some works contain only two of the levels; others may exist on all four planes.

ANALYZING TRAGEDY AND TRAGIC FICTION

Aristotelian Theory

Probably the most familiar cornerstone of critical theory to most teachers, this critical stance is based on the work of the philosopher Aristotle, whose *Poetics* (fourth century B.C.) laid out the basis for traditional analysis of drama or "dramatic" fiction. Aristotle asserts that poetic art is "the imitation of an action," a spiritual movement which is represented in concrete artistic form and which then becomes universal. This imitation, or *mimesis,* is a writer's attempt to represent reality or truth in artistic form.

Aristotle discusses the structure and purpose of tragedy in the following terms:

Unity of Action: tragic plots must have a clear beginning, middle, and end, and the action should be ordered and continuous, arising through a cause and effect process.

Catharsis: the events in the play should inspire pity and terror in its viewers, allowing them, through vicarious participation in the dramatic event, to attain an emotional purgation, moral purification, or clarity of intellectual viewpoint.

Tragedy is characterized by protagonists who are "highly renowned and prosperous," and whose reversal of fortune and fall from greatness are brought about "not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty." The protagonist's inner weakness or inherent error is called the *hamartia,* taken from the Greek word meaning "to err" or "to miss the mark." The *hamartia* often concerns excessive pride or *hubris.*

This reversal in fortune is characterized by "reversal of situation" *(peripeteia)* and "recognition" *(anagnorisis).* In *Oedipus the King,* for example, Oedipus

reverses his position from that of the powerful and justly offended pursuer of the evildoer who has polluted the city to being himself pursued as the abhorred polluter of the city. This same event brings about the *anagnorisis*, as Oedipus suddenly recognizes himself as the man who has broken unbreakable taboos and committed unbearable, if unintentional, wrongs. Aristotle believed that in the most successful tragedies, the moment of recognition and the reversal of situation take place in the same narrative event.

The **scene of suffering** must also take place in tragedy (for example, the scene where Oedipus blinds himself). Aristotle, and the Greeks in general, viewed suffering as a prerequisite for wisdom.

ARISTOTLE AND HUMPTY DUMPTY

Both middle school and high school students may enjoy learning about Aristotelian theory through the story of Humpty Dumpty.

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall... He's a noble protagonist set perilously in a high place of power—

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall... He experiences a reversal of situation; he falls from greatness—his tragic weakness is his frailty—a thin shell—and an error—he probably wiggled around, showing off, on the wall or tried to stand up on it to get even higher. His sin is his pride; like Yertle the Turtle in the Dr. Seuss story or Julius Caesar in Shakespeare's play, he tried to rise too high, beyond his natural boundaries.

> All the king's horses and all the king's men
> Couldn't put Humpty Dumpty together again.

The readers feel pity and terror. The egg is cracked. The yolk streams out like Duncan's "silver skin, laced with his golden blood" in *Macbeth*. Poor Humpty. He'll never sit on the wall feeling the rush of the cool spring air on his shell, never again experience the exhilaration of balancing precariously on a tempting wall. He is dead and gone, irreparably damaged and deprived of his once-high position and enjoyable life.

And the same thing could happen to the reader one of these fine days if they're not careful. Go a bit too fast in that golden Mercedes and wind up spread across the highway crushed in a lump of molten metal. Reach for that high-yielding stock and end up broke. Overstep the bounds of law and morality in reaching for a high political office and end up ruined and disgraced, resigning ignominiously from your post, lucky to have avoided prison.

But it has not happened to us. We have vicariously experienced the story and learned wisdom from the suffering of the protagonist. We leave the story or play with a feeling of catharsis, an emotional release and a purification of mind, heart, and soul.

DICTION

In all forms of literature—nonfiction, fiction, poetry, and drama—authors choose particular words to convey effect and meaning to the reader. Writers employ diction, or word choice, to communicate ideas and impressions, to evoke emotions, and to convey their views of truth to the reader. The following definitions may be useful in helping students understand and appreciate the deliberate word choices that writers make.

LEVELS OF DICTION

High or *formal diction* usually contains language that creates an elevated tone. It is free of slang, idioms, colloquialisms, and contractions. It often contains polysyllabic words, sophisticated syntax, and elegant word choice. The following passage from Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* uses formal diction:

> Discerning the impracticable state of the poor culprit's mind, the elder clergyman, who had carefully prepared himself for the occasion, addressed to the multitude a discourse on sin, in all its branches, but with continual reference to the ignominious letter. So forcibly did he dwell upon this symbol, for the hour or more during which his periods were rolling over the people's heads, that it assumed new terrors in their imagination, and seemed to derive its scarlet hue from the flames of the infernal pit.
>
> Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1850.

Neutral diction uses standard language and vocabulary without elaborate words and may include contractions. An example of neutral diction is taken from Ernest Hemingway's novel, *The Old Man and the Sea.*

> The shark swung over and the old man saw his eye was not alive and then he swung over once again, wrapping himself in two loops of the rope. The old man knew that he was dead but the shark would not accept it. Then, on his back, with his tail lashing and his jaws clicking, the shark plowed over the water as a speedboat does. The water was white where his tail beat it and three-quarters of his body was clear above the water when the rope came taut, shivered, and then snapped. The shark lay quietly for a little while on the surface and the old man watched him. Then he went down very slowly.
>
>

Informal or *low diction* is the language of everyday use. It is relaxed and conversational. It often includes common and simple words, idioms, slang, jargon, and contractions. The following passage from *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison uses informal diction:

> Three quarts of milk. That's what was in that icebox yesterday. Three whole quarts. Now they ain't none. Not a drop. I don't mind folks coming in and getting what they want, but three quarts of milk! What the devil does anybody need with three quarts of milk?
>
> Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye.* Reprinted by permission of International Creative Management, Inc. Copyright © 1970 by Toni Morrison.

TYPES OF DICTION

Slang refers to a group of recently coined words often used in informal situations. Slang words often come and go quickly, passing in and out of usage within months or years.

Colloquial expressions are nonstandard, often regional, ways of using language appropriate to informal or conversational speech and writing. The characteristic "ayah" of the Maine resident or the southern word "y'all" are examples of colloquialisms.

Jargon consists of words and expressions characteristic of a particular trade, profession, or pursuit. Some examples of nautical jargon from *The Secret Sharer* by Joseph Conrad are "cuddy," "taffrail," "mizzen," and "binnacle."

Dialect is a nonstandard subgroup of a language with its own vocabulary and grammatical features. Writers often use regional dialects or dialects that reveal a person's economic or social class. Mark Twain makes use of dialect in the following passage from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer:*

> "Sho, there's ticks a-plenty. I could have a thousand of 'em if I wanted to."
>
> "Well, why don't you? Becuz you know mighty well you can't. This is a pretty early tick, I reckon. It's the first one I've seen this year."
>
> Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer.* New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1946.

Concrete diction consists of specific words that describe physical qualities or conditions. The following passage from *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison uses concrete diction to describe an experience Pecola has at Junior's house:

> The tears came fast, and she held her face in her hands. When something soft and furry moved around her ankles, she jumped, and saw it was the cat. He wound himself in and about her legs. Momentarily distracted from her fear, she squatted down to touch him, her hands wet from the tears. The cat rubbed up against her knee. He was black all over, deep silky black, and his eyes, pointing down toward his nose, were bluish green. The light made them shine like blue ice. Pecola rubbed the cat's head; he whined, his tongue flicking with pleasure. The blue eyes in the black face held her.
>
> Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye.* Reprinted by permission of International Creative Management, Inc. Copyright © 1970 by Toni Morrison.

Abstract diction refers to language that denotes ideas, emotions, conditions, or concepts that are intangible. Some examples of abstract diction from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* are such words as *impenetrable, incredible, inscrutable, inconceivable,* and *unfathomable.*

Denotation is the exact, literal definition of a word independent of any emotional association or secondary meaning.

Connotation is the implicit rather than explicit meaning of a word and consists of the suggestions, associations, and emotional overtones attached to a word. For example, the word *house* has a different emotional effect on the reader than does the word *home,* with its connotation of safety, coziness, and security.

Good writers value both *denotation* and *connotation,* but while scientists may use more denotative words, literary artists tend to rely more heavily on connotative words for deepest meaning and strongest effect. Since connotative words have complex layers of associations and implications, writers spend a considerable amount of time searching for just the "right words" to convey experience and truth.

It is essential that students understand clearly the concepts of denotation and connotation and their role in making meaning of text. Misinterpreting denotation and connotation in a literary work translates into misinterpreting tone and theme.

SAMPLE ANALYSIS OF DICTION USING A PROSE PASSAGE

One way to lead students through a discussion of diction and to help them remember a method for analyzing how an author's word choices convey effect and meaning in a literary work is by using the acronym **LEAD.**

Low or informal diction (dialect, slang, jargon)
Elevated language or formal diction
Abstract and concrete diction
Denotation and connotation

The **LEAD** method is demonstrated below using a passage from *The Secret Sharer* by Joseph Conrad:

> The side of the ship made an opaque belt of shadow on the darkling glassy shimmer of the sea. But I saw at once something elongated and pale floating very close to the ladder. Before I could form a guess a faint flash of phosphorescent light, which seemed to issue suddenly from the naked body of a man, flickered in the sleeping water with the elusive, silent play of summer lightning in a night sky. With a gasp I saw revealed to my stare a pair of feet, the long legs, a broad livid back immersed right up to the neck in a greenish cadaverous glow. One hand, awash, clutched the bottom rung of the ladder. He was complete but for the head. A headless corpse! The cigar dropped out of my gaping mouth with a tiny plop and a short hiss quite audible in the absolute stillness of all things under heaven. At that I suppose he raised up his face, a dimly pale oval in the shadow of the ship's side...I only climbed on the spare spar and leaned over the rail as far as I could, to bring my eyes nearer to that mystery floating alongside. As he hung by the ladder, like a resting swimmer, the sea lightning played about his limbs at every stir; and he appeared in it ghastly, silvery, fishlike.
>
> Conrad, Joseph. *The Secret Sharer and Other Stories.* New York: Dover Publications, 1993.

LOW OR INFORMAL DICTION

A first step could be to check for *low* or *informal diction* such as slang, dialect, and jargon. These expressions are often used in dialogue or directly by the speaker in stories told from the first person point of view. One strategy for deriving meaning from informal diction is to pay close attention to dialogue and to read the text aloud to hear how it sounds, attempting to determine meaning from sound and context. Another strategy is to refer to a thesaurus or dictionary that contains word histories and definitions of informal expressions.

Teachers may ask their students to find the one example of jargon in the preceding Conrad passage. The example from this passage is the word *spar,* which means a wooden or metal pole used to support rigging on a ship. Another example of Conrad's use of nautical jargon elsewhere in the story is as follows:

> "I descended the poop and paced the waist."

The dictionary reveals that *poop* means the rear deck of a ship, and *waist* means the middle part of a deck. With this information we can paraphrase the sentence in the following way to gain a greater understanding of its meaning:

"I went down to the rear deck and walked back and forth across the middle of it."

Students might find many other examples of jargon in the story and reflect on how these and other uses of informal diction contribute to tone and theme.

ELEVATED LANGUAGE OR FORMAL DICTION

A next step might be to check for e*levated language,* indicating the use of *formal diction.* Because formal diction includes more elaborate, polysyllabic words, it may be more difficult for students to understand. Teachers might ask students to pay close attention to complex words and to use a dictionary to help them define words they are unable to understand from the context. Students could paraphrase a difficult passage by rewriting it in their own words to determine the author's meaning.

A paraphrase of the passage from Conrad's novella might look something like this:

> The side of the ship cast a dark shadow on the calm, dark surface of the sea. But I suddenly saw something long and whitish floating near the ladder. A light seemed to appear suddenly from the unclothed body of a man in the dark water, lighted up every now and then by flashes of lightning. I was shocked to see what looked like a pale, headless corpse, floating in the dim light of the green-colored water surrounding it. As my mouth dropped open, my cigar fell out, breaking the silence by falling into the water and making a noise. He lifted his face out of the water...As he rested on the ladder, the lightning made him look like a cross between a ghost and a shiny fish.

After paraphrasing this and other passages from the story, students could discuss how the use of elevated language contributes to tone and how paraphrase affects tone.

ABSTRACT AND CONCRETE DICTION

A next step in this process might be to examine the use of a*bstract* and *concrete diction.* Writers may choose to use abstract or concrete words depending on the response they want to evoke from the reader. Although the more abstract words tend to be used impersonally to convey universal truths and emotions, writers in general tend to use specific, concrete words to describe people, places, and objects. Good writers also use active verbs to describe actions. Liberal use of abstract diction in a passage might make it more difficult to understand. Students can look carefully at a descriptive passage to find examples of effective descriptions of people, places, objects, and actions.

Referring again to the passage from *The Secret Sharer,* the students could discuss examples of concrete diction. Conrad's diction is specific when he uses such concrete words as *opaque, glassy, shimmer, pale, phosphorescent light, flickered, livid, immersed,* and *headless corpse.* These words communicate perceivable actions and states.

Conrad also uses abstract diction in this novel by leaving the captain, the ship, and the crew nameless. Students could discuss why the author chose to use this technique. One possibility is that Conrad may be suggesting universality. Perhaps the captain represents humanity, and the boat represents everyone's journey on the ship of life.

The teacher could ask students to look for other examples of abstract and concrete diction in the story and then encourage a discussion of how an author's choices of abstract and concrete diction enhance effect and meaning.

DENOTATION AND CONNOTATION

Students could examine both the *denotative* and *connotative* meanings of unfamiliar words. Many English words have more than one denotative meaning, so the first strategy is to use context clues. Generally, the context (words and sentences surrounding a particular word) tells the reader which meaning is intended. If unable to discern the meaning of a word from its context, students could find the word in a dictionary.

Initially, students might check the title itself for any words that are unfamiliar or vague. In discussing Joseph Conrad's novella *The Secret Sharer,* students might discuss the denotative meaning of the title. The dictionary defines *sharer* in the following way:

1. One who divides and parcels out in shares; one who apportions
2. One who participates in, experiences, or uses in common

The denotation of "secret" is *concealed, kept hidden, not visibly expressed* or *clandestine.* Thus, "secret sharer" would seem to mean someone whose sharing is kept hidden from others. In this story, the secret sharing takes place between the young captain of one ship and an escaped murderer from another ship with whom the captain identifies and whom he harbors inside his own cabin as a secret guest.

A close reading of the story reveals the connotative meaning of the "secret sharer." Not only does the hidden guest, Leggatt, share the captain's cabin, but he shares his very soul as well. Leggatt seems to represent the captain's other self, the dark side of his soul that remains hidden from view.

The passage describes the captain's first discovery of his *secret sharer.* Conrad uses the following images to portend the captain's identification with his ghostly dark self: *cadaverous, darkling, pale, phosphorescent, ghastly, headless,* and *fishlike.* Some connotative meanings for these expressions follow:

Cadaverous suggests a rotting corpse.
Darkling refers to the darkness of night and the evil it conceals.
Pale suggests the whitish, pallid, or wan appearance of disease.
Phosphorescence suggests death because of its association with decay.
Ghastly suggests a ghostlike, terrifying appearance.
Headless implies lack of intellect or reason.
Fishlike has the connotation of cold-bloodedness and suggests a lack of humanity.

In literary works, water frequently has a symbolic connection with unconsciousness or the unconscious mind, and darkness often suggests evil, secrecy, and concealment. The captain finds his "dark self" floating in the dark water that represents his unconscious mind.

Classroom Activities

These activities are examples of how teachers can help students understand the concept of diction and appreciate how writers make conscious word choices in order to convey tone and theme. Not intended to be prescriptive, these examples are provided so that teachers can model and design activities that will be appropriate for their students.

In his novel *Hatchet,* Gary Paulsen uses slang to try to capture the voice of the 13-year-old main character. Students could find examples of Paulsen's use of slang and evaluate its effectiveness.

A unique characteristic of Paulsen's writing in *Hatchet* is the way he combines two verbs with a hyphen to describe one action; for example, *push-paddle, swim-crawl,* and *stagger-tripped.* Students might look for examples of these verb pairs in the story and explain what each verb combination connotes.

Using Steinbeck's novel, *The Pearl,* students might discuss the denotative and connotative meanings of the word *pearl* and then look the word up in a dictionary. One dictionary definition is as follows: "A smooth, lustrous, variously colored deposit, chiefly calcium carbonate, formed around a grain of sand, or other foreign matter in the shells of certain mollusks and valued as a gem." In the novel, Steinbeck points out that a pearl only has the value men give it. To the oyster, it is the remedy to an irritant. Students can work in groups, with each one describing a different object using connotation and denotation. Each group will provide a written description of one object.

Students might also discuss how Steinbeck's verb choices seem to imply more than simple movements. Two examples are the words *flurried* and *hovered.* Students could find these words in the story and determine their meanings using context clues. Then they could check the dictionary for definitions and select those they think come closest to Steinbeck's meanings. Next, they could look for other examples in the story and repeat this process.

To understand the connotations of the words in the title of *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad, the teacher and students can create a word web as a prewriting activity. By developing the web, students will recognize how the connotations of certain words inform their understanding of mood, tone, and theme. After the word web activity, students could write extended descriptive definitions of the word *darkness* or analyses of Conrad's use of the concept.

The teacher might point out that Hawthorne begins *The Scarlet Letter* using descriptions with rich connotative meaning from the very first page. He begins:

> A throng of bearded men, in sad-colored garments and gray, steeple-crowned hats, intermixed with women, some wearing hoods, and others bareheaded, was assembled in front of a wooden edifice, the door of which was heavily timbered with oak, and studded with iron spikes.
>
> Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1850.

In emphasizing the oppressiveness of the Puritan culture that judges Hester Prynne, Hawthorne employs the word *throng* to suggest the collective hostility of the community. The phrase *steeple-crowned hats* suggests its self-righteousness, and the image of *heavily timbered oak* (one of the most traditionally English, durable, and hard varieties of wood) implies the rigidity of the cultural and religious forces that Hester defies. After some reference to the history of the prison, Hawthorne goes on to describe it further and introduces the reader to its occupant, the story's main character.

> Before this ugly edifice, and between it and the wheel-track of the street, was a grass-plot, much overgrown with burdock, pig-weed, apple-peru, and such unsightly vegetation, which evidently found something congenial in the soil that had so early borne the black flower of civilized society, a prison. But on one side of the portal, and rooted almost at the threshold, was a wild rose-bush, covered, in this month of June, with its delicate gems, which might be imagined to offer their fragrance and fragile beauty to the prisoner as he went in, and to the condemned criminal as he came forth to his doom, in token that the deep heart of Nature could pity and be kind to him.
>
> This rose-bush, by a strange chance, has been kept alive in history; but whether it had merely survived out of the stern old wilderness, so long after the fall of the gigantic pines and oaks that originally overshadowed it,—or whether, as there is fair authority for believing, it had sprung up under the footsteps of the sainted Ann Hutchinson, as she entered the prison-door,—we shall not take upon us to determine. Finding it so directly on the threshold of our narrative, which is now about to issue from that inauspicious portal, we could hardly do otherwise than pluck one of its flowers and present it to the reader. It may serve, let us hope, to symbolize some sweet moral blossom that may be found along the track, or relieve the darkening close of a tale of human frailty and sorrow.
>
> Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1850.

Students could paraphrase this opening page, discuss its connotative meanings, and examine how Hawthorne's diction reveals his attitude toward the subject. They could circle connotative words and, afterwards, write a brief examination of the tone these words create.

Students might examine Toni Morrison's diction in *The Bluest Eye* and discuss the significance of dialect, slang, and colloquialism in the story. Among the many expressions to consider are these:

> "quiet as its kept"
>
> being "put out"
>
> being "put outdoors"
>
> "My mama said you ruined."
>
> "Northern colored folks was different too. Dicty-like."
>
> "Ought to be a law; two ugly people doubling up like that to make more ugly. Be better off in the ground."

Students could explore the nuances of denotation and connotation by writing sentences using two different meanings for the same word.

Students might write advertisements in which they use words with strong emotional overtones to try to sell their products and discuss how word choice affects our mental picture of people, places, objects, and ideas.

Students might create picture dictionaries illustrating two or more meanings for each word.

Students might read an article that is filled with propaganda and underline all of the "loaded" words.

Students might write a descriptive paragraph or a news article using words with positive connotations, then give it a different spin by rewriting the same description using words with negative connotations.

Students might rewrite passages from *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, changing all dialect to correct standard English. Then they could explain how these changes alter Twain's meaning or effect.

Students could create connotation collages using words and pictures to illustrate associations and various shades of meaning from a story or poem they are reading.

Students could make connotation charts in which they classify words having the same basic meaning but with different connotations, one being negative and the other positive. Some examples are:

- childish and childlike
- poor and short of money
- gaudy and ornate
- skinny and slender
- fat and plump
- jammed and filled
- stench and fragrance

SYNTAX

INTRODUCTION

The manner in which a speaker or author constructs a sentence affects what the audience understands. The inverted order of an interrogative sentence cues the reader or listener to a question and creates a tension between speaker and listener. Similarly, short sentences are often emphatic, passionate, or flippant; whereas longer sentences suggest the writer's more deliberate, thoughtful response; and very long, discursive sentences give a narrative a rambling, meditative tone. The section on syntax in this guide enriches an understanding of how sentence structure affects tone and theme.

From the time that children begin to respond to the playful inversions of Dr. Seuss ("I do not like you, Sam I am") through the tumbling phrases and clauses by which Poe develops tension in "The Cask of Amontillado" to the rapidity of the middle passage section of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, readers are influenced by syntax. One of the goals of teachers is to transform this unconscious understanding into conscious knowledge that will evolve into more sophisticated critical reading and writing skills. It is essential to remember that syntax must be examined for its ability to contribute to and enhance meaning and effect.

Syntax should not be studied in isolation but in conjunction with other stylistic techniques that work together to develop meaning.

Teachers at every grade level will find within the materials they are currently teaching examples of passages in which authors manipulate sentence structure to enhance meaning. The methods outlined here can be used effectively at all levels. Certainly, AP Vertical Teams for English members will discover more techniques to share with one another in their meetings. At its simplest level, syntax consists of sentence structure, but analysis of style and meaning never relies on one concept alone. Syntax should not be studied in isolation, but rather it should be examined in conjunction with other stylistic techniques that work together to develop meaning. AP Vertical Team for English members may wish to review the information given below and then construct activities appropriate for their own students.

Describing Sentence Structure
Describe the sentence structure by considering these questions.

Are the sentences *telegraphic* (shorter than 5 words in length), *short* (approximately 5 words in length), *medium* (approximately 18 words in length), or *long and involved* (30 words or more in length)? What is the effect of the sentence length the author uses?

Examine sentence beginnings. Is there a good variety, or does a pattern emerge?

Examine the arrangement of ideas in a sentence. Are they set out in a special way for a purpose? Do the same for a paragraph. Does the arrangement of ideas suggest a particular strategy on the part of the author?

SENTENCE PATTERNS

One of the most important elements of syntax is the way the words, phrases, and clauses are arranged. This is a key element of the author's style and can have a marked effect on meaning. Students beginning to practice literary analysis should be familiar with many of the following sentence patterns. In addition, the study and practice of various sentence patterns will strengthen the students' own writing and will make syntactical choices available to them which will enrich their style and enhance their powers of expression. Students should be able both to identify and to write sentences in the following patterns. Practice with syntactical variety can begin as early as the sixth grade, continuing, with increasing complexity, into the high school years.

A *declarative* sentence makes a statement: e.g., "The king is sick."

An *imperative* sentence gives a command: e.g., "Cure the king!"

An *interrogative* sentence asks a question: e.g., "Is the king sick?"

An *exclamatory* sentence provides emphasis or expresses strong emotion: e.g., "The king is dead! Long live the king!"

A *simple sentence* contains one independent clause: e.g., "The singer bowed to her adoring audience."

A *compound sentence* contains two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction or by a semicolon: e.g., "The singer bowed to the audience, but she sang no encores."

A *complex sentence* contains an independent clause and one or more subordinate clauses: e.g., "Because the singer was tired, she went straight to bed after the concert."

A *compound-complex sentence* contains two or more independent clauses and one or more subordinate clauses: e.g., "The singer bowed while the audience applauded, but she sang no encores."

A *loose* or *cumulative sentence* makes complete sense if brought to a close before the actual ending: e.g., " We reached Edmonton that morning after a turbulent flight and some exciting experiences, tired but exhilarated, full of stories to tell our friends and neighbors." The sentence *could* end before the modifying phrases without losing its coherence.

A *periodic sentence* makes sense fully only when the end of the sentence is reached: e.g., "That morning, after a turbulent flight and some exciting experiences, we reached Edmonton."

In a *balanced sentence*, the phrases or clauses balance each other by virtue of their likeness of structure, meaning, or length: e.g., "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters."

Natural order of a sentence involves constructing a sentence so the subject comes before the predicate: e.g., "Oranges grow in California."

Inverted order of a sentence (sentence inversion) involves constructing a sentence so the predicate comes before the subject: e.g., "In California grow the oranges." This is a device in which typical sentence patterns are reversed to create an emphatic or rhythmic effect.

Juxtaposition is a poetic and rhetorical device in which normally unassociated ideas, words, or phrases are placed next to one another, often creating an effect of surprise and wit: e.g., "The apparition of these faces in the crowd:/Petals on a wet, black bough." ("In a Station of the Metro" by Ezra Pound)

Parallel structure (parallelism) refers to a grammatical or structural similarity between sentences or parts of a sentence. It involves an arrangement of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs so that elements of equal importance are equally developed and similarly phrased: e.g., "He loved swimming, running, and playing tennis."

Repetition is a device in which words, sounds, and ideas are used more than once to enhance rhythm and to create emphasis: e.g., "...government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." ("Address at Gettysburg" by Abraham Lincoln)

A *rhetorical question* is a question that requires no answer. It is used to draw attention to a point and is generally stronger than a direct statement: e.g., "If Mr. Ferchoff is always fair, as you have said, why did he refuse to listen to Mrs. Baldwin's arguments?"

A *rhetorical fragment* is a sentence fragment used deliberately for a persuasive purpose or to create a desired effect: e.g., "Something to consider."

ADVANCED SYNTAX TECHNIQUES

The techniques listed here are powerful strategies for using language. Students find it both interesting and valuable to identify these techniques in the works of authors and to use them in their own writing.

Anaphora is the repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginning of successive clauses: e.g., "We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing-grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills." (Winston Churchill)

Asyndeton is deliberate omission of conjunctions in a series of related clauses: e.g., "I came, I saw, I conquered."(Julius Caesar)

Chiasmus/Antimetabole is a sentence strategy in which the arrangement of ideas in the second clause is a reversal of the first: e.g., "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."(John F. Kennedy)

Polysyndeton is the deliberate use of many conjunctions for special emphasis—to highlight quantity or mass of detail or to create a flowing, continuous sentence pattern: e.g., "The meal was huge—my mother fixed okra and green beans and ham and apple pie and green pickled tomatoes and ambrosia salad and all manner of fine country food—but no matter how I tried, I could not consume it to her satisfaction."

Stichomythia is dialogue in which the endings and beginnings of each line echo each other, taking on a new meaning with each new line, as in the following example from *Hamlet:*

> Hamlet: Now mother, what's the matter?
> Queen: Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.
> Hamlet: Mother, you have my father much offended.
> Queen: Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.
> Hamlet: Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.
>
> Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet.* Second Edition ©1997 by Houghton Mifflin Company.

Zeugma is the use of a verb that has two different meanings with objects that complement both meanings: e.g., "He stole both her car and her heart that fateful night."

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES FOR SYNTAX PRACTICE

In a composition, students may write several types of sentences employing the strategies listed. Then they might analyze the effect on the reader of each type of syntactical technique.

When students find unique or beautiful sentences that are characteristic of an author's style, they may analyze these syntactical patterns, then practice writing **"Syntax Mad-Libs"** using the author's sentences as models, as in the following example from the short story "I See You Never" by Ray Bradbury.

Original Passage

> She remembered a visit she had once made to some Mexican border towns—the hot days, the endless crickets leaping and falling or lying dead and brittle like the small cigars in the shopwindows, and the canals taking river water out to the farms, the dirt roads, the scorched seascape. She remembered the silent towns, the warm beer, the hot, thick food each day. She remembered the slow, dragging horses and the parched jackrabbits on the road. She remembered the iron mountains and the dusty valleys and the ocean beaches that spread hundreds of miles with no sound but the waves—no cars, no buildings, no nothing.
>
>

In class discussion, the students might identify the many unique syntactical techniques Bradbury uses to create a drowsy, nostalgic, hypnotic tone. The many types of repetition, including anaphora, impress the reader with the similarity of each day in the character's past, the way each day seems to resemble the last. The wavelike triadic patterns of the last few phrases are resonant with the sound of the sea and bring to mind a life in which every day has the same pattern as the waves—slightly varied, but monotonous in its regularity. The use of polysyndeton also reinforces the feeling of fullness and lethargy created by the images of "hot thick food," "warm beer," the "parched jackrabbits," and "slow, dragging horses."

This is a useful way to introduce close reading of a passage to younger students—to begin, not with a story or a novel, but with a sentence or a paragraph. They can analyze not only the syntax, but also the images, figurative language, diction, and concrete details that create a certain tone. Then, for writing practice, students may write a sentence modeled on the author's work but on a totally different subject, creating a completely different tone. For younger students, working in pairs makes this an easier and more engaging task. After doing this analysis and practice with several authors' works, the students not only begin to notice syntax and its effects in their reading, but they feel freer to experiment with syntactical variety in their own writing.

Mad-Libs Sentence

> She remembered the (adj) (plural noun), the (adj) (noun), the (adj) (adj) (noun) each day. She remembered the (adj) (verb + ing) (plural noun) and the (adj) (plural noun) on the road. She remembered the (adj) (plural noun) and the (adj) (plural noun) and the (adj) (plural noun) that (verb past tense) hundreds of miles with no (noun)—no (plural noun), no (plural noun), no (noun).

Student Variation

> She remembered the shadowy woods, the shy forest animals, the long, relaxing walks each day. She remembered the fiery, scarlet trees and the cool woodland pools and the grey mountain peaks that ranged hundreds of miles with no end but the sky—no limits, no rules, no fences.

Have students try writing sentences, paragraphs, or poems in which *prepositional phrases, participial phrases,* or *gerund phrases* predominate, flooding the eye and ear of the reader with descriptive details.

Encourage students to write "singing sentences" which pair words and phrases on the basis of sound devices.

To write "singing sentences," students in pairs should:

- Generate a list of infinitive phrases that consist of pleasant-sounding (euphonious) words. Then they can do the same with a list of prepositional phrases. (Another kind of sentence can be made using lists of "ugly" or cacophonous words.)
- Pair infinitive phrases with prepositional phrases based on their assonant, consonant, alliterative, or rhythmic similarities.
- Connect the pairs with coordinating conjunctions (and, yet, but, for, nor, so, yet).
- End the sentence with an independent clause that gives the paired phrases meaning and focus.

Example

> To play with grace [assonance] and to struggle through strife [alliteration]; to win with a grin [rhyme] but to face defeat without heat [rhyme and consonance]; to try beyond tribulation and to rejoice within reason [alliteration]: these are the ways of a great man.

Variations on this syntax construction exercise can be any graceful or unusual series of grammatical elements that can be connected through sound devices. Students could find examples of such sentences in their reading and bring them to the attention of the class.

Because *punctuation* is an important aspect of syntax, students should explain how unusual or interesting combinations of punctuation—the dash, the exclamation point, the semicolon, or parentheses—contribute to meaning. They may then practice using these punctuation techniques in their own writing. The work of such writers as Edgar Allan Poe, Emily Dickinson, and Cormac McCarthy provides ample opportunities for this type of analysis.

A good way to practice reading poetry, especially in the Pre-AP years, is for students to read poems aloud sentence by sentence, rather than line by line. The syntax of many poems includes *enjambed* lines, sentences which extend beyond the end of the line and into the next line. Learning to read poetry in sentences is essential to a basic understanding of the text.

SYNTAX AND STYLE

When examining an author's style or when comparing one author's style with that of another, students will find it useful to write a paragraph that contains at least one sentence describing the author's characteristic syntax, one about his or her use of imagery and figurative language, one about the diction, and one about symbolism and/or concrete detail. This type of description is good practice for the Advanced Placement English Examinations, as these are some of the elements of language analysis assessed on both tests. Throughout the year, students should keep a running list of words that describe style and syntax. Some examples of words that lend themselves to this kind of description follow.

plain, spare, austere, unadorned
ornate, elaborate, flowery
jumbled, chaotic, obfuscating,
erudite. esoteric
journalistic, terse, laconic
harsh, grating
mellifluous, musical, lilting, lyrical
whimsical
elegant
staccato, abrupt
solid, thudding
sprawling, disorganized
dry
deceptively simple

While students are peer-editing essays, short stories, or other writing, they should work on their syntax as well as on mechanical problems. Some suggestions for syntactical revision are listed below.

- Rework most sentences beginning with the expletive "there."
- Change all passive voice sentences to active voice: e.g., change "The ball was caught by John," to "John caught the ball."
- Add a sentence using a comparison (simile or metaphor).
- Replace "be" verbs with active verbs.
- Combine any two sentences to form one compound, one complex, or one compound-complex sentence.
- Change one declarative sentence into an interrogative sentence and answer it with a rhetorical fragment.
- Move one sentence to a more effective location in the paragraph.
- Use a sophisticated syntactical technique (anaphora, chiasmus, polysyndeton, rhetorical fragment, etc.) in at least one of the sentences.

Another strategy for describing an author's style in terms of syntax utilizes the chart that follows. Students may choose any rich passage from a novel, short story, or essay and look closely at the syntax and characteristic language of the author. They can then formulate a statement, paragraph, or full-length essay characterizing the author's style and showing how the author's use of syntax affects tone and meaning.

Style and Syntax Analysis Worksheet

	Sentence 1	Sentence 2	Sentence 3	Sentence 4	Sentence 5
Number of words					
Number of independent clauses					
Number of subordinate clauses					
Use of dash, semicolon, or exclamation point					
Repeated use of coordinating conjunctions (and, yet, but, for, nor, so, or)					
Number of polysyllabic words					
Use of reverse order or questions					
Large number of prepositional or other descriptive phrases					
Use of repetition					
Use of parallel structures					
Use of rhetorical fragments					
Use of antithetical or balanced structures					
Other unusual or distinguishing characteristics of sentence structure (whole passage)					
Use of comparisons					
Types of figurative language (or none used)					
Use of colloquial expressions or regionalisms					

SYNTAX ANALYSIS

An effective method of teaching syntactical analysis is to assist students in closely reading opening or closing passages of novels (often the most carefully and deliberately structured parts of the book), or other richly layered and stylistically interesting passages, paying special attention to the syntactical techniques the author uses and analyzing sentence structure for its contribution to the tone of the piece. Sample passages and analyses are provided; teachers may adapt this technique to almost any work of literary merit from any grade level.

Sample Passage for Syntax Analysis

London. Michaelmas Term lately over, and the Lord Chancellor sitting in Lincoln's Inn Hall. Implacable November weather. As much mud in the streets as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill. Smoke lowering down from chimney-pots, making a soft black drizzle, with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snowflakes—gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the death of the sun. Dogs, indistinguishable in mire. Horses, scarcely better, splashed to their very blinkers. Foot-passengers jostling one another's umbrellas in a general infection of ill-temper and losing their foothold at streetcorners, where tens of thousands of other foot-passengers have been slipping and sliding since the day broke (if this day ever broke) adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud.

Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, fog down the river. Fog on the Essex marshes, fog on the Kentish heights. Fog creeping into the cabooses of collier-brigs; fog lying out on the yards and hovering in the rigging of great ships; fog drooping on the gunwales of barges and small boats...Never can there come fog too thick, never can there come mud and mire too deep, to assort with the groping and floundering condition which this High Court of Chancery, most pestilent of hoary sinners, holds, this day, in the sight of Heaven and earth.

Dickens, Charles. *Bleak House.* New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1951.

Passage Analysis

This passage is from a novel in which Dickens condemns the English court system known as "Chancery." Chancery courts resolve disputes over wills and were slow-moving and ineffective in Dickens' day, with cases taking decades or even generations to conclude, after which the proceeds of the case, if any, were consumed by legal costs and creditors of the principals in the case. The syntax of this passage is revealing in many ways. First of all, it is written almost entirely in *sentence fragments,* suggesting that the institution it describes never finishes anything it begins, that its process is never complete. The first paragraph begins with a one-word fragment, then builds to long, complex fragments with many elements, none of which finishes a thought, mirroring the legal process that begins with a simple claim and then complicates it. Dickens also uses *inverted sentence order* in the second paragraph to suggest the chaotic state of Chancery Court and the people who frequent it. Everything is unresolved, topsy-turvy, in this outmoded, ancient system. The complicated, digressive nature of Chancery Court is suggested by the long, serpentine fragments in the center of the passage in which *parenthetical insertions* interrupt the flow of events and thoughts, adding layers of complication. Many different types of *repetition,* including *anaphora,* occur in the syntax of the passage, emphasizing the repetitive nature of the court system, the sameness of the day-to-day proceedings,

and the lack of resolution that characterizes these long-drawn-out court cases. The use of many *prepositional phrases* in the second paragraph of the passage, all describing the ubiquitous nature of the fog, highlights the overall confusion and myopia that permeates the court system and makes it seem to be everywhere, blinding all its participants and preventing them from having a clear vision of truth. The inverted order of the only complete sentences in the passage—the last ones—gives a thunderous, outraged, biblical tone to the condemnation Dickens heaps upon what he considered one of the travesties of his time—an institution that wasted people's time and money, dragged on incessantly, and consumed uselessly the resources meant to provide justice and equity.

This passage, as well as *most* opening or closing passages from novels, also provides ample opportunity for the analysis of symbolism, diction, concrete detail, and figurative language. Syntactical analysis is only one aspect of close reading and will not occur in isolation. However, it can be a key element in the reader's understanding of the way in which an author uses language to create a powerful emotional and rhetorical effect.

Examine the Syntax Within a Single Sentence

Write a sentence on the board and help students discover how syntactical techniques support meaning.

> Next morning when the first light came into the sky and the sparrows stirred in the trees, when the cows rattled their chains and the rooster crowed and the early automobiles went whispering along the road, Wilbur awoke and looked for Charlotte.
>
> From *Charlotte's Web.* New York: HarperCollins Publishers. Inc., 1952. Copyright 1952 by E. B. White; renewed 1980 by E. B. White.

Teachers can consider the following analysis when leading a discussion or when encouraging students to write about how the author has used syntax effectively within a single sentence in a novel.

The sentence follows the sun, the birds, the cows, then the cars. Finally, when the world is awake, Wilbur gets up to look for Charlotte. The movement of the sentence takes the readers from the sunlight, which not only begins the day but represents the farthest remove from humanity, down through birds, cows, and roosters—coming ever closer—until it gets to the cars, driven by human beings. But no human beings appear, so the readers can continue to enjoy the pretense that Wilbur and Charlotte are human even though they are actually a pig and a spider, respectively.

The sentence is periodic, moving from the opening adverb phrase through the two successive adverb clauses, the second longer than the first, to the final main clause—the main focal and grammatical point of the sentence. In addition, it may be helpful to note that in the first subordinate clause, the subjects

are the sun and the sparrows—natural and free-ranging—while in the second, the subjects are cows in chains, a rooster, and the automobiles. So by the time Wilbur awakes and goes back to look for Charlotte, the scene has been fully set.

If White had changed the order of the sentence to "Wilbur awoke and looked for Charlotte when the first light came into the sky and the sparrows stirred in the trees, when the cows rattled their chains and the rooster crowed and the early automobiles went whispering along the road," the emphasis on Wilbur's action would be forgotten by the time the reader reaches the end of the sentence.

Examine the Syntax Within a Single Page of a Novel

Teachers can duplicate a passage from a novel that the class is studying and put the excerpt on the overhead projector. The class should work as a group in identifying the syntactical structures that distinguish the passage (e.g., repetition of the sentence pattern, rhetorical fragments, inverted word order). The discussion will incorporate the effect of the choices made by the author and how those choices contribute to the tone and meaning.

> It was a cold grey day in late November. The weather had changed overnight, when a backing wind brought a granite sky and a mizzling rain with it, and although it was not only a little after two o'clock in the afternoon the pallor of a winter evening seemed to have closed upon the hills, cloaking them in mist. It would be dark by four. The air was clammy cold, and for all the tightly closed windows it penetrated the interior of the coach. The leather seats felt damp to the hands, and there must have been a small crack in the roof, because now and again little drips of rain fell softly through, smudging the leather and leaving a dark blue stain like a splodge of ink. The wind came in gusts, at times shaking the coach as it travelled round the bend of the road, and in the exposed places on the high ground it blew with such force that the whole body of the coach trembled and swayed, rocking between the high wheels like a drunken man.
>
> The driver, muffled in a greatcoat to his ears, bent almost double in his seat in a faint endeavour to gain shelter from his own shoulders, while the dispirited horses plodded sullenly to his command, too broken by the wind and the rain to feel the whip that now and again cracked above their heads, while it swung between the numb fingers of the driver.
>
> The wheels of the coach creaked and groaned as they sank into the ruts on the road, and sometimes they flung up the soft splattered mud against the windows, where it mingled with the constant driving rain, and whatever view there might have been of the countryside was hopelessly obscured.
>
> DuMaurier, Daphne. *Jamaica Inn.* In *Four Great Cornish Novels: Jamaica Inn, Rebecca, Frenchman's Creek, My Cousin Rachel.* London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1978.

The teacher may choose to lead a discussion based on the analysis given below.

A syntactical analysis of the page enables the reader to predict the subject and to anticipate the theme of the novel.

In paragraph one, the first and third sentences sandwich the second. Note the length of each sentence. The first one is simple; so is the third. Both are impersonal, beginning not even with a subject but the pseudosubject "It." In the second, the bleakness of the weather is emphasized by the adverb clauses that describe the wind, sky, and rain; the time of the afternoon; and the prospect of a winter evening in which the main quality—a pallor—already has cloaked the hills in mist. By this point in the paragraph, the reader can feel the cold and see the oppressive, cheerless mist.

In the second paragraph, a single sentence begins and ends with the same two words, "the driver." As a verb, "bent" sits without energy in the first line. Between the beginning and end are modifying phrases and clauses that pull the reader's attention from the muffled driver to the "dispirited horses" and to the wind and rain, already described but now enhanced by an implicit comparison to the whip. From the whip, the author redirects the reader's attention to the driver. By now, the gloomy and dreary atmosphere has permeated the horses and the man, and no cheerful scene can be expected to return soon.

The third paragraph, itself a single sentence, concentrates on the wheels of the coach. Here, unlike the previous sentence, the verbs work energetically: the wheels "creak," "groan," "sink," and "fling mud." The mud takes over, mingles with the rain, and finally obscures "whatever view there might have been."

The atmosphere developed on the first page prepares us for a disturbing story of bleak passion and anguish.

Another Example of Syntax Analysis

The North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance agent promised to fly from Mercy to the other side of Lake Superior at three o'clock. Two days before the event was to take place he tacked a note on the door of his little yellow house.

At 3:00 P.M. on Wednesday the 18th of February, 1931, I
will take off from Mercy and fly away on my own wings.
Please forgive me. I loved you all.

(signed) Robert Smith, Ins. agent

Mr. Smith didn't draw as big a crowd as Lindbergh had four years earlier—not more than forty or fifty people showed up—because it was already eleven o'clock in the morning, on the very Wednesday he had chosen for his flight, before anybody read the note. At that time of day, during the middle of the week, word-of-mouth news just lumbered along.

Children were in school; men were at work; and most of the women were fastening their corsets and getting ready to go see what tails or entrails the butcher might be giving away. Only the unemployed, the self-employed, and the very young were available—deliberately available because they'd heard about it, or accidentally available because they happened to be walking at that exact moment in the short end of Not Doctor Street, a name the post office did not recognize. Town maps registered the street as Mains Avenue, but the only colored doctor in the city had lived and died on that street, and when he moved there in 1896 his patients took to calling the street, which none of them lived in or near, Doctor Street. Later, when other Negroes moved there, and when the postal service became a popular means of transferring messages among them, envelopes from Louisiana, Virginia, Alabama, and Georgia began to arrive addressed to people at house numbers on Doctor Street. The post office workers returned these envelopes or passed them on to the Dead Letter Office. Then in 1918, when colored men were being drafted, a few gave their address at the recruitment office as Doctor Street. In that way, the name acquired quasi-official status. But not for long. Some of the city legislators, whose concern for appropriate names and the maintenance of the city's landmarks was the principal part of their political life, saw to it that "Doctor Street" was never used in any official capacity. And since they knew that only Southside residents kept it up, they had notices posted in the stores, barbershops, and restaurants in that part of the city saying that the avenue running northerly and southerly from Shore Road fronting the lake to the junction of routes 6 and 2 leading to Pennsylvania, and also running parallel to and between Rutherford Avenue and Broadway, had always been and would always be known as Mains Avenue and not Doctor Street.

It was a genuinely clarifying public notice because it gave Southside residents a way to keep their memories alive and please the city legislators as well. They called it Not Doctor Street, and were inclined to call the charity hospital at its northern end No Mercy Hospital since it was 1931, on the day following Mr. Smith's leap from its cupola, before the first colored expectant mother was allowed to give birth inside its wards and not on its steps.

Students and teachers analyzing the diction and syntax of this first page of Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* would discover the following ideas:

A fantastic event (a man planning to "fly" from "Mercy...on [his] own wings") is heralded in the simplest, most mundane language. Treating this plan in such a nonchalant, realistic manner prepares the reader for the mixture of the fantastic and the commonplace that, later in the novel, makes the unbelievable more believable (reminiscent of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's "magic realism").

Offering specific details of time, date, and place (e.g., the tacking of a note to the "little yellow house") is a shocking contrast to the seriousness of the potentially suicidal event.

Robert Smith's planned flight contrasts with the use of the word "lumbered" to describe the way news travels in the middle of a work-weary week—a week from which many must wish to fly away.

In the sentence beginning "Children were in school...," the list of activities—paralleled both by structure and by the use of "s"—culminates with women who fasten on "corsets" to go "see what tails or entrails the butcher might be giving away." This accomplishes two paradoxical goals. It indicates the importance of women whose description is much longer than that of the children or men and who supply the food for the family, yet it also denigrates their restricted position in society (wearing of the corsets) and their poverty as they rely on charity for "tails or entrails."

Note how the idea of names (thematically critical to the novel) is introduced offhandedly, even tangentially, at the tag end of the sentence mentioning "Not Doctor Street, a name the post office did not recognize."

The lengthy, humorous story of how "Not Doctor Street" received its name stresses the contrast between the "official" white-dominated society, with its concern for "appropriate names," and the practical Southside community that seeks to "keep its memories alive" with names. The black community uses names to reflect reality and does so despite the efforts of the prevailing white community to superimpose its facade (Mains Ave.) for a street that is not even of central importance to it.

Satire of the city legislators' hypocrisy and superficiality is underscored in the length and complexity of the 78-word sentence beginning "And since they knew..." which sounds as pompous and confused as the interaction between the legislators and the Southside residents.

The parallel phrasing of "Not Doctor Street" and "No Mercy Hospital" calls satirical attention to the idea that healing seems inapplicable to the poor Southside residents.

Reevaluating this page **after** completing the novel would reveal additional important ideas:

- The motif of flight (from responsibility, from guilt, for freedom, for joy) is introduced.
- The subject of love as a primary motive for many kinds of actions, including violence, is introduced in Robert Smith's note.
- Irony exists in the fact that Robert Smith, a life insurance agent, is a murderer whose guilt spurs him to suicide.

Examine the Syntax of a Passage from an AP Examination

The following passage was used in the AP English Language and Composition Examination (1984):

Paret was a Cuban, a proud club fighter who had become welterweight champion because of his unusual ability to take a punch. His style of fighting was to take three punches to the head in order to give back two. At the end of ten rounds, he would still be bouncing, his opponent would have a headache. But in the last two years, over fifteen-round fights, he had started to take some bad maulings.

This fight had its turns, Griffith won most of the early rounds, but Paret knocked Griffith down in the sixth. Griffith had trouble getting up, but made it, came alive and was dominating Paret again before the round was over. Then Paret began to wilt. In the middle of the eighth round, after a clubbing punch had turned his back to Griffith, Paret walked three disgusted steps away, showing his hindquarters. For a champion, he took much too long to turn back around. It was the first hint of weakness Paret had ever shown, and it must have inspired a particular shame, because he fought the rest of the fight as if he were seeking to demonstrate that he could take more punishment than any man alive. In the twelfth, Griffith caught him. Paret got trapped in a corner. Trying to duck away, his left arm and his head became tangled on the wrong side of the top rope. Griffith was in like a cat ready to rip the life out of a huge boxed rat. He hit him eighteen right hands in a row, an act which took perhaps three or four seconds. Griffith making a pent-up whimpering sound all the while he attacked, the right hand whipping like a piston rod which has broken through the crankcase, or like a baseball bat demolishing a pumpkin. I was sitting in the second row of that corner—they were not ten feet away from me, and like everybody else, I was hypnotized. I had never seen one man hit another so hard and so many times. Over the referee's face came a look of woe as if some spasm had passed its way through him, and then he leaped on Griffith to pull him away. It was the act of a brave man. Griffith was uncontrollable. His trainer leaped into the ring, his manager, his cut man, there were four people holding Griffith, but he was off on an orgy, he had left the Garden, he was back on a hoodlum's street. If he had been able to break loose from his handlers and the referee, he would have jumped Paret to the floor and whaled on him there.

And Paret? Paret died on his feet. As he took those eighteen punches something happened to everyone who was in psychic range of the event. Some part of his death reached out to us. One felt it hover in the air. He was still standing in the ropes, trapped as had been before, he gave some little half-smile of regret, as if he were saying, "I didn't know I was going to die just yet," and then, his head leaning back but still erect, his death came to breathe about him. He began to pass away. As he passed, so his limbs descended beneath him, and he sank slowly to the floor. He went down more slowly than any fighter had ever gone down, he went down like a large ship which turns on end and slides second by second into its grave. As he went down, the sound of Griffith's punches echoed in the mind like a heavy ax in the distance chopping into a wet log.

Mailer, Norman. *The Presidential Papers.* New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1963.

In the passage, Norman Mailer describes a championship boxing match. He uses a journalistic style with a novelist's skill to re-create the action that is associated with the event. Note the patterns of sentences in the passage. In the first paragraph, the first three sentences are informative statements with the subject at or near the beginning. The fourth sentence, however, begins with the conjunction "But," and the subject appears 11 words into the sentence. The effect of this structure is to call our attention to a change in the implications of the information, to the length of his decline, and to the length of his fights. Both the sentence and the paragraph end with the word "maulings." In the second paragraph, the action suddenly accelerates. Sentences become shorter, and most of the words are monosyllabic. In line 25, the focus shifts from the fighters to the observers at ringside. Then, when the narrator's hypnotized reaction has been mentioned, the reader's attention is redirected to the ring, but this time to an involved observer, the referee.

Further analysis would note the progression of the work building to the dramatic last paragraph.

Examine the Syntax of a Passage Using a Sentence-Beginning Activity
(This activity has been adapted from "SOS Sentence Opening Sheet." Robert B. Cahill and Herbert J. Hrebic. *Stack the Deck.* Chicago: The Stack the Deck Writing Program, P.O. Box 429, Tinley Park, IL 60477, 1994.)

The SOS sheet is a useful tool that allows students to contrast the writing of two authors, to study the style of a single author, and to improve the effectiveness of their own writing style. A column labeled "Special Features" allows the teacher to identify elements that focus on the particular assignment (e.g., imagery, periodic sentence, figurative language, etc.). The first step is for students to fill in a chart similar to the one below:

Sentence Number	First Four Words	Special Features	Verbs	No. of Words Per Sentence
1				
2				

The following chart of the third paragraph of the Benny Paret article reveals Mailer's mastery of diction, skilled imagery, and manipulation of sentence length to reflect content. For example, a glance at sentence nine, which recounts Paret's fall, illustrates this idea. This lengthy sentence (31 words) is a series of clauses slipping irrevocably into one another, even as Paret slides slowly to the floor. Mailer consciously manipulates syntax to stress the meaning and effect of the sentence.

Sentence Number	First Four Words	Special Features	Verbs	No. of Words Per Sentence
1	And Paret	—		2
2	Paret died on his	—	died	5
3	As he took those	—	took, happened, was	18
4	Some part of his	personification	reached	9
5	One felt it hover	—	hover	7
6	He was still standing	personification	was standing, trapped, had been, gave, were saying, did know, was going, came	51
7	He began to pass	—	began	5
8	As he passed, so	consonance	passed, descended, sank	16
9	He went down more	simile	went, had gone, went, turns, slides	31
10	As he went down	simile	went, echoed	25

When the chart is completed, it is examined by the student alone, by a peer group, or by the teacher together with the student.

Examine the Syntax of a Student Composition Using Sentence-Beginning Activity

As a revision technique for a student's own writing, completion of a chart may signal various writing problems (repetitiveness in sentence opening, possible run-ons or fragments, passive voice, poor verb choice, lack of variety of sentence lengths, etc.). This technique allows students not only to revise grammatical and usage errors but also to strengthen the meaning and effectiveness of their writing.

Students will use their charts to revise their own writing. For example, the following chart of the first paragraph on one student's essay about Mailer's Benny Paret article reveals a number of problems.

Sentence Number	First Four Words	Special Features	Verbs	No. of Words Per Sentence
1	In an article about	—	writes, describes	16
2	Mailer writes that Paret	—	writes, is, loses	17
3	Mailer says that the	—	says, reflects	15
4	After examining the fight	—	believes, suggests, is, reveals	40
5	The fight is an	—	is, penetrates	18
6	The fight is also	—	also, is	10
7	Because of the way	—	fights	6

Thus, the student may wish to revise his composition after noting the following problems:

Repetition of identical sentence structure and especially of sentence openings in Number 2 and Numbers 3, 5, and 6. Revise to improve sentence variety.

Excessive use of the verb "to be" and several repetitions of "says" and "writes." Revise to use more powerful verbs.

Possible opportunity for sentence combining with Number 2 and Numbers 3, 5, and 6. Revise to improve rhythm and to ensure that syntax enhances meaning.

Possible grammatical problems. Evaluate Number 4 for possible run-on sentence. Evaluate Number 7 for possible fragment.

Possible choppiness as the result of the use of the short sentence. Evaluate Numbers 6 and 7 to see if the ideas of the sentences are important enough to be singled out by a short sentence structure or if the ideas of the sentences are enhanced by the short sentence structure.

Much of the power of language arises from the way diction and syntax enhance meaning. Since this is true of good writing at all reading levels, every teacher on a vertical team can and should focus on the examination of these elements of language as their pupils become both students of literature and writers themselves.

LITERARY ELEMENTS

SETTING

Setting is the historical time and place and the social circumstances that create the world in which characters act and make choices. Readers who are sensitive to this world are better able to understand and judge the behavior of the characters and the significance of the action. Very often readers do not see the significance of the details associated with setting. They may read through the information quickly, impatient to get to what they believe are more important matters such as plot and theme. Ironically, the social circumstances of a story will often illuminate and provide insights into the meaning of a literary piece.

The setting can be revealed through the author's use of details about one or more of the following:

- Geographic location—topography (landscape), scenery, room layout (type and position of furniture), buildings, stage set or design; the physical dimensions of the place.
- Cultural backdrop/social context/time period—occupations/working conditions, way of life, way of talking and behaving, clothing, gender roles, traditions, habits, attitudes, customs, beliefs, values, speech patterns, laws, past, present, future.
- Artificial environment—rooms, buildings, cities, towns, villages, futuristic settings, etc.
- Props—tools, implements, gadgets, clothing/costumes, furniture.

When teachers and students consider the setting of a particular work, they may wish to ask the following questions:

- How many locations are described?
- How effective are the visual descriptions?
- Are there connections between the locations and the characters?
- What is the state of the objects, furniture, or dwellings?
- What conclusions does the author expect the reader to reach as a result of the world of the story?

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In addition to identifying the setting, remote or proximate, manufactured or natural, it is also necessary to analyze the effect setting may have on such elements as structure, symbol, irony, tone, mood, and character.

In this regard, setting may be connected to the structure of a work in that an author organizes the plot around the setting, for example, a frame structure where the action begins and ends in the identical place. It may also be used as a symbol itself where setting becomes contextual, not universal and highlights an author's particular idea as is seen in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, where

the island becomes a microcosm of society in general. Setting may also function as irony in that a description of a peaceful and natural scene may become the actual place where an evil and destructive act will soon occur, thus creating an unexpected contrast.

Two of the above categories, mood and character, are expanded below.

Setting As It Creates Mood or Atmosphere

Most often, people associate setting with the emotional content of a story, that is, with the mood or atmosphere. Through details about the environment, the emotional charge of a literary piece is created and that charge prepares the reader for what is to come. When authors describe light, shadow, colors, shapes, smells, and sounds, they are using setting to create distinctive moods. The moods created can be described using emotion-based adjectives such as "sad," "gloomy," "foreboding," "suspenseful," "ominous," "dreary," "brooding," "tragic," "hopeless," "happy," "romantic," or "mysterious."

The description of Simon's bower from William Golding's novel, *Lord of the Flies,* creates a natural, serene, and peaceful mood.

> Simon dropped the screen of leaves back into place. The slope of the bars of honey-colored sunlight decreased; they slid up the bushes, passed over the green candle-like buds, moved up toward the canopy, and darkness thickened under the trees. With the fading of the light the riotous colors died and the heat and urgency cooled away. The candle-buds stirred. Their green sepals drew back a little and the white tips of the flowers rose delicately to meet the open air.
>
> Now the sunlight had lifted clear of the open space and withdrawn from the sky. Darkness poured out, submerging the ways between the trees till they were dim and strange as the bottom of the sea. The candle-buds opened their wide white flowers glimmering under the light that pricked down from the first stars. Their scent spilled out into the air and took possession of the island.
>
>

Classroom Activities

Examine the opening paragraphs of J.R.R. Tolkien's novel, *The Hobbit.* This work has very distinctive settings that evoke different moods for the students as they read the text.

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort.

It had a perfectly round door like a porthole, painted green, with a shiny yellow brass knob in the exact middle. The door opened on to a tube-shaped hall like a tunnel: a very comfortable tunnel without smoke, with panelled walls, and floors tiled and carpeted, provided with polished chairs, and lots and lots of pegs for hats and coats—the hobbit was fond of visitors. The tunnel wound on and on, going fairly but not quite straight into the side of the hill—The Hill, as all the people for many miles round called it—and many little round doors opened out of it, first on one side and then on another. No going upstairs for the hobbit: bedrooms, bathrooms, cellars, pantries (lots of these), wardrobes (he had whole rooms devoted to clothes), kitchens, dining-rooms, all were on the same floor, and indeed on the same passage. The best rooms were all on the lefthand side (going in), for these were the only ones to have windows, deep-set round windows looking over his garden, and meadows beyond, sloping down to the river.

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit: or, There and Back Again* (Revised edition). New York: Ballantine Books, 1982, p. 1.

A writer often uses imagery to create moods or feelings. For example, in Elizabeth Madox Roberts' poem entitled "Cold Fear," the images produced create both a visual sense of a person caught in a frozen landscape while also depicting a mood of terror.

Read the poem "Cold Fear" with the class. Students may then make a chart of the sensory images of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell that they experience as a result of listening to the poem.

Cold Fear
As I came home through Drury's Woods,
My face stung in the hard sleet.
The rough ground kept its frozen tracks;
They stumbled my feet.
The trees shook off the blowing frost.
The wind found out my coat was thin.
It tried to tear my clothes away.
And the cold came in.

This poem can be compared with Nikki Giovanni's poem "Knoxville, Tennessee" to begin an examination of setting.

The poem by Nikki Giovanni entitled "Knoxville, Tennessee" uses details that create summer imagery, evoking a sense of pleasure and a time of innocence.

Read the poem aloud to the class. Have the members of the class complete the same chart for this poem that they did for "Cold Fear," filling in the images associated with the five senses that they can find in the poem dealing with summer in Tennessee.

Knoxville, Tennessee
I always like summer
best
you can eat fresh corn
from daddy's garden
and okra
and greens
and cabbage
and lots of
barbecue
and buttermilk
and homemade ice-cream
at the church picnic
and listen to
gospel music
outside
at the church
homecoming
and go to the mountains with
your grandmother
and go barefooted
and be warm
all the time
not only when you go to bed and sleep

Using the list of sensory images that the students create, the members of the class can identify the various feelings associated with each of the outlined images. For example, in "Knoxville, Tennessee," the detailed list of foods suggests comfort, warmth, and security. In the poem "Cold Fear," the words "stung," "hard," "rough," "frozen," "blowing," and "tear" connote an atmosphere of life-threatening terror. Students may then write compositions that compare and contrast the various settings and moods of the two poems.

Using the poems by Giovanni and Roberts, students may write compositions that examine the various images created by the two poets. Students should also examine the syntax and structure found in the two poems. Students should note that the poem "Cold Fear" relies on the use of adjectives and personification to achieve its chilling effect while "Knoxville, Tennessee" incorporates

specific nouns that bring about pleasant connotations.

Setting As a Reflection of Character

When analyzing the correlation between setting and character, one should consider the way characters respond to their environment and their adjustment to any changes in this setting. If an author gives details about a character's favorite room, workplace, hideaway, or manner of dress, the reader may infer certain traits which serve to enhance character development.

In Chapter XIX of Mark Twain's novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* Huck and Jim have been on the Mississippi River for three days and nights after the Grangerford episode. Here, the description of the river functions as a parallel to Huck's and Jim's tranquility and also provides a contrast to the disreputable characters they are about to meet.

> It was a monstrous big river down there—sometimes a mile and a half wide; we run nights, and laid up and hid daytimes; soon as night was most gone, we stopped navigating and tied up—nearly always in the dead water under a tow-head; and then cut young cotton-woods and willows and hid the raft with them. Then we set out the lines. Next we slid into the river and had a swim, so as to freshen up and cool off; then we set down on the sandy bottom where the water was about knee deep, and watched the daylight come. Not a sound anywheres—perfectly still—just like the whole world was asleep, only sometimes the bullfrogs a-clattering, maybe. The first thing to see, looking away over the water, was a kind of dull line—that was the woods on t'other side; you couldn't make nothing else out; then a pale place in the sky; then more paleness spreading around; then the river softened up away off, and warn't black any more, but gray; you could see little dark spots drifting along ever so far away—trading-scows, and such things; and long black streaks—rafts; sometimes you could hear a sweep screaking; or jumbled-up voices, it was so still, and sounds come so far; and by and by you could see a streak on the water which you know by the look of the streak that there's a snag there in a swift current which breaks on it and makes that streak look that way; and you see the mist curl up off of the water, and the east reddens up, and the river, and you make out a log cabin in the edge of the woods, away on the bank on t'other side of the river, being a wood-yard, likely, and piled by them cheats so you can throw a dog through it anywheres; then the nice breeze springs up, and comes fanning you from over there, so cool and fresh and sweet to smell on account of the woods and the flowers; but sometimes not that way, because they've left dead fish laying around, gars and such, and they do get pretty rank; and next you've got the full day, and everything smiling in the sun, and the song-birds just going it!
>
> Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.* New York: Bantam Books, 1981, pp. 113–114.

Classroom Activities

In Daniel Keyes' short story "Flowers for Algernon," Charlie Gordon, a man who has limited mental abilities, is in a hospital waiting for experimental surgery that may improve his intellectual capacity. Both Charlie Gordon and Algernon, a mouse that has already had the experimental operation, are "boxed in." For both Charlie and Algernon, life is a maze.

Students may examine the following passage and list the similarities between Charlie's world and Algernon's environment. Then they might analyze the type of life Charlie has as a result of his limited environment.

> Later some men in white coats took me to a difernt part of the hospitil and gave me a game to play. It was like a race with a white mouse. They called the mouse Algernon. Algernon was in a box with a lot of twists and turns like all kinds of walls and they gave me a pencil and a paper with lines and lots of boxes. On one side it said START and on the other end it said FINISH. They said it was *amazed* and that Algernon and me had the same *amazed* to do. I dint see how we could have the same *amazed* if Algernon had a box and I had a paper but I dint say nothing. Anyway there wasn't time because the race started.
>
> Excerpted from *Algernon, Charlie and I: A Writer's Journey* by Daniel Keyes. By permisssion of the author. ©1959, 1987, 1999.

The opening paragraph from Rudolfo Anaya's novel *Bless Me, Ultima* not only describes the *llano,* or plains, it also provides insight into the nature of both of the main characters, Tony and his mentor Ultima.

Students might examine the opening from the novel and then write a character sketch of Tony and Ultima based on what is learned about them from the author's words about the setting. If students read the complete novel, they should then review their preliminary sketches to check their validity.

> Ultima came to stay with us the summer I was almost seven. When she came the beauty of the llano unfolded before my eyes, and the gurgling waters of the river sang to the hum of the turning earth. The magical time of childhood stood still, and the pulse of the living earth pressed its mystery into my living blood. She took my hand, and the silent, magic powers she possessed made the beauty from the raw, sun-baked llano, the green river valley, and the blue bowl which was the white sun's home. My bare feet felt the throbbing earth and my body trembled with excitement. Time stood still, and it shared with me all that had been, and all that was to come....
>
>

The opening paragraph in James Joyce's short story "Araby" describes a young man's neighborhood. What can be inferred about the inhabitants of North Richmond Street from the details provided about the setting? Examine the diction found in the passage provided below and then write an analysis of that setting.

> North Richmond Street, being blind, was a quiet street except at the hour when the Christian Brothers' School set the boys free. An uninhabited house of two storeys stood at the blind end, detached from its neighbours in a square ground. The other houses of the street, conscious of decent lives within them, gazed at one another with brown imperturbable faces.
>
>

Archetypal Settings

Archetypal settings or setting elements have some universal aspect that is associated by most people with a particular human experience. For example, deserts are associated with spiritual quests through which the character is cleansed of desire and materialism and in which he or she has a divine or prophetic vision. The sea is a setting that hints at an opportunity to delve into the subconscious. Underground, or "chthonic" places suggest a "belly of the whale" experience in which the hero confronts the darker or more unpleasant aspects of the self, including the fear of death. Many other archetypal setting enrich the reader's understanding of the author's chosen theme. Other archetypal setting elements include:

- the river
- the garden
- the wasteland
- the maze
- the castle
- the tower
- the wilderness
- the threshold

Works such as *The Grapes of Wrath, Dune, Moby Dick, Cold Mountain, Lonesome Dove, The Crossing, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Dandelion Wine, Bridge to Terabithia, Invisible Man, Ender's Game, The Giver, The Great Gatsby,* and many others contain archetypal setting elements that serve symbolic functions.

CHARACTERIZATION

When we read fiction, we tend to sympathize with one or two characters and develop some antipathy towards their antagonists. We may identify sufficiently with them so that their enemies become our enemies. The character that we like or with whom we sympathize is almost always the main character, the point of view character, or the *protagonist:* three different terms for the same person.

Characterization is the process of presenting the different aspects of character and personality of someone in a novel or short story or any other narrative depiction of human beings. Readers learn about characters from:

- What they say (dialogue),
- What they do (actions),
- What they think (interior monologue),
- What they have and wear,
- Where they are,
- The people with whom they associate,
- What others say about them, and
- Through the author's direct statement.

The terms *narrator, point of view,* and *characterization* are so closely related that it is difficult to discuss any one without referring to the other two. The narrator tells the story from a certain point of view and, in doing so, develops the character of the persons in the narrative. The *omniscient narrator* and the *limited narrator* present information in different ways. The omniscient narrator knows all the thoughts of all the characters, so he or she may choose to describe a character explicitly. The narrator may do so in an introductory scene as the omniscient narrator describes Pat McCormick, the corrupt contractor in *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* by B. Traven.

> Pat McCormick, the contractor, was an old-timer. Before he had come down here, he had worked in Texas fields and afterwards in Oklahoma. He had come down here before the war, before there was anything that looked like a coming boom. There wasn't a job connected with oil at which he had had not tried his hand. He had been teamster, truck-driver, time-keeper, driller, tool-dresser, pumpman, storeman—anything that had come his way he had tackled. In recent years he had found out that there is more money in rigging up camps by contract—so much for the camp ready to start drilling. He had acquired an excellent eye for judging the job. He could look over a lot in the jungle and name his price for the job in such a well-calculated way that the company thought they were buying cheap when in fact he made a large profit on every contract. His trick was to get good and efficient labor cheap, cheaper than any company could get it. A company cannot hire workers with backpattings and cajoling, making them believe they are being taken on out of pity. Pat knew how to play the good fellow, even the Bolshevik comrade, to catch his men cheap. He could curse the big capitalist companies and their unscrupulous shareholders better than a Communist speaker when he wanted to soft-soap good workers. According to him, he never came out of his contract with any profit; he always lost his good money, so hard-earned in better times, and he took contracts, he said, only because he could not see men who wanted to work suffer from unemployment and starvation. In camp he played the good fellow-worker, joking and friendly. The whole job he handled as if it were a sort of co-operative enterprise in which all joined for the general good. He told how excellent Communism

> is; if he had his way, the United States and all South America would become a paradise for the Communists tomorrow.
>
> American boys he couldn't catch so easily with these ideas. Americans knew this sort of Pat too well to fall for his cooperative contracts. He took on Americans only when he could procure no others. Most welcome were the newly arrived Hunks, Czechs, Poles, Germans, Italians, fellows who had heard back home the stories of men working in the Mexican oil-fields and earning from thirty to fifty dollars a day almost without bending a finger. Having arrived in the republic, they learned during the first week that such fantastic wages were as rare as are the wages a bricklayer gets in Chicago, according to the fairy-tales circulating in Europe. After these men are here two months or so they kneel down before any contractor who offers them five dollars a day, and if he offers them eight, they worship him as they never worship the All-mighty, and the contractor may do with them what he likes. After six months without a job they are ready to accept whatever is offered.
>
>

The narrator may use a series of comments and observations throughout the narrative. When taken together, these may give the reader as much information as an introductory portrait, and this method may be used to develop suspense or to delay the discovery of some important information about the character. Unlike the omniscient narrator, a limited narrator does not control characterization in the narrative. Usually, this narrator tells what he or she sees without recourse to the thoughts of any other character. Huck Finn, an *innocent eye* or *naïve observer,* initially too young and guileless to understand true evil and too respectful of society to defy its rules, manages to grow and mature sufficiently during the novel so that at the end he can understand that the villainous king and duke are only the extreme examples of what turns out to be an "awful cruel" society. In his narrative, we see all characters in action, and because we understand the motives of the characters far better than Huck does, we also understand that he is often in greater danger than he thinks he is. At other times, an author may use an *unreliable narrator* to tell the story, one whose motives are suspect and whose interpretation of events the reader should question. An example of an unreliable narrator is Nellie in Wuthering Heights, whose dislike of Cathy causes her to misrepresent and misinterpret certain events.

The reader deduces from all the evidence that characters in the novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* are good or bad, strong or weak, innocent or corrupt. The characters are revealed in action through dramatic means. The method is the same as in a play where characterization is revealed by the characters' actions, their responses to the actions of others, and their own words. In Shakespeare's play, *King Lear,* the old king says, "You do me wrong to take me out of the grave:/ Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound/ Upon a wheel of fire that mine own tears/ Do scald like molten lead" (*King Lear,* IV, vii, 45–48). In this emotionally powerful scene, we understand that the once-foolish king has begun to accept his dreadful punishment and to prepare for death. His words

show that he has been purged of his egotism and selfishness and that he is now capable of seeing himself as fallible, foolish, and senile and his daughter, Cordelia, not as a hateful ingrate but as an angelic figure.

The reader may get to know the characters by observing the effects that external events or circumstances have upon them. An excellent example is the characterization of the four narrators of William Faulkner's novel, *The Sound and the Fury*. The first narrator, Benjy, whose simple mind cannot comprehend chronology, recollects important events through sensory and verbal association. The author does not comment in this case, so the reader must do all the work of collecting evidence, drawing conclusions from it, and establishing a workable chronology of the events of the novel. In this way we can understand what Benjy cannot: the immorality and decadence of the apparently upstanding Compson family.

Types of Character

To be believable, a character must be relevant to all people throughout the ages. The emotions and concerns of real people of all times are expressed in concrete terms through the traits of literary characters. In novels and short stories we come to know and understand a character most profoundly through his or her actions. An author may choose to concentrate on a single dominant trait (two-dimensional, angular, or *flat character*) to the exclusion or reduction of others, or the author may present a complex, fully rounded personality (three-dimensional or *round character*). If a single dominant trait is carried to an extreme, caricature results; such characters may be memorable and striking, but they lack depth. In fiction, the major characters generally need three-dimensional treatment; minor characters are usaully handled in two dimensions.

A character that changes little over the course of a narrative is called a *static character.* Things do happen to such a character, but little happens in him or her. This character is revealed by the action but is not changed by the action.

A character that changes in response to the actions through which he or she passes is called a *dynamic character.* One of the objectives of the work is to reveal the consequences of the action upon him or her. In longer literary works, protagonists are dynamic characters. Short fiction usually reveals static characters rather than characters changing in response to the action.

Archetypal characters are those who embody a certain kind of universal human experience. For example, a *femme fatale, siren,* or *temptress* figure is a character who purposefully lures men to disaster through her beauty. Instances of the femme fatale archetype in literature include the Sirens in *The Odyssey,* Delilah in the Bible story, Memo Paris in Bernard Malamud's novel *The Natural,* Keats's *La Belle Dame Sans Merci,* and Cathy in Steinbeck's *East of Eden.* Other examples of archetypal figures include the damsel in distress; the mentor; the old crone, hag, or witch; the earth mother; the blind seer; the threshold guardian; and the naïve young man from the country. Many other archetypes resonate within literary works; investigation into the ideas of Joseph Campbell, Carl Jung, or other archetype scholars will prove valuable for those wishing to explore further the idea of archetypal characterization.

PLOT

When characters are set in opposition to each other in literature, the result is usually conflict. Conflict requires resolution, and in a novel, short story or drama, the process of the resolution of conflict is called the *plot.* Plot usually involves the outline of the clearly connected and interdependent actions undertaken by the characters. Because most plots begin with the onset of the conflict between important characters, the middle sections should develop the conflict as well as the characters themselves, and the end should clearly show how the conflict has been resolved. In Hamlet's conflict with his stepfather, King Claudius, for example, the reader sees that as the **protagonist** (Hamlet) and the **antagonist** (Claudius) become increasingly hostile to each other, certain events occur which result in death for important minor characters, and when the major characters finally confront each other, the Queen, the King, Laertes, and Hamlet himself die violently. In addition, murder is brought to light and justice reasserts its rule. In this way, the nation is cleansed of corruption and Hamlet avenges his father's murder.

Unlike real life, plot is an artistic construct that follows an artificial sense of order. The author selects certain items from a life or a period in a life that are sufficiently related to share a *unity of action.* A. C. Bradley, a Victorian critic, defined tragedy as "character in action." This statement can easily be expanded to say that plot itself is character in action.

When asked what plot means, students will often answer "what happens in a story or poem." Although such a response is correct to a point, it ignores the crucial elements of cause and effect, which invariably drive plot. The following exercises are designed for students to focus on causal relationships that help to create plot.

Activities

Identify the causal relationships between the events in the following story that propel the reader to the final action.

The Flowers

It seemed to Myop as she skipped lightly from hen house to pigpen to smokehouse that the days had never been as beautiful as these. The air held a keenness that made her nose twitch. The harvesting of the corn and cotton, peanuts and squash, made each day a golden surprise that caused excited little tremors to run up her jaws.

Myop carried a short, knobby stick. She struck out at random at chickens she liked, and worked out the beat of a song on the fence around the pigpen. She felt light and good in the warm sun. She was ten, and nothing existed for her but her song, the stick clutched in her dark brown hand, and the tat-d-ta-ta-ta of accompaniment.

Turning her back on the rusty boards of her family's sharecropper cabin, Myop walked along the fence till it ran into the stream made by the

spring. Around the spring, where the family got drinking water, silver ferns and wildflowers grew. Along the shallow banks pigs rooted. Myop watched the tiny white bubbles disrupt the thin black scale of soil and the water that silently rose and slid away down the stream.

She had explored the woods behind the house many times. Often, in late autumn, her mother took her to gather nuts among the fallen leaves. Today she made her own path, bouncing this way and that way, vaguely keeping an eye out for snakes. She found, in addition to various common but pretty ferns and leaves, an armful of strange blue flowers with velvety ridges and a sweetsuds bush full of the brown, fragrant buds.

By twelve o'clock, her arms laden with sprigs of her findings, she was a mile or more from home. She had often been as far before, but the strangeness of the land made it not as pleasant as her usual haunts. It seemed gloomy in the little cove in which she found herself. The air was damp, the silence close and deep.

Myop began to circle back to the house, back to the peacefulness of the morning. It was then she stepped smack into his eyes. Her heel became lodged in the broken ridge between brow and nose, and she reached down quickly, unafraid, to free herself. It was only when she saw his naked grin that she gave a little yelp of surprise.

He had been a tall man. From feet to neck covered a long space. His head lay beside him. When she pushed back the leaves and layers of earth and debris Myop saw that he'd had large white teeth, all of them cracked or broken, long fingers, and very big bones. All his clothes had rotted away except some threads of blue denim from his overalls. The buckles of the overalls had turned green.

Myop gazed around the spot with interest. Very near where she'd stepped into the head was a wild pink rose. As she picked it to add to her bundle she noticed a raised mound, a ring, around the rose's root. It was the rotted remains of a noose, a bit of shredding plowline, now blending benignly into the soil. Around an overhanging limb of a great spreading oak clung another piece. Frayed, rotted, bleached, and frazzled,—barely there—but spinning restlessly in the breeze. Myop laid down her flowers.

And the summer was over.

Questions

Why is it important that on this day Myop "made her own path"?

What clues in paragraphs 4 and 5 anticipate the shift the plot takes in paragraph 6?

Why does Myop lay down her flowers at the end?

Read the following poem and consider the line "There are no millers any more" in light of the events that occur in the poem. Students will see that the miller's loss of livelihood leads to his suicide, which then leads to his wife's taking her own life. Even in a short poem, the causal chain is prominent.

The Mill

The miller's wife had waited long,
The tea was cold, the fire was dead;
And there might yet be nothing wrong
In how he went and what he said:
"There are no millers any more,"
Was all that she had heard him say;
And he had lingered at the door
So long that it seemed yesterday.

Sick with a fear that had no form
She knew that she was there at last;
And in the mill there was a warm
And mealy fragrance of the past.
What else there was would only seem
To say again what he had meant;
And what was hanging from a beam
Would not have heeded where she went.

And if she thought it followed her,
She may have reasoned in the dark
That one way of the few there were
Would hide her and would leave no mark:
Black water, smooth above the weir
Like starry velvet in the night,
Though ruffled once, would soon appear
The same as ever to the sight.

Robinson, Edwin Arlington. "The Mill" in *Edwin Arlington Robinson: Selected Poems*, ed. Faggen, Robert. New York: Penguin, 1977.

In reading Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," students are usually involved with a close analysis of character, symbolism, and imagery (among other elements), but close attention to the causal chain created when the mariner kills the albatross emphasizes the enormity of his sin and leads to an amplified understanding of the poem's themes.

When analyzing conflict in a literary selection, students may benefit from a consideration of its usual forms:

- A person in conflict with another person
- A person in conflict with his or her inner self
- A person in conflict with his or her society
- A person in conflict with fate
- A person in conflict with nature

Although these five types of conflict are not the only ones possible, they often appear in literature and a knowledge of them may help students make the connection between plot, structure, and meaning.

Students may benefit from applying archetypal concepts to their analysis of plot. The journey of the hero in its numerous manifestations forms the basis of many plots in literature. An analysis of the following "quest" structures in literature may be useful in linking plot to theme:

- The quest for identity
- The journey in search of knowledge
- The epic journey to find the promised land or to build the good city
- The tragic quest: the journey to the crossroads
- The quest for vengeance
- The quest to rid the land of danger
- The warrior's journey to save his people
- The fool's errand (because of his naïve viewpoint, the "holy fool" or madman succeeds where others fail)
- The search for love (including the quest to save the princess)
- The grail quest (the search for human perfection or spiritual nourishment)

Students might choose one or more of these archetypal plot structures and write short stories that fit them, and then analyze each other's work, focusing on the link between plot and theme.

Narrative Structure

In fiction, analysis is concerned with two major aspects: structure and texture. The term *structure* is usually applied to the framework: the elements of arguments in essays, the plot or storyline in fiction, or the outline of other literary works. In poetry, the term *structure* indicates length and stanzaic form; in drama it indicates divisions into acts and scenes; in prose fiction, it indicates the storyline and chapter divisions.

The term *texture* is used to indicate the nonstructural elements of a work: metaphor, imagery, diction, tone, rhyme, and meter.

Narrative Pace

Every story is told at a certain pace with some variations in speed. In stories in which the unfolding of quick or violent action is important, the narrator may use action verbs rather than verbs of being or condition to create the effect of headlong speed in a chase or quick, reciprocal action in a fistfight. Novels by Daniel Defoe, Richard Wright, Robert Louis Stevenson, John Buchan, and other adventure writers may be used to illustrate brisk, action-packed narrative pace. However, in novels of ideas or novels of manners, there may well be extended discussions of ideas by characters or by the narrator. In such a case, very little action may take place, and the narrative pace slows down. The novels of Jane Austen and Henry James may be used to illustrate the slower narrative pace.

THEME

Theme is the central, underlying, and controlling idea of a literary work, such as a novel, a play, or an epic poem. It is an abstract concept that may be represented by a character, by actions, or by images in the literary work. It is a generalization about human conduct that may be serious or comic, profound or unsurprising. Because theme often involves the development and revelation of character, it is ordinarily expressed in a full sentence, and it may even require as much as a full paragraph. It is important to understand not only what theme is but also what it is not. It cannot be expressed in a single word as a subject can. It is not the purpose of a work such as entertainment or instruction. Man versus nature is not a theme—it is a conflict. Unlike the moral of a fable or the lesson of a parable, the theme of a story is seldom if ever stated explicitly. Theme is almost always implicit.

To ascertain theme, the reader should first understand the plot, the characterization and conflict, the imagery, and the author's tone. First, identify the subject in one word, then explain in one or two sentences what the author says about the subject. These sentences will contain the theme of the work. The theme stated in one or more complete sentences reveals to us what we have learned about a particular subject.

Ask the following questions:

- How has the main character changed?
- What lessons has he or she learned?
- What is the central conflict in the work?
- What is the subject of the work?
- What does the author say about the subject?
- Can this idea be supported entirely by evidence from the work itself?
- Are all the author's choices of plot, character, conflict, and tone controlled by this idea?

If we ask these questions about *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,* we see that the subject of each work is a dangerous journey; the themes, however, are markedly different. In the novel, Huckleberry Finn survives many dangerous situations that usually involve selfishness or brutality, and late in the novel he comes to the conclusion that "Human beings can be awfully cruel to one another." However, after Tom Sawyer's plot to rescue Jim results in unnecessary distress and danger for all involved, the reader can expand Huck's statement to read: all human beings, even the most pleasant and respectable, are capable of great selfishness and cruelty. In *Sir Gawain,* the heroic knight discovers that great as he is, he is as subject to errors in judgment as everyone else and that he was wrong to presume himself capable of perfection.

POINT OF VIEW

Students sometimes have difficulty understanding that the author chooses the point of view for its precise effect on the meaning of the story. Point of view is an integral part of literary analysis. In both prose and poetry, an individual tells the story, and this person provides the reader with one perspective about the events. The author determines whose words are being read, where the narrator stands in relation to the events, and whether the events are viewed from a fixed or mobile position. Students sometimes have difficulty understanding that the choice is deliberate, that a different point of view would change the story significantly, and that the author chooses the point of view for its precise effect on the meaning of the story. The teacher should design activities to enable students to comprehend point of view more readily.

Members of an AP Vertical Team for English may wish to review and discuss the information given below and then structure appropriate activities to help students learn to appreciate an author's deliberate choice of a point of view. There are two basic types of point of view: participant and nonparticipant.

Participant Point of View

The participant point of view is also called *first-person point of view* because first-person pronouns (I, me, my, we, us, our) are used to tell the story.

The participant point of view can be further subdivided into two types:

- The narrator as a *major character* in the story (the story is told by and is chiefly about the narrator).
- The narrator as a *minor character* (the narrator tells a story that focuses on someone else, but the narrator is still a character in the story).

A special type of participant narrator is called the *innocent-eye narrator.* The character telling the story may be a child or a developmentally disabled individual; the narrator is thus naïve. The contrast between what the innocent-eye narrator perceives and what the reader understands may produce an ironic effect.

Stream of consciousness (interior monologue) is a narrative method in modern fiction in which the author tells the story through an unbroken flow of thought and awareness. The technique attempts to capture exactly what is going on in the mind of a character.

Another special type of first person or participant narrator involves different times in a character's life (e.g., Scout in *To Kill a Mockingbird* or David in *David Copperfield*).

Nonparticipant Point of View

The nonparticipant point of view is also called *third-person point of view* because third-person pronouns (he, him, she, her, they, them) are used to tell the story.

The nonparticipant point of view can be subdivided into three types:

- *Omniscient narrator.* The author can enter the minds of all the characters.
- *Selective (limited) omniscient narrator.* The author limits his omniscience to the minds of a few of the characters or to the mind of a single character.
- *Objective narrator.* The author does not enter a single mind, but instead records what can be seen and heard. This type of narrator is like a camera or a fly on the wall.

Note: A rarely used point of view in literature is the second-person point of view. This narrative technique uses second-person pronouns (you, your, yourself, etc.). Use of second-person point of view is uncommon because it directly involves the reader in the story, and the reader may be unwilling and unable to identify with the "you" in the story.

An author may choose to use more than one point of view in a given work.

Purposes of Participant Points of View

The first-person point of view offers immediacy. The reader sees what is perceived by the individual "I."

- The first-person narrator can approach other fictional characters as closely as one human being can approach another.
- The first-person narrator can be an eyewitness, observing what other characters say and do.
- The first-person narrator can summarize events and retreat from a scene to meditate on its significance.

The first person point of view allows the reader to be discerning; the reader must determine whether the narrator is trustworthy.

- The first-person narrator understands other characters only by observing what they say and do. This narrator cannot enter the minds of the other characters and is unable to grasp their inner thoughts.
- The first-person narrator outlines what a character observes and feels, and thus the narrator's conclusions may be inaccurate.
- The reader may question the validity and accuracy of the narrator's opinions.
- The first-person point of view may contribute to dramatic irony; there is a discrepancy between what the narrator knows and what the reader understands.

Purposes of Nonparticipant Points of View

Omniscient Point of View

The omniscient point of view allows great freedom in that the narrator knows all there is to know about the characters, externally and internally.

- The third-person narrator describes what characters are feeling and thinking.
- The third-person narrator describes what characters do.
- The narrator may shift focus from the close view to the larger perspective.
- The narrator may comment on events and characters, thus explaining their significance to the reader.
- The narrator may offer multiple perspectives on the same event.

Limited Omniscient Point of View
The author knows everything about a particular character.

- The story is portrayed through the eyes of one character, and there is a sense of distance from the other characters.
- The limited omniscient point of view approximates conditions of life in that only one character's thoughts are known. The story is more unified through the use of this point of view.

Objective Point of View
The objective point of view allows inferences to be made by readers through their observance of dialogue and external action. Readers are not directly influenced by the author's statements. Readers' perceptions are influenced more subtly by the author's selection of diction and details.

Classroom Activities
The activities presented here are just examples of ways in which teachers can develop students' understanding of point-of-view concepts. They are provided so that teachers can model and design activities that will be appropriate for their students. Also note that the activities suggested for the middle grades are more "tactile" in nature (i.e., they ask the student to draw, to write, to act, etc.), whereas the advanced activities are more discursive in nature. This is not to say, however, that teachers on any level cannot move up and down this continuum, depending on the needs of their students.

Set a scene in a particular time and place and outline people and animals who belong in that scene. Students may choose the roles of the various human and animal characters found in the situation or story. Each student assumes a role and completes the situation as that character. Extensions of this activity include dramatization and artistic representation of the characters and situations. Oral and written work, such as diaries, journal entries, letters, etc., can be included. This activity encourages students to think from the point of view of another being and allows them to "get into the skin" of the persona they have created.

Students may take on the role of an animal or object and relate the story from a different point of view. For example:

- The trees in Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* or in John Knowles' *A Separate Peace*
- The last tree in the world from A. Lentini's short story "Autumn Time"
- The student's school building
- The school bully
- A sea creature (crab, lobster, barnacle) on a rock near the beach

This activity may enable students to realize that when point of view is manipulated, meaning and perspective can be altered significantly.

Read the first three paragraphs of a novel told from the first-person point of view. Students should discuss the reasons why the author has chosen this point of view and speculate about the effect of the story's being told through the eyes of the narrator. Then students can break into groups and rewrite the passage from a different point of view. Groups may share their work with the class; individuals should then freewrite about the different effects created by the use of different points of view.

In the following passage from Scott O'Dell's novel *The Black Pearl,* the story is told through the eyes of the main character, Ramón Salazar. This excerpt would be an effective one to study using the method outlined above.

> Everyone who lives in our town of La Paz, or along the far coasts or among the high mountains of Baja California, has heard of the Manta Diablo. There are many who live in the great world outside who have heard of him also, I am told. But of these thousands only two have really seen him. And of the two, only one is alive—I, Ramón Salazar.
>
> There are many people in the town of La Paz and in Baja California who say they have seen the Manta Diablo. Old men around the fires at night tell their grandsons of the meetings they have had with him. Mothers seek to frighten bad children by threatening to call from the deeps of the sea this fearsome giant.
>
> I am now sixteen, but when I was younger and did things I should not have done, my own mother said to me solemnly, "Ramón, if you do this thing again I shall speak a word to the Manta Diablo."
>
> She told me that he was larger than the largest ship in the harbor of La Paz. His eyes were the color of ambergris and shaped like a sickle moon and there were seven of them. He had seven rows of teeth in his mouth, each tooth as long as my father's Toledo knife. With these teeth he would snap my bones like sticks.
>
> Mothers of my friends also threatened them with the Manta Diablo. He was a somewhat different monster from the one my mother knew, for he

had more teeth or less or eyes shaped in a different way or only a single eye instead of seven.

My grandfather was the most learned man in our town. He could read and use a pen and recite long poems right out of his memory. He had seen the Manta Diablo several times both at night and in the daytime, so he said, and his descriptions were nearer the truth as I know it.

Yet I say to you, that of all the old men and the mothers and even my grandfather, not one has been able to give a true picture of the Manta Diablo.

As a further extension of this exercise, students may choose the point of view of the Manta Diablo from the story. Using the words "I am the Manta Diablo" as a beginning, they may write a description of themselves based on what the main character, Ramón Salazar, has outlined from his point of view in the opening paragraphs of the novel.

Students may write or draw a scene from two different points of view. The points of view should be those of two different characters in the story. For example, the student writers can envision themselves first as the old man and then as the murderer in Edgar Allan Poe's story "The Tell-Tale Heart."

Students may write about a car accident as seen from differing points of view, or they can discuss all the possible views of a car accident and then relate the incident from different points of view.

Students may choose a well-known piece of literature and rewrite the point of view so that the story is told from another character's viewpoint—the point of view of the wolf from the story "Little Red Riding Hood," the point of view of the monster Grendel in *Beowulf,* the point of view of Casey from "Casey at the Bat," or the point of view of Jay Gatsby in *The Great Gatsby.*

Teachers may read or outline to students the scenario of Santa Claus kissing the student's mother beside the Christmas tree. (Try to refrain from singing the song.) Have students choose the point of view of a 3-year-old, a teenager, and an adult witnessing the scene. They must then write about what they have seen from the viewpoint they have chosen. Through this exercise, students can appreciate that a single situation may have several different meanings, depending on the point of view that has been chosen.

The following activities are based on Alfred Noyes' poem "The Highwayman."

At any level of study, students can discuss and write about the various characters found in the poem. They may wish to assume the character of Bess, the landlord's daughter; Tim, the ostler; the Highwayman; or the two spirits at the end of the poem.

Students may transcribe the poem into a narrative account while maintaining the third-person point of view. Teachers could bring in newspaper articles reporting various local events and then ask students to write about the events that have occurred in the poem from a reporter's point of view. For a more sensational form of journalism, use examples of writing from tabloids and then have students imitate the style when dealing with the tragedy found in "The Highwayman."

At the more advanced levels, teachers may desire to review some of the concepts associated with point-of-view theory. With a little guidance from the teacher, it is possible for students to determine that an author has used the third-person objective point of view.

The teacher may wish to discuss with the class the advantage of the objective point of view, where the author does not enter his characters' minds but instead records what is seen and heard. This discussion should cause students to think about the conscious choice of the point of view that the author has made and why that choice is effective. Following the discussion, students will be asked to write a paragraph dealing with the objective point of view, which allows the reader to make inferences about the characters in the poem. What can be inferred about the characters of the Highwayman, Bess, and Tim?

The Highwayman

Part One

The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees.
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas.
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
And the highwayman came riding—
Riding—riding—
The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

He'd a French cocked-hat on his forehead, a bunch of lace at his chin,
A coat of the claret velvet, and breeches of brown doe-skin.
They fitted with never a wrinkle. His boots were up to the thigh.
And he rode with a jewelled twinkle,
His pistol butts a-twinkle,
His rapier hilt a-twinkle, under the jewelled sky.

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark inn-yard.
He tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all was locked and barred.
He whistled a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

And dark in the dark old inn-yard a stable-wicket creaked
Where Tim the ostler listened. His face was white and peaked.
His eyes were hollows of madness, his hair like mouldy hay,

But he loved the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's red-lipped daughter,
Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber say—

"One kiss, my bonny sweetheart, I'm after a prize to-night,
But I shall be back with the yellow gold before the morning light;
Yet, if they press me sharply, and harry me through the day,
Then look for me by moonlight,
Watch for me by moonlight,
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way."

He rose upright in the stirrups. He scarce could reach her hand,
But she loosened her hair in the casement. His face burnt like a brand
As the black cascade of perfume came tumbling over his breast;
And he kissed its waves in the moonlight,
(O, sweet black waves in the moonlight!)
Then he tugged at his rein in the moonlight, and galloped away to the west.

Part Two

He did not come in the dawning. He did not come at noon;
And out of the tawny sunset, before the rise of the moon,
When the road was a gypsy's ribbon, looping the purple moor,
A red-coat troop came marching—
Marching—marching—
King George's men came marching, up to the old inn-door.

They said no word to the landlord. They drank his ale instead.
But they gagged his daughter, and bound her, to the foot of her narrow bed.
There was death at every window;
And hell at one dark window;
For Bess could see, through her casement, the road that *he* would ride.

They had tied her up to attention, with many a sniggering jest.
They had bound a musket beside her, with the muzzle beneath her breast!
"Now, keep good watch!" and they kissed her. She heard the doomed man say—
Look for me by moonlight;
Watch for me by moonlight;
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way!

She twisted her hands behind her; but all the knots held good!
She writhed her hands till her fingers were wet with sweat or blood!
They stretched and strained in the darkness, and the hours crawled by like years,
Till, now, on the stroke of midnight,
Cold, on the stroke of midnight,
The tip of one finger touched it! The trigger at least was hers!

The tip of one finger touched it. She strove no more for the rest.
Up, she stood up to attention, with the muzzle beneath her breast.
She would not risk their hearing; she would not strive again;
For the road lay bare in the moonlight;

Blank and bare in the moonlight;
And the blood over her veins, in the moonlight, throbbed to her love's refrain.

Tlot-tlot; tlot-tlot! Had they heard it? The horse-hoofs ringing clear;
Tlot-tlot; tlot-tlot, in the distance? Were they deaf that they did not hear?
Down the ribbon of moonlight, over the brow of the hill,
The highwayman came riding—
Riding—riding—
The red-coats looked to their priming! She stood up, straight and still.

Tlot-tlot, in the frosty silence! *Tlot-tlot,* in the echoing night!
Nearer he came and nearer. Her face was like a light.
Her eyes grew wide for a moment; she drew one last deep breath,
Then her finger moved in the moonlight,
Her musket shattered the moonlight,
Shattered her breast in the moonlight and warned him—with her death.

He turned. He spurred to the west; he did not know who stood
Bowed, with her head o'er the musket, drenched with her own blood!
Not till the dawn he heard it, and his face grew grey to hear
How Bess, the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Had watched for her love in the moonlight, and died in the darkness there.

Back, he spurred like a madman, shouting a curse to the sky,
With the white road smoking behind him and his rapier brandished high.
Blood-red were his spurs in the golden noon; wine-red was his velvet coat;
When they shot him down on the highway,
Down like a dog on the highway,
And he lay in his blood on the highway, with a bunch of lace at his throat.

And still of a winter's night, they say, when the wind is in the trees,
When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
When the road is a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor
A highwayman comes riding—
Riding—riding—
A highwayman comes riding, up to the old inn-door.

Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs in the dark inn-yard.
He taps with his whip on the shutters, but all is locked and barred.
He whistles a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

Noyes, Alfred. *Collected Poems.* London: John Murray (Publishers) Ltd.

Read the following passage to the class. Then have the students pretend that they are Mary Lennox and that they are writing about their own life as Mary.

There's No One Left

When Mary Lennox was sent to Misselthwaite Manor to live with her uncle everybody said she was the most disagreeable-looking child ever seen. It was true, too. She had a thin face and a little thin body, thin light hair and a sour expression. Her hair was yellow, and her face was yellow because she had been born in India and had always been ill in one way or another. Her father had held a position under the English Government and had always been busy and ill himself, and her mother had been a great beauty who cared only to go to parties and amuse herself with gay people. She had not wanted a little girl at all, and when Mary was born she handed her over to the care of an Ayah, who was made to understand that if she wished to please the Mem Sahib she must keep the child out of sight as much as possible. So when she was a sickly, fretful, ugly little baby she was kept out of the way, and when she became a sickly, fretful, toddling thing she was kept out of the way also. She never remembered seeing familiarly anything but the dark faces of her Ayah and the other native servants, and as they always obeyed her and gave her her own way in everything, because the Mem Sahib would be angry is she was disturbed by her crying, by the time she was six years old she was as tyrannical and selfish a little pig as ever lived. The young English governess who came to teach her to read and write disliked her so much that she gave up her place in three months, and when other governesses came to try to fill it they always went away in a shorter time than the first one. So if Mary had not chosen to really want to know how to read books she would never have learned her letters at all.

Burnett, Frances Hodgson. *The Secret Garden.* Toronto: Scholastic Inc., n.d.

Use the following beginning: "When I was sent to Misselthwaite Manor to live with my uncle, everybody said I was the most disagreeable-looking child ever seen."

Students may read the following passages from Madeleine L'Engle's novel *A Wrinkle in Time* and then base a writing assignment on the passages they have read.

"Who's this IT?" Meg [Murry] asked.

"All in good time," Charles Wallace said. "You're not ready for IT yet. First of all I will tell you something about this beautiful, enlightened planet of Camozotz." His voice took on the dry, pedantic tones of Mr. Jenkins. "Perhaps you do not realize that on Camazotz we have conquered all illness, all deformity—"

"*We*?" Calvin interrupted.

> Charles continued as though he had not heard. And of course he hadn't, Meg thought. "We let no one suffer. It is so much kinder simply to annihilate anyone who is ill. Nobody has weeks and weeks of runny noses and sore throats. Rather than endure such discomfort they are simply put to sleep." (p. 127)
>
> As she continued to step slowly forward as last she realized what the Thing on the dais was.
>
> IT was a brain.
>
> A disembodied brain. An oversized brain, just enough larger than normal to be completely revolting and terrifying. A living brain. A brain that pulsed and quivered, that seized and commanded. No wonder the brain was called IT. IT was the most horrible, the most repellent thing she had ever seen, far more nauseating than anything she had ever imagined with her conscious mind, or that had ever tormented her in her most terrible nightmares.
>
>

Take on the identity of IT of Camazotz. Outline your views on running the planet.

In a stream-of-consciousness activity, students record the thoughts of a 6-year-old child. The teacher can help them get started by suggesting examples that may be significant to a child: e.g., the birth of a sibling, thoughts on waking up in the morning, or moving to a new location. Students should be told to write the way they think without paying much attention to sentence structure and mechanical conventions.

Students then read their works to the class, and a discussion can be held that focuses on the challenges writers face when they attempt to complete an interior monologue. This activity can be used to introduce the novel *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes, or it can serve as an introduction to the stream-of-consciousness writing technique. Where it is used as an introduction to the technique, the teacher may wish to read aloud the first four pages of James Joyce's novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.* Following the reading, the discussion should focus on how Joyce has managed to capture the thoughts and experiences of a 6-year-old child. Students should be encouraged to view the passage critically. They may find places where they can suggest alternatives to the writer's technique.

In a multiple point-of-view activity, the teachers should choose a historcal event that is being studied by the students. Try to find an account of the event in the form of a poem, a narrative account, or a diary entry by a character. It is also possible to use a section in a social studies textbook that explains the event. Students are to write an account of the event, choosing a point of view that seems suitable (first person, second person, third person, stream of

consciousness, innocent eye narrator, etc.). For example, base the historical event on "The Indian's Lament" by Christine Park Hankinson and "John Burnett's Journey," an account of the Trail of Tears. Play some Native American music. Students select a part (soldier, Cherokee Indian, newspaper reporter, etc.) and write an account of the tragedy using a point of view that seems appropriate. Students may wish to reenact the journey, with the parts of the soldiers and Indians being assigned. One student can narrate while the others play drums and pantomime the event.

Students working at advanced levels are given the first two paragraphs of various works, and can work in groups determining what they can predict about the narrator and why the author may have chosen that particular point of view. The effect of the point of view on the reader should also be considered. Sample opening paragraphs have been provided below:

> In my young years I took pride in the fact that luck was called a lady. In fact, there were so few public acknowledgments of the female presence that I felt personally honored whenever nature and large ships were referred to as feminine. But as I matured, I began to resent being considered a sister to a changeling as fickle as luck, as aloof as an ocean, and as frivolous as nature.
>
> The phrase "A woman has the right to change her mind" played so aptly into the negative image of the female that I made myself a victim to an unwavering decision. Even if I made an inane and stupid choice, I stuck by it rather than "be like a woman and change my mind."
>
> Angelou, Maya. *Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now.* New York: Random House, Inc., 1993.

> David Canaan had lived in Entremont all his thirty years. As far back as childhood, whenever anger had dishevelled him, or confusion, or the tick, tick, tick of emptiness like he felt today, he had sought the log road that went to the top of the mountain. As he moved along this road, somewhere the twist of anger would loosen; a shaft of clarity would strike through the scud of confusion; blood would creep back into the pulse and pallor of the emptiness. He would take happiness there, to be along with it; as another child might keep hidden for a day a toy that wasn't his.
>
> He stood at the kitchen window now, watching the highway.
>
> *The Mountain and the Valley* by Ernest Buckler. Used by permission, McClelland & Stewart Ltd. The Canadian publishers.

My father's family name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip.

I give Pirrip as my father's family name, on the authority of his tombstone and my sister—Mrs. Joe Gargery, who married the blacksmith. As I never saw my father or my mother, and never saw any likeness of either of them (for their days were long before the days of photographs), my first fancies regarding what they were like were unreasonably derived from their tombstones. The shape of the letters on my father's gave me an odd idea that he was a square, stout, dark man, with curly black hair. From the character and turn of the inscription, "Also Georgiana Wife of the Above," I drew a childish conclusion that my mother was freckled and sickly. To five little stone lozenges, each about a foot and a half long, which were arranged in a neat row beside their grave, and were sacred to the memory of five little brothers of mine—who gave up trying to get a living exceedingly early in that universal struggle—I am indebted for a belief I religiously entertained that they had all been born on their backs with their hands in their trousers-pockets, and had never taken them out in this state of existence.

Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations.* Ed., Angus Calder. New York: Viking Penguin, Inc., 1965.

I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids—and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination—indeed, everything and anything except me.

Nor is my invisibility exactly a matter of a biochemical accident to my epidermis. That invisibility to which I refer occurs because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of those with whom I come in contact. A matter of the construction of their inner eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality. I am not complaining, nor am I protesting either. It is sometimes advantageous to be unseen, although it is most often rather wearing on the nerves. Then too, you're constantly being bumped against by those of poor vision. Or again, you often doubt if you really exist. You wonder whether you aren't simply a phantom in other people's minds. Say, a figure in a nightmare which the sleeper tries with all his strength to destroy. It's when you feel like this that, out of resentment, you begin to bump people back. And, let me confess, you feel that way most of the time. You ache with the need to convince yourself that you do exist in the real world, that you're a part of all the sound and anguish, and you strike out with your fists, you curse and you swear to make them recognize you. And, alas, it's seldom successful.

In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since.

"Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone," he told me, "just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had."

It is a long way in time and space from the bathroom of my Grandmother Mowat's house in Oakville, Ontario, to the bottom of a wolf den in the Barren Lands of central Keewatin, and I have no intention of retracing the entire road which lies between. Nevertheless, there must be a beginning to any tale; and the story of my sojourn amongst the wolves begins properly in Granny's bathroom.

When I was five years old I had still not given any indication—as most gifted children do well before that age—of where my future lay. Perhaps because they were disappointed by my failure to declare myself, my parents took me to Oakville and abandoned me to the care of my grandparents while they went off on a holiday.

Above the town, on the hill brow, the stone angel used to stand. I wonder if she stands there yet, in memory of her who relinquished her feeble ghost as I gained my stubborn one, my mother's angel that my father bought in pride to mark her bones and proclaim his dynasty, as he fancied, forever and a day.

Summer and winter she viewed the town with sightless eyes. She was doubly blind, not only stone but unendowed with even a pretense of sight. Whoever carved her had left the eyeballs blank. It seemed strange to me that she should stand above the town, harking us all to heaven without knowing who we were at all. But I was too young then to know her purpose, although my father often told me she had been brought from Italy at a terrible expense and was pure white marble. I think now she must have been carved in that distant sun by stone masons who were the cynical descendants of Bernini, gouging out her like by the score, gauging with admirable accuracy the needs of fledgling pharaohs in an uncouth land.

Using literature appropriate for the levels of their students, teachers can design activities in which two points of view are compared and analyzed. *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* lend themselves well to comparison because a number of the characters are present in both pieces of literature.

The following passages deal with the identical incident taken from two points of view. Students can be asked to compare the event based on the different points of view of the two characters.

I said, 'I can't remember what happened. I can't remember.'

'When he came in,' said Grace Poole, 'he didn't recognize you.'

'Will you light the fire,' I said, 'because I'm so cold.'

'This gentleman arrived suddenly and insisted on seeing you and that was all the thanks he got. You rushed at him with a knife and when he got the knife away you bit his arm. You won't see him again. And where did you get that knife? I told them you stole it from me but I'm much too careful. I'm used to your sort. You got no knife from me. You must have bought it that day when I took you out. I told Mrs. Eff you oughtn't to be taken out.' . . .

Grace Poole said, 'So you don't remember that you attacked this gentleman with a knife? I said that you would be quiet. "I must speak to her," he said. Oh he was warned but he wouldn't listen. I was in the room but I didn't hear all he said except "I cannot interfere legally between yourself and your husband." It was when he said "legally" that you flew at him and when he twisted the knife out of your hand you bit him. Do you mean to say that you don't remember any of this?'

Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea.* New York: W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1982.

'Now, my good fellow, how are you?' he asked.

'She's done for me, I fear,' was the faint reply.

'Not a whit?—courage! This day fortnight you'll hardly be a pin the worse of it: you've lost a little blood; that's all—Carter, assure him there's no danger!

'I can do that conscientiously,' said Carter, who had not undone the bandages; 'only I wish I could have got here sooner: he would not have bled so much—but how is this? The flesh on the shoulder is torn as well as cut. This wound was not done with a knife: there have been teeth here!'

'She bit me,' he murmured. 'She worried me like a tigress, when Rochester got the knife from her.'

'You should not have yielded: you should have grappled with her at once,' said Mr. Rochester.

'But under such circumstances, what could one do?' returned Mason. 'Oh, it was frightful!' he added, shuddering. 'And I did not expect it: she looked so quiet at first.'

Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre.* New York: Viking Penguin, Inc., 1965.

TONE/ATTITUDE/EFFECT

Tone

Tone is the speaker or author's attitude toward the subject, which is revealed by the words he or she chooses. Very young children can sense a speaker's attitude in tone of voice. For that matter, even a dog understands the tone of his master's voice: "You lazy old cur, how are you today? Did anyone ever tell you that you are absolutely useless. Wish I could be as worthless as you are." The dog wags his tail, enjoying the attention and kindness of his master's voice despite the literal meaning of the words.

Understanding tone in written prose and poetry, however, is an entirely different matter. The reader does not have voice inflection either to obscure or to carry meaning. Thus, a student's understanding of word choice, details, imagery, and language all contribute to the understanding of tone. To misinterpret tone is to misinterpret meaning. If a student misses irony or sarcasm, he or she may misread the meaning of an entire passage.

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As teachers introduce students to the concept of tone, it is important for the students to work with literature that is appropriate for their grade level. In Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher," a ninth grader would sense the melancholy attitudes of the speaker, while a twelfth grader would discover the urbane contempt of the Duke of Ferrara in "My Last Duchess." The middle school teacher can help the student discover the tone in works such as"The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Cremation of Sam McGee," "Janet Waking," "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," *All Creatures Great and Small,* "The Highwayman," and "The Night the Ghost Got In."

To introduce tone the teacher might speak the same phrase in several different tones of voice. The phrase "I love you" or "I see you" might be said affectionately, questioningly, sarcastically, glibly, or coldly. A brief scene with a simple dialogue between two students using differing tones to fit different characters and contexts emphasizes how tone changes meaning. For example:

A. You're late!
B. I know. I couldn't help it.

A. I understand.
B. I knew you would.

A. I have something for you.
B. Really? What?

A. This!

- How might this scene by played by two lovers who are meeting at a restaurant where one lover is about to propose marriage?
- How would two spies speak the same words?
- How would a parent and a child who has come home late do so? In each scenario, the tone controls audience understanding and interpretation.

A list of tone words is one practical method of providing a basic "tone vocabulary." An enriched vocabulary enables students to use more specific and subtle descriptions of an attitude they discover in a text. Include words such as the following:

angry	sad	sentimental
sharp	cold	fanciful
upset	urgent	complimentary
silly	joking	condescending
boring	poignant	sympathetic
afraid	detached	contemptuous
happy	confused	apologetic
hollow	childish	humorous
joyful	peaceful	horrific
allusive	mocking	sarcastic
sweet	objective	nostalgic
vexed	vibrant	zealous
tired	frivolous	irreverent
bitter	audacious	benevolent
dreamy	shocking	seductive
restrained	somber	candid
proud	giddy	pitiful
dramatic	provocative	didactic

The teacher encourages students to use dictionaries for definitions of the tone words listed above. Students need explicit dictionary meanings to establish subtle differences between tone words such as *emotional, sentimental,* and *lugubrious* so that they can accurately comment on a work that appeals to emotions, emphasizes emotion over reason, or becomes emotional to the point of being laughable. Keeping a list of precise tone words and adding to it sharpens students' articulation in stating tone.

Shift in Tone

As students grow more aware of tone, they will discover that good authors rarely use only one tone. To demonstrate how complex a speaker's attitude might be or how an author might have one attitude toward the audience and another attitude toward the subject, the teacher might give students clues to watch for shifts in tone:

- key words (e.g., but, yet, nevertheless, however, although)
- punctuation (dashes, periods, semicolons)
- stanza and paragraph divisions
- changes in line and stanza or in sentence length
- sharp contrasts in diction

In the following poem, note how the speaker puzzles about the irony of killing men in war who might have been neighbors or friends. As the poem continues, however, the speaker grows more uncertain of his attitude. Note that repetition and punctuation guide the reader to the speaker's shifting tone:

The Man He Killed

Had he and I but met
By some old ancient inn,
We should have sat us down to set
Right many a nipperkin!*

But ranged as infantry,
And staring face to face,
I shot at him as he at me,
And killed him in his place.

I shot him dead because—
Because he was my foe,
Just so: my foe of course he was;
That's clear enough, although

He though he'd 'list, perhaps,
Off-hand-like—just as I—
Was out of work—had sold his traps—
No other reason why.

Yes; quaint and curious war is!
You shoot a fellow down
You'd treat if met where any bar is,
Or help to half-a-crown.

*Half-pint cup

A number of clues show the reader the infantryman's changing attitude. Although the repetition of "because" could be viewed as a stylistic weakness, here it effectively indicates some hesitancy of tone. The speaker is uncertain of the reason for killing even though he has been given the standard reason to kill "the enemy." Similarly, the word "although" in line 12 gets more emphasis at the end of the line and the stanza, suggesting that the speaker is trying to persuade himself. The dashes, indicating a pause, suggest a rethinking on the part of the speaker that his former attitude of certainty about who an enemy is has changed to doubt and ambivalence.

Using the acronym DIDLS helps students remember those elements of tone that they should consider when evaluating prose or poetry. Diction, images, details, language, and sentence structure all help to create the author's or speaker's attitude toward the subject and audience (tone).

DIDLS

Diction the connotation of the word choice
Images vivid appeals to understanding through the senses
Details facts that are included or those omitted
Language the overall use of language, such as formal, clinical, jargon
Sentence Structure how structure affects the reader's attitude

Short Passages for Discussion

Begin practicing the analysis of tone by using short passages along with a specific strategy such as DIDLS to determine the tone. Ask students to suggest what tone-words they would use to describe the speaker's attitude.

In his story "The Fall of the House of Usher," Edgar Allan Poe has created a sense of foreboding.

> During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing along, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country, and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher...I reined my horse to the precipitous brink of a black and lurid tarn that lay in unruffled luster by the dwelling...[with] vacant and eye-like windows."
>
> Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Fall of the House of Usher." *The Fall of the House of Usher and Other Tales.* New York: Signet Classic, 1960.

The passage uses word choice and imagery to create its melancholic, somber tone. In this case, the imagery and diction also produce an oppressive atmosphere, or mood, which helps to establish this somber tone. Words such as "dull," "dark," and "dreary" suggest the oppressive feeling, whereas the image "vacant and eye-like windows" creates the melancholy and somber attitude.

Look at the following passage from Frank Folsom's "Life in Caves." Teachers may introduce the work by having students write about their attitudes toward bats before examining Folsom's passage. In the following paragraph, the more sophisticated students should be able to sense a shift in tone—one attitude for the society in general and another for the subject.

> Perhaps because bats are nocturnal in habit, a wealth of thoroughly unreliable legend has grown up about them, and men have made of the harmless, even beneficial little beasts a means of expressing their unreasoned fears. Bats were the standard paraphernalia for witches; the female half of humanity stood in terror that bats would become entangled in their hair. Phrases crept into the language expressing man's revulsion or ignorance—"Bats in the Belfry," "Batty," "Blind as a Bat."
>
> Folsom, Frank. "Life in Caves." Crown Publishers, Inc. New York.

Diction such as "thoroughly unreliable legend" or "unreasoned fears" suggests that Folsom's attitude toward those who fear bats is disapproving and contemptuous. On the other hand, his attitude toward the bats, indicated by diction such as "harmless, even beneficial little beasts," shows respect and approval. The word "beasts" no longer has a negative meaning, and combined with the use of "little," becomes playfully friendly. Humans are ignorant and superstitious while bats are harmless.

Certainly, even young children can discover tone. Consider the poem below as an exploration in irony:

> **Today Is Very Boring**
>
> Today is very boring
> it's a very boring day,
> there is nothing much to look at,
> there is nothing much to say,
> there's a peacock on my sneakers,
> there's a penguin on my head,
> there's a dormouse on my doorstep,
> I am going back to bed.
>
> Today is very boring
> it is boring through and through,
> there is absolutely nothing
> that I think I want to do,
> I see giants riding rhinos,
> and an ogre with a sword,
> there's a dragon blowing smoke rings,
> I am positively bored.

Today is very boring,
I can hardly help but yawn,
There's a flying saucer landing
in the middle of my lawn,
a volcano just erupted
less than half a mile away,
and I think I felt an earthquake,
it's a very boring day.

The following passage from J. R. R.Tolkien's *The Hobbit* shows the speaker's attitude toward his audience to be one of gentle mockery, whereas his attitude toward the hobbits is revealed in whimsical and complimentary details.

I suppose hobbits need some description nowadays, since they have become rare and shy of Big People, as they call us. They are (or were) a little people, about half our height, and smaller than the bearded dwarves. Hobbits have no beards. There is little or no magic about them, except the ordinary everyday sort which helps them to disappear quietly and quickly when large stupid folk like you and me come blundering along, making a noise like elephants which they can hear a mile off. They are inclined to be fat in the stomach; they dress in bright colours (chiefly green and yellow); wear no shoes, because their feet grow natural leathery soles and thick warm brown hair like the stuff on their heads (which is curly); have long clever brown fingers, good-natured faces, and laugh deep fruity laughs (especially after dinner, which they have twice a day when they can get it).

TONE ANALYSIS INTRODUCTORY EXERCISE

Pre-AP students who are just beginning to study the ways in which imagery, detail, and diction work together to produce tone may benefit from the following activity. The steps can be adapted to nearly any passage from a richly layered text.

Carefully read the following passage from *Walkabout*, by James Vance Marshall. This book is about two Caucasian children who become lost in the Australian Outback and are rescued by an Aborigine boy. This passage describes one of the many Australian animals they encounter on their journey at a time when the children feel discouraged, lost, hungry, and frightened.

They saw a bird, an ordinary rather sad-looking bird, with big eyes, pointed beak and long, straggling tail. He was scratching about for grubs. To the white children the scene looked very prosaic: an anti-climax. But the black boy was obviously enthralled; he signaled them to be quiet, and so they knelt close to the wattle bushes: motionless, expectant. And after about twenty minutes their patience was rewarded.

Quite suddenly the bird raised his head; he drew himself erect and, with a stiff-legged goose step, strutted into the center of the clearing. Then he started to sing. And in an instant all his drabness was sloughed away, for his song was beautiful beyond compare: stream after stream of limpid melodious notes, flowing and mingling, trilling and soaring: bush music, magic as the pipes of Pan. On and on it went, wave after wave of perfect harmony that held the children spell-bound. At last the notes sank into a croon, died into silence. The song was over. But not the performance. For now came a metamorphosis too amazing to be believed. The drab-brown bird with its tatty, straggling tail disappeared, and in its place rose a creature of pure beauty. The drooping tail fanned wide: its two outmost feathers swung erect to form the frame of a perfect lyre; and in between spread a mist of elfin plumage, a phantasmagoria of blue and silver, shot with gold, that trembled and quivered with all the beauty of a rainbow seen through running water. Then, hidden behind its plumage, the lyre bird again burst into song. And as he sang, he danced; prancing joyfully from side to side, hopping and skipping to the beat of a high-speed polka. And every now and then his song broke off, was interspersed with croaking chuckles of happiness.

Then, as suddenly as his performance had begun, it ended. The feathers drooped, the polka came to a halt, the singing died. And he was just another bird.

The children walked on. The sun dropped lower. The western sky glowed rose and gold.

Marshall, James Vance. *Walkabout*. Littleton, MA: Sundance Publishing, 1995, pp. 103–105.

Tone Analysis for* Walkabout *Passsage

IMAGES

After you have read the passage to find out what happens, go back and read it again, this time with a highlighter in your hand. As you read, mark the following *images:*

Images of sound Images of sight Images of feeling

DICTION

Then highlight unusual or interesting words and words you don't understand. Discuss the effect of the words; look them up in a dictionary or ask your teacher to explain them. Discuss the ways in which an understanding of these words increases your appreciation of the passage. What kinds of feelings do you get from the words? What connotations occur to you when the author uses certain words?

DETAIL

Next, think about the details the author has chosen to bring the children's experience to life. What does the bird do? What happens? Do the actions of the bird

suggest anything else that happens in human life? What meaning do you think the children take with them from this experience?

TONE

Think about the feeling created by the images, details, and diction (word choice) the author has used. List as many very specific "feeling words" as you can to describe the tone of the passage. How do you think the author or narrator feels about the transformation and performance of the bird?

Putting It All Together

Now, either with a partner or alone, write a paragraph analyzing the tone of the passage. In the first sentence, tell your reader what feelings you think the author is trying to create through his use of diction, imagery, and detail. Then, using specific examples and short quotations from the text, explain SPECIFICALLY how the author uses language to create these feelings. End your paragraph with several statements about the passage's overall meaning.

More Short Passages for Discussion

Read John Steinbeck's description of the doctor in the following passage from *The Pearl*. What feeling toward the doctor does the author communicate through his words? What will this doctor's attitude be toward treating a poor Indian's baby? Consider how the diction and imagery make clear Steinbeck's contempt for the lazy and pretentious doctor.

> In his chamber the doctor sat up in his high bed. He had on his dressing gown of red watered silk that had come from Paris, a little tight over the chest now if it was buttoned. On his lap was a silver tray with a silver chocolate pot and a tiny cup of eggshell china, so delicate that it looked silly when he lifted it with his big hand, lifted it with the tips of thumb and forefinger and spread the other three fingers wide to get them out of the way. His eyes rested in puffy little hammocks of flesh and his mouth drooped with discontent. He was growing very stout, and his voice was hoarse with the fat that pressed on his throat. Beside him on a table was a small Oriental gong and a bowl of cigarettes. The furnishings of the room were heavy and dark and gloomy. The pictures were religious, even the large tinted photograph of his dead wife, who, if Masses willed and paid for out of her own estate could do it, was in Heaven. The doctor had once for a short time been a part of the great world and his whole subsequent life was memory and longing for France.
>
>

Examine the complex attitude in the following passage from *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison, written from the point of view of Claudia, an African American child of perhaps eight or nine years. Note the various senses to which Morrison appeals. What do you infer her attitude to be toward the subject here? Why? Note how verbs affect tone in the last 8 or 10 lines. Speculate on how this passage might relate to major thematic concerns in the book.

It had begun with Christmas and the gift of dolls. The big, the special, the loving gift was always a big, blue-eyed Baby Doll. From the clucking sounds of adults I knew that the doll represented what they thought was my fondest wish...Picture books were full of little girls sleeping with their dolls. Raggedy Ann dolls usually, but they were out of the question. I was physically revolted and secretly frightened of those round moronic eyes, the pancake face, and orangeworms hair.

The other dolls, which were supposed to bring me great pleasure, succeeded in doing just the opposite. When I took it to bed, its hard unyielding limbs resisted my flesh—the tapered fingertips on those dimpled hands scratched. If, in sleep, I turned, the bone-cold head collided with my own. It was a most uncomfortable, patently aggressive sleeping companion. To hold it was no more rewarding. The starched gauze or lace on the cotton dress irritated any embrace. I had only one desire: to dismember it. To see of what it was made, to discover the dearness, to find the beauty, the desirability that had escaped me, but apparently only me. Adults, older girls, shops, magazines, newspapers, window signs—all the world had agreed that a blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl child treasured. "Here," they said, "this is beautiful, and if you are on this day 'worthy' you may have it." I fingered the face, wondering at the single-stroke eyebrows; picked at the pearly teeth stuck like two piano keys between red bowline lips. Traced the turned-up nose, poked the glassy blue eyeballs, twisted the yellow hair. I could not love it. But I could examine it to see what it was that all the world said was lovable. Break off the tiny fingers, bend the flat feet, loosen the hair, twist the head around, and the thing made one sound—a sound they said was the sweet and plaintive cry "Mama," but which sounded to me like the bleat of a dying lamb, or, more precisely, our icebox door opening on rusty hinges in July. Remove the cold and stupid eyeball, it would bleat still, "Ahhhhhh," take off the head, shake out the sawdust, crack the back against the brass bed rail, it would bleat still. The gauze back would slit, and I could see the disk with six holes, the secret of the sound. A mere metal roundness.

In the following passage from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde, the sensuous detail suggests excess, a languid beauty that describes the character's self-indulgence.

The studio was filled with the rich odour of roses, and when the light summer wind stirred amidst the trees of the garden there came through the open door the heavy scent of the lilac, or the more delicate perfume of the pink-flowering thorn.

From the corner of the divan of Persian saddlebags on which he was lying, smoking, as was his custom, innumerable cigarettes, Lord Henry

Wotton could just catch the gleam of the honey-sweet and honey-coloured blossoms of a laburnum, whose tremulous branches seemed hardly able to bear the burden of a beauty so flame-like as theirs; and now and then the fantastic shadows of birds in flight flitted across the long tussore-silk curtains that were stretched in front of the huge window, producing a kind of momentary Japanese effect, and making him think of those pallid jade-faced painters of Tokio who, through the medium of an art that is necessarily immobile, seek to convey the sense of swiftness and motion. The sullen murmur of the bees shouldering their way through the long unmown grass, or circling with monotonous insistence round the dusty gilt horns of the straggling woodbine, seemed to make the stillness more oppressive. The dim roar of London was like the bourdon note of a distant organ.

Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray.* New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1993.

The AP English Examinations often ask students about the author's attitude. In the following example from AP English Language and Composition Examination (Question 2, 1981), George Bernard Shaw's tone of awe and wonder at the cremation of his mother as well as his affection for her and her humor surprisingly contradicts the tone of gloom and despair normally associated with such an event.

The following excerpt is taken from a letter by Shaw on the death of his mother. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you describe the attitude of the writer toward his mother and her cremation. Using specific references to the text, show how Shaw's diction and use of detail serve to convey this attitude.

At the passage "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust" there was a little alteration of the words to suit the process. A door opened in the wall: and the violet coffin mysteriously passed out through it and vanished as it closed. People think that the door is the door of the furnace: but it isn't. I went behind the scenes at the end of the service and saw the real thing. People are afraid to see it; but it is wonderful. I found there the violet coffin opposite another door, a real unmistakable furnace door this time: when it lifted there was a plain little chamber of cement and fire-brick. No heat, no noise. No roaring draught. No flame. No fuel. It looked cool, clean, sunny. You would have walked in or put your hand in without misgiving. Then the violet coffin moved again and went in, feet first. And behold! The feet burst miraculously into streaming ribbons of garnet coloured lovely flame, smokeless and eager, like pentecostal tongues, and as the whole coffin passed in, it sprang into flame all over; my mother became that beautiful fire. The door fell; well, they said that if we wanted to see it all through to the end, we should come back in an hour and a half. I remembered the wasted little figure with the wonderful face, and said, "Too long" to myself—but off we went...When we returned, the end was wildly funny; Mama would have enjoyed it enormously.

> We looked down through an opening in the floor. There we saw a roomy kitchen, with a big cement table and two cooks busy at it. They had little tongs in their hands, and they were deftly and busily picking nails and scraps of coffin handles out of Mama's dainty little heap of ashes and samples of bone. Mama herself being at the moment leaning over beside me, shaking with laughter. Then they swept her up into a sieve and shook her out; so that there was a heap of dust and a heap of bone scraps. And Mama said in my ear," Which of the two heaps do you suppose is me?..." and that merry episode was the end, except for making dust of the bone scraps and scattering them on a flower bed...O grave, where is thy victory?...And so goodnight, friends who understand about one's mother.
>
> The Society of Authors on Behalf of the George Bernard Shaw Estate.

In all analyses of tone, students should keep in mind the complex attitudes that often characterize the work of great writers. Students sometimes think that there is one specific tone in the passage that it is their task to discover. Far from accurate, this perception may lead the student into the kind of limited and simplistic thinking that results in a failure to comprehend the rich texture and resonance of the literature they encounter. Teachers will want to emphasize the broad range of tones that can be apprehended by the close reader. Although some interpretations of the tone may be inaccurate due to a failure to ground analysis in the text itself, any interpretation that is backed up by valid textual proof (diction, imagery, detail, or syntax) can be considered viable.

> Most importantly, the student's analysis of tone should not be considered an end in itself. Unless the study of tone is accompanied by a search for thematic meaning, the activity becomes only an academic exercise. The search for meaning in a work of literature that can enrich and illuminate the reader's own life is of paramount importance and should accompany any analysis of literary or rhetorical techniques.

POETRY ANALYSIS

Poetry is an excellent vehicle for the exploration of human experience, but since it may intimidate students, teaching them to value and appreciate the artistry of poetry becomes a challenge to teachers of literature.

Identifying poetic devices is secondary to gaining an understanding of how the devices operate in conveying the effect and meaning of the poem.

Realizing that the importance of poetry lies in understanding meaning and how technique enhances meaning, teachers need multiple strategies to help students explore and enjoy poetry. This section will examine only one of many approaches, but this one does touch the aspects of poetry a teacher should consider when structuring learning activities.

Poetic devices such as metaphor, simile, personification, alliteration, onomatopoeia, and rhyme are mechanisms that create poetic experience in the reader. Identifying poetic devices, however, is secondary to gaining an understanding of how the devices operate in conveying the effect and meaning of the poem. In other words, knowledge of poetic devices empowers students to become interpreters of the poetic experience.

As readers of poetry, we often experience the delight of sudden understanding as we read, but that intuitive response sometimes fails us and may well desert our students when they explore a new poem. Below is one stratagem to offer students for beginning to interpret a poem when they do not know how to begin.

TP-CASTT—an acronym for title, paraphrase, connotation, attitude, shift, title (again), and theme—is designed to help students remember the concepts they can consider when examining a poem. This is not a lockstep sequential approach, but rather it is a fluid process in which the student will move back and forth among the various concepts. For example, in examining connotations of a line, students may also notice a shift, which in turn may give them an insight into theme.

Summary of TP-CASTT Analysis

Title	Ponder the title before reading the poem.
Paraphrase	Translate the poem into your own words.
Connotation	Contemplate the poem for meaning beyond the literal.
Attitude	Observe both the speaker's and the poet's attitude (tone).
Shifts	Note shifts in speakers and in attitudes.
Title	Examine the title again, this time on an interpretive level.
Theme	Determine what the poet is saying.

Janet Waking

Beautifully Janet slept
Till it was deeply morning. She woke then
And thought about her dainty-feathered hen,
To see how it had kept.

One kiss she gave her mother,
Only a small one gave she to her daddy
Who would have kissed each curl of his shining baby;
No kiss at all for her brother.

"Old Chucky, old Chucky!" she cried,
Running across the world upon the grass
To Chucky's house and listening. But alas,
Her Chucky had died.

It was a transmogrifying bee
Came droning down on Chucky's old bald head

And sat and put the poison. It scarcely bled,
But how exceedingly

And purply did the knot
Swell with the venom and communicate
Its rigor! Now the poor comb stood up straight
But Chucky did not.

So there was Janet,
Kneeling on the wet grass, crying her brown hen
(Translated far beyond the daughters of men).
To rise and walk upon it.

And weeping fast as she had breath
Janet implored us, "Wake her from her sleep!"
And would not be instructed in how deep
Was the forgetful kingdom of death.

Barter

Life has loveliness to sell,
All beautiful and splendid things,
Blue waves whitened on a cliff,
Soaring fire that sways and sings,
And children's faces looking up
Holding wonder like a cup

Life has loveliness to sell,
Music like a curve of gold,
Scent of pine trees in the rain,
Eyes that love you, arms that hold,
And for your spirit's still delight,
Holy thoughts that star the night.

Spend all you have for loveliness,
Buy it and never count the cost;
For one white singing hour of peace
Count many a year of strife well lost,
And for a breath of ecstasy
Give all you have been or could be.

Title

Although titles are often keys to possible meanings of a poem, students frequently do not contemplate them either before or after reading poetry. As a first step in the analysis of a new poem, the teacher points out the title and asks students to predict what the poem may be about.

In "Janet Waking," students initially might assume that this poem deals with a girl waking up.

In "Barter," the teacher should explore what the word *barter* means, asking students to suggest types of exchanges in addition to the exchange of physical objects.

Other poems in which titles may be misleading, but are suggestive of meaning:

"Dreams"	Langston Hughes
"Night Clouds"	Amy Lowell
"Petals"	Pat Mora
"Stepping Westward"	William Wordsworth
"The Hollow Men"	T. S. Eliot
"The Bait"	John Donne
"Sea Lullaby"	Elinor Wylie

Paraphrase

Another aspect of a poem often neglected by students is the literal meaning—the "plot." Frequently, real understanding of a poem must evolve from comprehension of "what's going on in the poem." The teacher might ask students to restate a poem in their own words, focusing on one syntactical unit at a time—not necessarily on one line at a time. Another possibility is to ask students to write a sentence or two for each stanza of the poem.

A paraphrase of stanza six of "Janet Waking" might be "Janet was kneeling on the wet grass begging her brown hen (was it the hen or Janet who was lifted? moved? out of the world of little girls) to come to life and walk on the grass." Note that the ambiguous paraphrase opens the possibility of multiple meanings of the lines.

A paraphrase of stanza one in "Barter" might be that the speaker describes the wonderful experiences of the senses that life provides.

Additional poems in which a clear, literal understanding of the poem is necessary to help students discover meaning:

"Narcissa"	Gwendolyn Brooks
"The Highwayman"	Alfred Noyes
"Ode on a Grecian Urn"	John Keats
"Sunday Morning"	Wallace Stevens
"Neutral Tones"	Thomas Hardy
Any Shakespearean sonnet	

Connotation

Although this term usually refers solely to the emotional overtones of word choice, here it indicates that students should examine any and all poetic devices, focusing on how such devices contribute to the meaning, the effect, or both of a poem. Students may consider figurative language (especially simile,

metaphor, and personification), symbolism, diction, point of view, and sound devices (alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhythm, and rhyme). The teacher must demonstrate an acceptance of a variety of possibilities by the phrasing of statements and questions and by openness in interacting with students' responses.

In "Janet Waking," the line "Running across the world upon the grass" contrasts "the forgetful kingdom of death" in the final line. The teacher might ask: "What do you visualize from those two images?"

Does "deeply morning" suggest an end of youth or a pun on "mourning" or a literal awakening or something else?

Questions about connotation in "Barter" might include: "What is the significance of the children's faces being compared to 'a cup'? Why is music compared to 'gold'?"

As students develop the skill of looking carefully at new pieces of poetry, the teacher becomes less active in the process. Students not only find the devices but also discuss how they create meaning. What is important is not that students are able to identify poetic devices so much as that they can explain how the devices enhance meaning and effect.

Other poems in which a study of poetic devices enhances meaning:

"The Sea"	James Reeves
"The Eagle"	Alfred, Lord Tennyson
"The Fog"	Carl Sandburg
"The Bells"	Edgar Allan Poe
"Jabberwocky"	Lewis Carroll
"Silver"	Walter de la Mare
"Knoxville, Tennessee"	Nikki Giovanni
"Storm Warnings"	Adrienne Rich
"Dulce et Decorum Est"	Wilfred Owen
"Buffalo Bill's defunct"	e. e. cummings
"Sunset"	Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali
"I Love the Look of Words"	Maya Angelou

Attitude (Tone)

Having examined the poem's devices and clues closely, students are now ready to explore the multiple attitudes that may be present in the poem. Examination of diction, images, and details suggests the speaker's attitude toward the subject and contributes to understanding.

In "Janet Waking," for example, the line "No kiss at all for her brother" shows humor, while the line "Who would have kissed each curl of his shining baby" reveals the father's love for the child.

In "Barter," such words as "beautiful," "splendid," "wonder," and "ecstasy" suggest the speaker's awe.

Additional poems that exhibit multiple attitudes or subtle attitudes are listed below.

Additional Poems for Analysis:	
"A Narrow Fellow in the Grass"	Emily Dickinson
"Casey at the Bat"	Ernest Lawrence Thayer
"The Charge of the Light Brigade"	Lord Alfred Tennyson
"Mother to Son"	Langston Hughes
"My Last Duchess"	Robert Browning
"Ozymandias"	Percy Bysshe Shelley
"Ex-Basketball Player"	John Updike
"My Mistress' Eyes Are Nothing Like the Sun"	William Shakespeare
"And We Shall Be Steeped"	Leopald S. Senghor
"Those Winter Sundays"	Robert Hayden

Shift (Progression)

Rarely does a poet begin and end the poetic experience in the same place. As is true of most of us, the poet's understanding of an experience is a gradual realization, and the poem is a reflection of that epiphany. Consequently, the students' discovery of the movement is critical to their understanding of the poem. One way to help students arrive at an understanding of a poem is to ask them to trace the changing feelings of the speaker from the beginning to the end, paying particular attention to the conclusion.

The discovery of shift can be facilitated if students are taught to watch for the following:

- Key words (but, yet, however, although)
- Punctuation (dashes, periods, colons, ellipsis)
- Stanza divisions
- Changes in line or stanza length or both
- Irony (sometimes irony hides shifts)
- Effect of structure on meaning
- Changes in sound that may indicate changes in meaning
- Changes in diction (slang to formal language)

The first shift in "Janet Waking" occurs in stanza three, "But alas,/Her Chucky had died," and the next shift takes place in stanza six with the combination of the parenthesis and the word "Translated." The shifts indicate the alteration of attitude and idea from an amused, affectionate tone as the speaker describes Janet in the early stages to a magnified sense of importance and universality as the speaker recounts the child's growing awareness of death.

The third stanza of "Barter" begins differently from the first two stanzas, moving from observations about beauty to a command: "Spend all you have." This shift signals the theme that the beauty of the world is worth the sacrifices and troubles people inevitably endure.

Poems that exhibit shifts that are clues to meaning:	
"Life Doesn't Frighten Me"	Maya Angelou
"Legacy II"	Leroy Quintana
"Maggie and Milly and Molly and May"	e. e. cummings
"One Perfect Rose"	Dorothy Parker
"The Seven Ages of Man"	William Shakespeare
"The Boarder"	Louis Simpson
"The Tropics in New York"	Claude McKay

Title (Again)
The teacher leads the students in examining the title again, this time on an interpretive level.

Although "Janet Waking" does literally describe a child waking up in the morning, the word "waking" also suggests that Janet is mourning for her pet as well as awakening to the reality of death.

The word "Barter" now indicates that some sacrifice must be made; something must be given in exchange for this "breath of ecstasy."

Theme
In identifying theme, the student will recognize the human experience, motivation, or condition suggested by the poem. One way for students to arrive at this is, first, summarize the "plot" of the poem in a paragraph (in writing or orally); next, list the subject or subjects of the poem (moving from literal subjects to abstract concepts such as death, war, discovery); then, determine what the poet is saying about each subject and write a complete sentence. The students have then identified theme. This method also reduces anxiety about stating the theme.

More Poems with Striking Themes:	
"Southern Mansions"	Arna Bontemps
"Birches"	Robert Frost
"Interview"	Sara Henderson Hay
"I'm Nobody! Who Are You?"	Emily Dickinson
"You Came Too"	Nikki Giovanni
"Auto Wreck"	Karl Shapiro
"Traveling Through the Dark"	William Stafford
"Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out"	Shel Silverstein

The teacher might examine the poetry that is currently being taught at various grade levels and determine exactly which pieces of poetry lend themselves to the model. Or the teacher might create a new approach that accomplishes the same objective—helping students to find meaning and effect in a piece of poetry.

THEME CHART

PLOT	SUBJECTS	THEMES
A summary of the "plot" or events of a poem (or short story or novel) is written in paragraph form.	Subjects of the poem (or short story or novel) are listed as words or phrases.	After combining subjects where appropriate, students write a complete sentence identifying what idea the author is conveying about each subject.
Examples:	Examples:	Examples:
In "Janet Waking," Janet awakens morning and runs to greet her pet chicken only to discover that a bee had stung and killed the bird. The discovery desolates Janet to such a degree that her father cannot comfort her.	(1) a child's first experience with death (2) loss of a pet (3) innocence	(1) Children become aware of one inevitability of death and are transformed by the knowledge. (2) The death of innocence is inevitable. (Note: Subjects 1 and 2 are combined into one theme.)
In "Barter," the poet describes the beauty of the ocean, fire, children's faces, music, pine trees, and thoughts. The poet urges the reader not to "count the cost" but to "Count many a year of strife well lost" and "Give all you have" for "a breath of ecstasy."	(1) beautiful things in life (2) barter/exchange (3) the suffering and problems in life	Exchange the suffering and problems of life for the moments of loveliness.

Using the approach illustrated above is one way to help students arrive at the theme of a piece of poetry. Another strategy called **TWIST** is outlined in the Writing Tactics section.

PROSE ANALYSIS

Concluding this section is an analysis of "The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin. This sample illustrates many of the literary analysis techniques discussed in this chapter.

Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour" presents teachers of both middle school and high school students considerable opportunities for fruitful interpretive discussions. Although the beginning student may focus more on the plot, characterization, and meaning of the ironic ending, the more experienced student may enhance the reading of the story to consider how imagery and tone contribute to meaning; and the advanced student may investigate the effect narrative point of view has on creating theme.

The Story of an Hour

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the story of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul. She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves. There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams. She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will—pass powerless as her two white slender hands would have been. When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had

followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body. She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception to dismiss the suggestion as trivial.

She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for her during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him—sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

"Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. "Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door—you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven's sake open the door."

"Go away. I am not making myself ill." No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Some one was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

But Richards was too late. When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of joy that kills.

Chopin, Kate. "The Story of an Hour" in *Reading About the World, Vol. 2,* ed. Paul Brains, et al, published by American Heritage Books, 1999.

Sample Discussion Questions

- What effect does the news of her husband's apparent death have on Mrs. Mallard?
- What details help us to understand her character?
- Why does Mrs. Mallard die at the end of the story?
- How does the author's use of imagery help us to understand Mrs. Mallard's mental state?
- How would you describe the story's tone? To what extent is it constant?
- How does the story address the subject of marriage?
- How would you define the narrative point of view? How does it affect our interpretation of the events in the story?
- Explain the possible meaning of the story's last line.

Analysis of Chopin's "The Story of an Hour"

An examination of "The Story of an Hour" may center on its ironic ending. Most students will be surprised at the death of Mrs. Mallard upon the return of her husband, though, perhaps preceded by a second reading, they will see how Chopin foreshadows the ending. The reader's understanding of Mrs. Mallard's "heart trouble," her feeling of new-found freedom, her reflections on the unsatisfying nature of her marriage will lessen their shock at her heart attack.

The narrator tells us that Mrs. Mallard "did not hear the story [of her husband's "death"] as many women would have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once...." When attentive readers take note of the protagonist's reaction, they may anticipate unexpected, even unconventional, behavior from Mrs. Mallard throughout the remainder of the story.

And such behavior they do indeed observe. Chopin's inclusion of such details and images as the "comfortable, roomy armchair" into which Mrs. Mallard sinks, the "new spring life" with the "delicious breath of rain" and the "countless sparrows...twittering in the eaves" that she observes predicts the rebirth that the central character will increasingly feel with the progression of the story and helps to create the positive tone associated with that rebirth.

Chopin's refusal to identify the "something" that approaches Mrs. Mallard, a something "too subtle and elusive to name," can prove problematic at first to student readers. They will perceive, however, that "this thing that was approaching to possess her" is a sense of freedom that has been gained only after she has tried to "beat [it] back." By this time, most experienced readers will recognize the emerging social context of the story; some may begin to interpret it through a feminist's lens.

That the narrative makes a comment on the institution of marriage should escape no reader. The degree to which a reader sees Chopin criticizing marriage will depend on a number of factors, not the least of which is the reader's personal response to a woman who feels liberated by the realization that "she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would

belong to her absolutely," a procession that is the result of her husband's demise. Certainly a reader should not ignore Mrs. Mallard's insight that "There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow creature." Nor should the reader overlook the truth that Mrs. Mallard had loved her husband "sometimes."

Although the ambiguity suggested here may cause some readers to be frustrated, a close look at the narrative point of view may lead to a more confident interpretation. Through her primary use of the limited omniscient point of view, Chopin enables the reader to share Mrs. Mallard's slowly unfolding epiphany with her and thereby to gain a measure of understanding for her. On the other hand, the narrator's omniscience at the story's end serves to remove the reader from Mrs. Mallard's consciousness. Instead, Chopin focuses on the way Mrs. Mallard is perceived from the outside: "When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of joy that kills." Mrs. Mallard's doctors, and even her sister and family friend Richards, are not privy to the protagonist's thoughts as we are. Only the reader, through the limited omniscient narrator, knows that the return of Brently Mallard does, in fact, kill his wife because it eradicates the "joy" she felt in her new-found freedom, NOT because it brings her overwhelming happiness to see her husband alive.

Close Reading

DEFINING THE SKILL

Unfortunately, too many students are unreflective when they read. For them, reading is a simple and straightforward process. The meaning of a text lies only within the author's words. Reflective readers, on the other hand, experience an interaction between themselves and what they read. Their reading is a dynamic process wherein they doubt, question, respond, and often reread and ponder before they move on.

Transforming students from unreflective to reflective readers is an ongoing task. The following strategies are possible methods for teachers to help their students become more reflective readers. This chapter divides these tactics into two types: *metacognitive strategies* and *discussion methods.*

METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

- Thinking notes
- Reading aloud
- Thinking aloud
- Ladders of questions
- Reading journals
- Reading strategies
- Annotating texts

DISCUSSION METHODS

- Fishbowl discussions
- Timed discussions
- Reading conferences
- Bulletin board
- Threaded discussions
- Literature circles

METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

THINKING NOTES

This is a simple procedure to help students become more involved in their reading and to give them a way of recording their thoughts about the text. The strategy consists of a notation system that records students' reactions to what they read. Since marking in a book is an issue at times, strips of paper or sticky notes can be labeled with the marking systems and placed on the page. [Note: It is sometimes advisable for students to add page numbers to their thinking notes.]

These are some comon thinking notes that students might use:

yes	agree
X	disagree
+	new
!	WOW
?	I wonder
??	don't understand
*	important

READING ALOUD: READ, PAUSE, AND THINK

Students are never too old to be read to—nor are they ever too old to read aloud. Reading aloud allows students the chance to demonstrate their personal interpretations of characters and stories. It also provides opportunities for teachers to discuss audience, point of view and, especially, tone. In fact, sometimes the very same piece can be read aloud with predetermined tones so the class can discuss how one presentation differs from another in order to depict the appropriate tone.

An excellent piece for this exercise is Lewis Carroll's poem "Jabberwocky." Because of the nonsensical nature of the diction, students must establish the appropriate tone through their delivery, since the language itself offers no clues. (As an aside, this is also a useful piece of writing from which to discuss the importance of punctuation, grammar, and word relationships. For example, "slithy toves" is an adjective-noun combination, but how do we know this?)

Jabberwocky

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beward the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought—
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood a while in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey woods,
And burbled as it came!

One two! One two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!

He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
Oh frabjous day! Calloh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Carroll, Lewis. "Jaberwocky" in *Classic Poems to Read Aloud,* ed. James Berry. New York: Kingfisher. 1997.

When students read aloud, they need to...

- Hear the voice of the speaker.
- Discern the tone and rhythm of the piece.
- Understand meanings and sounds of unfamiliar words.
- Mark the text to provide themselves with cues about *how* to read when they actually read aloud.
- Pause and think about the structure and meaning of the passage or poem.

For example, "Jabberwocky" opens and closes with identical stanzas. Direct quotations from the older and wiser character follow stanza one and precede the last stanza. He first speaks with a voice of warning and experience. Then he embraces the main character, celebrating his success and re-establishing the peaceful mood of the opening.

THINKING ALOUD

This technique encourages students to discuss their thinking processes intermittently while they are reading aloud. Teachers can begin this process by modeling for students how they would approach the text. For instance, in "Hazel Tells Laverne," teachers might read the title and stop and muse aloud about what the title suggests. Next, they would read the first five lines and mention such elements as setting, characterization, the running together of words, the lack of capital letters, and emotions associated with the poem's diction. The reading process for students may be demystified when they hear teachers struggle with a passage and grapple with possible meanings.

Students may also utilize this process by reading to the teacher or to other students. The benefits from this activity will depend on its use, and they may range from the teachers' hearing a student's thoughts, to students' reflecting upon what they are reading and, finally, to students' receiving validation of their own understanding by listening to others.

"Hazel Tells Laverne," which is enjoyable to read and fun to hear, allows students to wrestle with meaning and tone as they orally refer to the text while reading for understanding.

In the annotation that follows, the poem has been bracketed into natural reflection points with comments indicating possible reflections students might have during an initial reading. With more time and/or with advanced students, a more interpretive or analytical 'thinking aloud' might result.

Hazel Tells Laverne

last night
im cleanin out my
howard johnsons ladies room
when all of a sudden
up pops this frog
musta come from the sewer
swimmin aroun and tryin ta
climb up the sida the bowl
so i goes ta flushm down
but sohelpmegod he starts talkin
bout a golden ball
an how i can be a princess
me a princess
well my mouth drops
all the way to the floor
an he says
kiss me just kiss me
once on the nose
well i screams
ya little green pervert
an i hitsm with my mop
an has ta flush
the toilet down three times
me a princess

Aal, Kathyrn Machan. "Hazel Tells Laverne" in *Robert Wallace: Writing Poems.* Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman, 1987.

funny names
I wonder what she will "tell"

Why my?
words look strange—no punctuation

Where does the frog come from?

Gross! The frog is in the toilet!
I'd scream and run.

"sohelpmegod"—hard to read
Reminds me of a fairy tale
She will have to kiss him.

She's shocked!
Why on the nose and not on the lips?

I'd scream too.
Funny language

3 times? A wish?

Did she lose her chance?
Is she laughing at the possibility of being a princess?

LADDERS OF QUESTIONS

Teachers are familiar with creating study questions and questions for quizzes, tests, and discussions. Readers also formulate questions and answer them with varying degrees of success during a particular reading. To help students learn how answering questions leads to greater understanding, teachers can create sets or ladders of questions that promote progressive thinking and closer reading.

Proficient readers actively revise their understanding of the text and its importance as they read. After a close reading, they can express a cogent synthesis of the overall meaning of the text and evaluate it in light of other texts and experiences—the goal for all readers.

The ladder can be divided into three types of questions: literal, interpretive, and experience-based. The following chart labels each level with the types of questions to be asked at that level, the location of the answer, and the understanding students gain through responding to the questions.

Types of Questions and Answers

Literal	Interpretive	Experience-Based
Questions	**Questions**	**Questions**
• Factual • Address key elements	• Inferential • Motive of author or a character	• Connecting • Link text to prior knowledge, other texts, or experiences
Answers	**Answers**	**Answers**
• Found directly in text	• Found by following patterns and seeing relationships among parts of the text	• Found by testing the ideas of a text against readers' schema
• Good answers lead to an accurate and complete summary of text	• Good answers lead to an identification of the significant patterns	• Good answers lead to an appreciation of the text and further discussion

To help teachers assess student growth in understanding through these ladders of questions, readers can paraphrase the text as they understand it both before and after answering the questions. They can also reflect on their own growth, perhaps seeing insights in their answers that were not part of their first paraphrase. This step is crucial; otherwise, answering questions becomes relatively mechanical as students turn learning into mere "school work."

After teachers have modeled these types of questions and students have internalized the method and value of using ladders of questions to reach higher understanding, students can generate their own questions. Students can come to understand which questions are most helpful and powerful in unlocking texts and can begin to form their own purposes and processes for reading closely.

EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES FOR LADDERS

The following passages provide rich opportunities for using questioning techniques to get at the meaning of a complex, layered text. The questions that accompany the selections are intended as models for teachers to use in guiding students through similar passages.

Girl

Wash the white clothes on Monday and put them on the stone heap; wash the color clothes on Tuesday and put them on the clothesline to dry; don't walk barehead in the hot sun; cook pumpkin fritters in very hot sweet oil; soak your little cloths right after you take them off; when buying cotton to make yourself a nice blouse, be sure that it doesn't have gum on it, because that way it won't hold up well after a wash; soak salt fish overnight before you cook it; is it true that you sing benna in Sunday school?; always eat your food in such a way that it won't turn someone else's stomach; on Sundays try to walk like a lady...; don't sing benna in Sunday school; you mustn't speak to wharf-rat boys, not even to give directions; don't eat fruits on the street—flies will follow you; but I don't sing benna on Sundays at all and never in Sunday school; this is how to sew on a button; this is how to make a buttonhole for the button you have just sewed on; this is how to hem a dress when you see the hem coming down...; this is how you iron your father's khaki shirt so that it doesn't have a crease; this is how you iron your father's khaki pants so that they don't have a crease; this how you grow okra—far from the house, because okra tree harbors red ants; when you are growing dasheen, make sure it gets plenty of water or else it makes your throat itch when you are eating it; this is how you sweep a corner; this how you sweep a whole house; this is how you sweep a yard; this is how you smile to someone you don't like too much; this is how you smile to someone you don't like at all; this is how you smile to someone you like completely; this is how you set a table for dinner with an important guest; this is how you set a table for lunch; this is how you set a table for breakfast; this is how to behave in the presence of men who don't know you very well...; be sure to wash every day, even if it is with your own spit; don't squat down to play marbles—you are not a boy, you know; don't pick people's flowers—you might catch something; don't throw stones at blackbirds, because it might not be a blackbird at all; this is how to make a bread pudding; this is how to make doukona; this is how to make pepper pot; this is how to make a good medicine for a cold; ... this is how to catch a fish; this is how to throw back a fish you don't like, and that way something bad won't fall on you; this how to bully a man; this is how a man bullies you; this how to love a man, and if this doesn't work there are other ways, and if they don't work don't feel too bad about giving up; this is how to spit up in the air if you feel like it, and this is how to move quick so that it doesn't fall on you; this is how to make ends meet; always squeeze bread to make sure it's fresh; but what if the baker won't let me feel the bread?; you mean to say that after all you are really going to be the kind of woman who the baker won't let near the bread?

Literal Questions

1. What kinds of advice does the mother give the girl about cooking, managing a household, and behaving?
2. In the context of the passage, what do you think "dasheen," "doukona," and "benna" mean?
3. What does the mother tell the girl to do to make ends meet?

Interpretive Questions

1. Why did Kincaid write this narrative as one sentence?
2. What are the effects of the mother's two questions?
3. Why does the girl speak only twice?
4. Why does the girl ask the last question?
5. Why does the author have the mother give the girl so much advice?
6. How is tone revealed through the mother's directives?

Experience-Based Questions

1. What is the most valuable advice your mother has given you?
2. What do you know about Caribbean culture?
3. When does a girl become a woman?
4. What similarities and differences do you see between the ways females are raised in your culture and the way Jamaica Kincaid's character is raised?

Additional questions based on the LADDERS format follow. The passage is taken from Eugenia Collier's "Marigolds."

> I leaped furiously into the mounds of marigolds and pulled madly, trampling and pulling and destroying the perfect yellow blooms. The fresh smell of early morning and of dew-soaked marigolds spurred me on as I went tearing and mangling and sobbing while Joey tugged my dress or my waist crying, "Lizabeth stop, please stop!"
>
> And then I was sitting in the ruined little garden among the uprooted and ruined flowers, crying and crying, and it was too late to undo what I had done. Joey was sitting beside me, silent and frightened, not knowing what to say. Then, "Lizabeth, look."
>
> I opened my swollen eyes and saw in front of me a pair of large calloused feet; my gaze lifted to the swollen legs, the age-distorted body clad in a tight cotton night dress, and then the shadowed Indian face surrounded by stubby white hair. And there was no rage in the face, now that the garden was destroyed and there was nothing any longer to be protected.
>
> "M-miss Lottie!" I scrambled to my feet and just stood there and stared at her, and that was the moment when childhood faded and womanhood began. That violent, crazy act was the last act of childhood. For as I gazed at the immobile face with sad, weary eyes, I gazed upon a kind of reality which is hidden to childhood. The witch was no longer a witch but only a broken old woman who had dared to create beauty in the midst of ugliness

> and sterility. She had been born in squalor and had lived in it all her life. Now at the end of that life she had nothing except a falling-down hut, a wrecked body, and John Burke, the mindless son of her passion. Whatever verve there was left in her, whatever was of love and beauty and joy that had not been squeezed out by life, had been there in the marigolds she had so tenderly cared for...
>
> There are times when the image of those passionate yellow mounds returns with a painful poignancy. For one does not have to be ignorant and poor to find that his life is barren as the dusty yards of our town. And I too have planted marigolds.
>
> Collier, Eugenia. "Marigolds". *The Language of Literature*, NY: McDougal Littell, Inc., 1999.

Literal Questions

1. Describe Lizabeth's actions in this scene.
2. What are the meanings of the words "sterility," "verve" and "poignancy"?
3. How is Miss Lottie described?
4. What sense words are used to describe the marigold garden?
5. What does Lizabeth do right after she destroys the flowers?

Interpretive Questions

1. Why do you think the narrator destroyed the marigolds?
2. Why is Lizabeth unable to stop her actions?
3. Why did Miss Lottie so tenderly care for the marigolds?
4. Why has Lizabeth's understanding of Miss Lottie changed?
5. How do you interpret the last line of the story?
6. Can you identify any stylistic devices? How do they add meaning to the passage?

Experience-Based Questions

1. Can you think of a time when your anger got out of control? What were the consequences of your behavior?
2. Have you had an experience that changed your perception of another person? (i.e. divorce, failures, sickness)
3. What information can you find about the Great Depression? How is this information significant to this story?
4. When does childhood end and adulthood begin? Is this the same for all people?

READING JOURNALS

Students can enhance their close reading skills by keeping reading journals. These journals consist of written responses that express students' understanding of and questions about a piece of literature. Students generate writing that demonstrates their degree of comprehension of the reading. These responses can range from literal comments to more complex interpretations.

Students may use the journals to connect their reading to personal experience, although critical and analytical commentary should complement students' personal reflections. Teachers need not mark or line-edit reading journals but will probably wish to search for patterns in the responses that indicate growth. In addition, journal responses often indicate promising topics for class discussion. The following section regarding reading strategies can be helpful to students as they begin to write analytically about their reading.

READING STRATEGIES

Students should be actively engaged with the text while they are reading. They must also be mindful of their thoughts while reading in order to write in their journals. This activity is intended to encourage a metacognitive approach to reading. Following is a list of reading strategies and metacognitive questions. Of course, this list can be modified to meet the appropriate level of the reader.

Questioning

- Ask questions about what is happening.
- Explore (determine) reasons for what is going on in the story.
- Explain how a character feels.
- Write down what confuses you.
- Determine why the author chose some distinctive words.

Connecting and Reflecting

- Describe similarities between what you are reading and what you have experienced.
- Explore the ways this book makes you think and feel.
- Describe similarities between what you are reading and what you have heard about or read about.

Predicting

- Try to figure out what will happen next in the story. What will the character say or do?
- Try to predict how the story will end.

Reviewing

- Stop at times to review what you have read.
- Summarize.

Evaluating

- Form opinions about what you read.
- Develop images and ideas about characters and events.
- Think about how this book compares to others you have read.

Citing Quotations
- Cite parts of the book that you think are examples of good writing.
- Comment on your thoughts about each quotation.

Recognizing Words
- Use context clues to determine meaning.
- Consult a dictionary.

Self-Correction
- Read to make sense.
- Read on.
- Reread.

Following this excerpt from Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird* are samples of possible student responses to the text that illustrate various reading strategies.

Opening from *To Kill A Mockingbird*

When he was nearly thirteen, my brother Jem got his arm badly broken at the elbow. When it healed, and Jem's fears of never being able to play football were assuaged, he was seldom self-conscious about his injury. His left arm was somewhat shorter than his right; when he stood or walked, the back of his hand was at right angles to his body, his thumb parallel to his thigh. He couldn't have cared less, so long as he could pass and punt.

When enough years had gone by to enable us to look back on them, we sometimes discussed the events leading to his accident. I maintain that the Ewells started it all, but Jem, who was four years my senior, said it started long before that. He said it began the summer Dill came to us, when Dill first gave us the idea of making Boo Radley come out.

I said if he wanted to take a broad view of the thing, it really began with Andrew Jackson. If General Jackson hadn't run the Creeks up the creek, Simon Finch would never have paddled up the Alabama, and where would we be if he hadn't? We were far too old to settle an argument with a fist-fight, so we consulted Atticus. Our father said we were both right.

Questioning

How does Jem break his arm? What kind of accident does Jem have? Who are the Ewells, Dill, and Boo Radley?

What does the word assuage mean? It sure sounds like an adult word.

Connecting and Reflecting

The debate between the narrator and her brother reminds me of my siblings. We never agree. We don't fist-fight either, but we do yell at each other. It is my mom who always has to tell us to stop fighting.

Predicting

I think we will get a better idea of what happened that summer. I think the narrator is setting up the story for us to decide where the trouble really began.

I know that Jem will have a broken elbow. I think Jem and the narrator will get in trouble trying to make "Boo Radley come out."

Reviewing

So far in this text I know that the narrator's brother, Jem, broke his arm and this seems to be an important event.

The Finch family has a long history in that town.

Evaluating

I think it is confusing so far. I don't understand how the story about the siblings fits with Andrew Jackson and the Creeks. It seems to be jumping around.

ANNOTATING TEXTS

While *annotating texts,* students mark the pages of the book, passage, or poem as they read. Students note what they think is important, what they think a passage means, and what ideas and questions that passage raises.

Some readers mark up the text extensively, while others mark only the parts they consider most significant or problematic. What is important is not how students annotate or even how much they annotate, but **that** they annotate. The mere act of marking the page as they read makes it more likely that students will read closely and attentively.

When students read for meaning, their annotations should reflect their efforts to understand what they are reading, as well as their reactions to the text—including questions the reading raises, new ideas it suggests, and reactions students have to it.

There is no right or wrong way to annotate. Each reader has a different style. Here are just a few ways to annotate a text:

- Highlight or underline key words and sentences.
  - Bracket important passages.
  - Connect related ideas with lines.
  - Outline the main ideas in the margin.
  - Circle words to be defined.
  - Write brief comments and questions in the margin.
  - Place an asterisk beside something unusual, special, or important.
  - Label important events in the plot at the top of the page or with a "post-it" note.

Below are illustrations of two students' annotations while reading for meaning. Notice what these readers marked in the text and wrote in the margins.

What kind of bank? —strange expression

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, "and what is the use of a " book, thought Alice, "without pictures or conversation?"

I agree—a book needs conversations

Just how young is this kid, anyhow?

So she was considering in her own mind (as well as she could, for the hot day made her feel very sleepy and stupid) whether the pleasure of making a daisy-chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and picking the daisies, when suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her.

She is stupid for just sitting there

A talking rabbit—please

There was nothing so very remarkable in that; nor did Alice think so very much out of the ordinary to hear the Rabbit say to itself, "Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!" (when she thought it over afterwards, it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it all seemed quite natural); but when the Rabbit actually took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket, and looked at it, and then hurried on, Alice started to her feet, for it flashed across her mind that she had never before seen a rabbit with either a waistcoat-pocket or a watch to take out of it, and burning with curiosity, she ran across the field after it, and fortunately was just in time to see it pop down a large rabbit-hole under the hedge.

A watch and clothing—maybe this is like one of those Hobbit stories.

At least she has some curiosity. I was thinking she was brain dead.

In another moment down went Alice after it, never once considering how in the world she was to get out again.

Finally, some excitement. Now what is she going to do?

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll

The following text by Charles Frazier is annotated by advanced students in response to the prompt.

Read the following passage from *Cold Mountain* carefully. Write an essay in which you discuss the author's use of connotative (emotionally charged) diction (word choice), imagery, concrete detail, and sentence structure to create a certain effect on the reader. Be sure to state what the effect is and how it is achieved.

Several nights later Inman stood in front of the slanted house. It sat toadlike down in its swale, and the windows were all black. He softly called the three-legged dog from out its den and offered it a piece of pork bone that he had carried in his pocket wrapped in sycamore leaves. The dog came sniffing, soundless. It snatched the bone and then disappeared under the front porch.

Inman followed the dog down to the house and circled around to the rear. The big fire was but a cold black pock on the ground. He went to the back porch. His knapsack still lay there in a pile. He looked through it, and everything was there but for Veasey's old pistol. He thrust his arm into the woodstack and seized the haversack and felt the butt of the LeMat's through the fabric. He drew it forth and it was like a tonic to feel the weight of the pistol in his hand, the balance and the sound when he pulled back the hammer.

A rind of light shone under the smokehouse door and Inman went and cracked the door and looked inside. Junior stood rubbing salt on a ham. A bayonet was stobbed into the dirt floor, and its muzzle socket held a taper as neatly as a silver candlestick. The floor of the smokehouse was so packed and greasy that the flame cast glints off it. Junior bent over the ham. He had his hat on and his face was dark in the shade of its brim. Inman opened the door fully and stood in the light. Junior raised up his face and looked at him but seemed not to recognize him. Inman stepped to Junior and struck him across the ear with the barrel of the LeMat's and then clubbed at him with the butt until he lay flat on his back. There was no movement out of him but for the bright flow of blood which ran from his nose and cuts to his head and the corners of his eyes. It gathered and pooled on the black earth of the smokehouse floor.

Frazier, Charles. *Cold Mountain*. New York; Vintage Books, 1997, pp. 233–235.

Concrete details: slanted house and three-legged dog indicate that things are out of balance, wrong.

Connotation: all-black windows prevent vision; the house is "toadlike," nasty and unpleasant, slimy, loathsome...

Diction: the dog comes out of its "den" like a wild animal and "snatches" the bone like a wolf. This is a wild place with savage creatures in it.

Parallel syntactical structure reinforces idea of gun's balance.

"Rind of light" and "cracked" door are images of narrowness.

bayonet used as candlestick an unusual/weird way to shed light on something—the weapon is "stobbed" into the floor—violent diction

Blood is "bright"—maybe another paradox?

Onomatopoetic alliteration: the sibilent "s" sounds in "sniffing," "soundless," "snatched" "slanted, "softly," "sycamore," etc. create a sinister hissing sound that helps to create the ominous tone.

Things that should be hot are cold; the fire pit is a "pock," a sign of disease or contagion...

Verbs "thrust" and "seized" are violent ones.

Paradox of gun being like a "tonic," life-giving

Infernal images of light and dark—flames glinting on the greasy floor

Junior is in the shadow; Inman in the light—clues to characterization?

Inman "clubbed" at him—the action of a caveman—is he reverting to savagery?

Pool of blood in the black earth a powerful image of black and red

DISCUSSION METHODS

FISHBOWL DISCUSSIONS

In fishbowl discussions, the class is split into two circles, an inner circle and an outer circle. The inner circle discusses a text, using either a teacher- or student-generated prompt, and the teacher facilitates. The outer circle listens and takes notes to assess the quality of understanding of a partner who is in the fishbowl, to evaluate the inner circle's understanding, or to prepare to take up the discussion when the circles switch places.

TIMED DISCUSSIONS

Timed discussions require that as students discuss a text, each speaker must speak for a minimum amount of time without being redundant or rambling. In this kind of speaking, students use thinking and communication skills that are similar to those they use in spontaneous writing, and they find that, in order to keep focused and speak for longer periods of time, they refer more closely to the text. As their speaking time increases, students learn how to plan carefully and to support their ideas.

READING CONFERENCES

Reading conferences allow students to practice and improve close reading skills. Conferences can be held in groups of three to five students whether the class is reading a common title or multiple titles. Students take notes on the reading in preparation for the conference.

Teachers begin with open questions about the effect, meaning, or value of the work. Teachers might then ask each student one pointed question to elicit insights about such elements as style, tone, patterns, or inferences. These specific questions should build upon or challenge statements made by the group members. The more proficient the group, the more challenging the questions. As the conference ends, students are given some time for their own questions about the work, while teachers note the quality and direction of these questions.

BULLETIN BOARD

Although this strategy is primarily a way to get students to publish their reactions to literature, it also helps build close reading skills. Students write one-page responses to literature, responding to a prompt, a quote, or a self-generated question. These responses need to show a reasonable approach to answering the question, relying heavily on textual evidence. Other students respond to these postings, either by starting a new thread or building on an existing one. While electronic discussions are neater and can handle more threads and responses comfortably, this experience can be approximated by using a bulletin board and simply posting responses on top of the original posting.

THREADED DISCUSSIONS

Students can also utilize the Internet to discuss readings and to respond to prompts. However, threaded discussions, also known as Web forums, discussion forums, or discussion boards, are usually facilitated on a Web page instead of through e-mail. These discussions are typically archived automatically and are also often formatted in an outline form. This allows some students to peruse a "thread" of the discussion while the main conversation moves forward.

Threaded discussion groups are usually prearranged by the instructor. They allow students to read and post messages, thus exchanging ideas with instructors and with other students without the need for all participants to be online at the same time. This type of discussion is useful for conducting an online debate on a particular issue, for sharing ideas on topics related to a reading or course, and for posting answers to prompts and queries.

LITERATURE CIRCLES

Literature circles as created by Harvey Daniels (From *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom* by Harvey Daniels. Copyright © 1994. Reprinted with permission of Stenhouse Publishers.) offer text and discussion options to students while providing an intimate setting to encourage and enhance ownership of discussions. There are many benefits to readers of all abilities as students choose their books and specific roles for discussions. Students learn to take responsibility for the meaning of the text by taking an integral part in the discussion. According to Daniels, there are 12 key ingredients of literature circles:

- Students choose their own reading material.
- Small, temporary groups are formed based on book choice.
- Different groups read different books.
- Groups meet on a regular, predictable schedule.
- Students use written or drawn notes to guide both their reading and discussion.
- Discussion topics come from the students.
- Group discussions aim to be open and natural.
- In newly formed groups, students play a rotating assortment of roles.
- The teacher serves as a facilitator.
- Evaluation is by teacher observation and student self-evaluation.
- A spirit of playfulness and fun pervades the room.
- New groups form around new reading choices.

The four basic roles for students participating in literature circles discussions are as follows:

Discussion Director

- Creates questions
- Leads the meeting
- Seeks discussion from members

Literary Illuminator

- Notes important passages/sections
- Finds creative ways to present key parts

Connector

- Finds connections between the book and the world (life, school, community, other texts, events, etc.)

Illustrator

- Makes visual representation of sections of the text
- Illustrates ideas, feelings, and connections through sketches, cartoons, diagrams, flow charts, etc.

Assessment Ideas

- Individual conferences to monitor understanding
- Student assessment of group members
- Teacher observation of group discussions and individual members
- Set criteria for roles and discussion evaluated by a rubric

Performances and Products

Any of the techniques on the following page may be used for assessing students' understanding of reading.

accordion book
advertisement
advertising campaign
alphabet book
analogy
anthem
animated movie
annotated bibliography
annotated illustration
annotated reference list
anthology
appliqué
art gallery
artifact analysis
atlas
audio tape
autobiography
banner
bill of rights
biographical sketch
biography
blueprint
book cover
book-make
book-write, illustrate
bookmark
brochure
bulletin board
business plan
cartoons
case study
catalogue
causal relationship identified
chart
children's story
choral reading
choreography
clay model
clay sculpture
clothing
coat of arms collage
collected letters
collection
comparative observations
computer program
conclusion based on data
constructions
contour map
conundrum
cook book
cooking
costume
colloquium
commercial
comic strip
compare/contrast paper
comparison chart
court trial
creative story
crossword puzzle
critique
data base
debate
demonstration
design experiment
design product line
diagram
dialogue of a character
diary
dictionary of terms
diorama
display
dolls
draft of a new law
drawing
dress up
e-mail easy reader book
editorial
embroidery
essay
exit interview
experiment
fables
fact file
fairy tale
family tree
field guide
film
film criticism
film strip
finger puppet
flag
flannel board
flip book
flip chart
floor plan
forum
game
game board
game book
globe
graphic organizer
graphs on a computer
greeting card
group discussion
haiku
hidden picture
"historical" document
history
homework
horoscope
"how-to" book
humor and jokes
hypothesis development
idea web
illuminated manuscript
illustrated story
ink drawing
interview
interview simulation
invitation
issue based forum
jewelry
journal
kit of supplies
kite
lab demonstration
lab report
labeled diagram
large scale drawing
laws
learning center
learning packet
legal brief
legend
lesson
letter
letter of recommendation
letter to the editor
license plate
limerick
lists
literary criticism
logo
lyrics
machine
magazine
magazine article
mandala
maze
meeting
menu
mobile
model
montage
motto
miniature
miniature room display
mind map
multimedia report
mural
museum display with text
musical composition
musical instrument
myth
narrative
needlework
news report
newspaper
newspaper story
number system
obituary
oral defense oral report
origami
outline painting
pamphlet
panel presentation
paper dolls
paper maché
petition
photography
photo album
photo essay
picture
picture book
play
poem
poetry collection
pop-up book
portfolio
position paper
poster
pottery
PowerPoint presentation
press conference
project cube
propaganda analysis
puppet
puzzle
questionnaire
questions
quilt square
quilt
quiz
radio program
reaction paper
rebus story
recipe book
recommendation
record cover
report
research on Internet
resume
riddle
road map
role play
role reversal
sales presentation
schedule
science fiction story
scrapbook
screen play
script
sculpture
self-evaluation
senior project and defense
shield
silk screen
simulation
simulation game
skit
slide show
slogan
soft sculpture
solution to a problem
song
speech
spelling bee
spreadsheet
stamp story board
student file
summary
survey and report
syllogism analyzed
symposium
talk show program
tall tale
tape
television program
terrarium
test
timeline
tools
transparencies
travel brochure
treatise
treasure map
Web page


Marriott

Rhetoric

INTRODUCTION

In a coordinated English curriculum, teachers of all grade levels can help students think logically and write persuasively by teaching the foundations of rhetoric and the skills of argumentation. By first understanding the connection between reading and writing, students may see the text as the finished writing of an author, not simply as a book to be read. They could speculate, for example, why William Faulkner wrote "A Rose for Emily" with suspended detail and nonchronological ordering of events or why Abraham Lincoln wrote "Four score and seven years ago" rather than "Eighty-seven years ago." When students examine a text carefully, they are able to determine the intent of the writer. In the study of rhetoric, the focus should be how a writer uses elements of language—diction, detail, image, tone, syntax, logical ordering, juxtaposition, or contrast, for example—to achieve a specific purpose.

Rhetoric is the art of using words to persuade in writing or speaking. All types of writing—fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry—seek to persuade, and rhetoricians study these genres for their persuasive qualities. In the classroom, students study logic, the rational methods of ascertaining and preserving truth. They learn how to explore causal relationships, proving conclusions with sound logic and clear reasoning. Students learn to deliberate issues carefully and to avoid hasty writing on a visceral level. Students need to be able to analyze an assertion, determine its validity, prepare an appropriate response, and communicate that spoken or written response with clarity. In this four-section chapter, teachers will be introduced to the theory behind rhetoric, to material and activities related to analyzing rhetoric, to instruction and prompts geared toward writing arguments, and to two Advanced Placement English Language and Composition free-response questions: one that directs students to analyze prose; and the other, to write an argument.

RHETORICAL THEORY

Argument is used here to designate the entire persuasive essay. Writing argumentative essays is a complex process that addresses with a specific *purpose* a targeted *audience.* The process requires *reasoning,* a kind of controlled thinking in which the student comes to accept or reject an idea based on its validity and truth. An error in reasoning, or a *logical fallacy,* will weaken an argument and diminish the credibility of the writer. Effective arguments involve key issues, anticipated objections, gathered support, and logical reasoning to sway the thinking of the audience. An effective argument is a well-constructed presentation of ideas that takes a stand about an issue—often called the *thesis statement* or *claim*—and supports that thesis statement with various evidence or *premises.* In writing arguments, students will consciously structure their writing, using logical lines of reasoning such as order of importance, chain of

reasoning, cause and effect, rebuttal, concession/refutation, and process analysis. Writers of arguments will also use the various *modes of discourse* to support their claims with a combination of both logical (*logos*) and emotional (*pathos*) evidence to establish their credibility as writers or their ethical appeal (*ethos*). The argument's inference is the relationship between the premises and a *conclusion*, the final statement, which writers seek to prove as valid based on their premises, which also are assumed valid.

ELEMENTS OF ARGUMENTATION

Purpose: *Purpose* is the specific reason or reasons for the writing. It conveys what the readers have to gain by reading the essay. Purpose is the objective or the goal that the writer wishes to establish.

A writer's *purpose* might be to:

- Support a cause
- Promote a change
- Refute a theory
- Stimulate interest
- Win agreement
- Arouse sympathy
- Provoke anger

Audience: The *audience* is the writer's targeted reader or readers. The relationship between the writer and the audience is critical. Students should consider the kind of information, language, and overall approach that will appeal to a specific audience. Here are some questions students can ask themselves during the prewriting stage of their argumentative essays:

Who exactly is the audience?

What do they know?

What do they believe?

What do they expect?

How will the audience disagree with me?

What will they want me to address or answer?

How can I—or should I—use jargon?

Should I use language that is formal, factual, and objective—or familiar, anecdotal, and personal?

Appeals of Logic, Emotion, and Ethics

Types of Logical Appeals (logos)

Incorporate inductive reasoning.

Use deductive reasoning.

Create a syllogism.

Cite traditional culture.
Cite commonly held beliefs.
Allude to history, religious texts, great literature, or mythology.
Manipulate the style.
Employ various *modes of discourse* for specific effects.
Provide testimony.
Draw analogies/create metaphors.
Order chronologically.
Provide evidence.
Classify evidence.
Cite authorities.
Quote research.
Use facts.
Theorize about *cause and effect.*
Argue from precedent.

Emotional Appeals (pathos)
Use language that involves the senses.
Include a bias or prejudice.
Include an anecdote.
Include connotative language.
Explore euphemisms.
Use description.
Use figurative language.
Develop tone.
Experiment with informal language.

Ethical Appeal (ethos)
Show written voice in the argument.
Make the audience believe that the writer is trustworthy.
Demonstrate that the writer put in research time.
Support reasons with appropriate, logical evidence.
Present a carefully crafted and edited argument.
Demonstrate that the writer knows the audience and respects them.
Show concern about communicating with the audience.
Convince the audience that the writer is reliable and knowledgeable.

Logical Fallacies

Logical fallacies are errors in reasoning that render an argument invalid.

General guidelines for student writers:

- *Do not claim too much.* No writing will completely solve or even fully address all problems involved in a complex topic.
- *Do not oversimplify complex issues.* You selected your topic because it is controversial and multifaceted. If you reduce the argument to simplistic terms and come up with an easy solution, you will lose your credibility and diminish your ethos.
- *Support your argument with concrete evidence and specific proposals,* not with abstract generalizations and familiar sentiments. Always assume that your audience is skeptical, expecting you to demonstrate your case reasonably, without bias or shallow development.

Common Logical Fallacies

- *ad hominem* fallacy: "to the individual," the target's person's characteristics are attacked, instead of the argument

Example: Nick Jacobson is not a worthy candidate for vice president of the senior class because he is short and frowns too much.

- *ad populum* fallacy: "to the crowd," a misconception that a widespread occurrence of something is assumed to make an idea true or right

Example: The parents of Sylvia's friends allow their daughters to stay out until 2:00 a.m. on a school night, so Sylvia's parents should allow her to stay out until 2:00, as well.

- begging the question: taking for granted something that really needs proving

Example: "Free all political prisoners" begs the question of whether some of those concerned have committed an actual crime, like blowing up the chemistry building in a political protest.*

- circular reasoning: trying to prove one idea with another idea that is too similar to the first idea; such an error logic moves backward in its attempt to move forward

Example: A writer is a person who writes.

- either/or reasoning: the tendency to see an issue as having only two sides

Example: The possession of firearms should be completely banned or completely legal.

- hasty generalization: drawing a general and premature conclusion on the basis of only one or two cases

Example: Dallas Police Chief Christopher Michaels suggested that all dogs be muzzled because two Golden Retrievers have been disturbing the peace in Fritz Park.

- *non sequitur:* "it does not follow," an inference or conclusion that does not follow established premises or evidence

Example: "He is certainly sincere; he must be right." or "He's the most popular: he should be president."*

- pedantry: a display of narrow-minded and trivial scholarship; an arbitrary adherence to rules and forms

Example: Mary prides herself in knowing so much about grammar, but she never earns high grades on essays because she cannot think of—let alone organize—insightful ideas.

- *post hoc, ergo propter hoc:* "after this, therefore because of this," assuming that an incident that precedes another is the cause of the second incident

Example: Antonietta worked on her written argument longer than she had for any other essay; therefore, she felt she must earn an "A."

- propaganda: writing or images that seek to persuade through emotional appeal rather than through logical proof; written or visual texts that describe or depict using highly connotative words or images—favorable or unfavorable—without justification

Example: Roger's infatuation with the model's ruby red lips, beautiful teeth, sparkling eyes, and streaming hair made him believe that Optident is the best toothpaste.

*Adaptation from pp. 268–270 from *The Practical Stylist with Readings and Handbook, 8th ed.* by Sheridan Baker. Copyright © 1998 by Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers Inc. Reprinted by permission of Pearson Education, Inc.

Modes of Discourse**

Description: The traditional classification of discourse that depicts images verbally in space and time and arranges those images in a logical pattern, such as spatial or by association.

Narration: The classification of discourse that tells a story or relates an event. It organizes the events or actions in time or relates them in space. Narration generally tells what happened, when it happened, and where it happened.

Exposition: One of the traditional classifications of discourse that has as a function to inform or to instruct or to present ideas and general truths objectively. Exposition can use incorporate any the following organizational patterns.

- comparison: This traditional rhetorical strategy is based on the assumption that a subject may be shown more clearly by pointing out ways it is similar to something else. The two subjects may each be explained separately and then their similarities are pointed out.
- contrast: This traditional rhetorical strategy is based on the assumption that a subject may be shown more clearly by pointing out ways in which it is unlike another subject.

- cause and effect: One of the traditional rhetorical strategies, cause and effect consists of arguing from the presence or absence of the cause to the existence or nonexistence of the effect or result or, conversely, in arguing from an effect to its probable causes.
- classification: One of the traditional ways of thinking about a subject, classification identifies the subject as a part of a larger group with shared features.
- division: A traditional way of thinking about a subject that includes breaking the subject into smaller segments.
- definition: A traditional pattern of thought which places a subject into an appropriate group and then differentiates the subject from the other sections of the group. The first step limits the meaning of the subject; the second step specifies its meaning. In prose, definitions are often extended by illustrations and examples.

Argumentation: also ***persuasion.*** This traditional form of discourse functions by convincing or persuading an audience or by proving or refuting a point of view or an issue. Argumentation uses *induction,* moving from observations about particular things to generalizations, or *deduction,* moving from generalizations to valid inferences about particulars, or some combination of the two as its pattern of development.

**Adapted from Woodson, Linda. *A Handbook of Modern Rhetorical Terms.* Urbana, Ill: Copyright ©1979 by National Council of Teachers of English.

Classical Argumentative Scheme

Part I: Introductory Paragraph

- Catch interest
- Present the issue or topic with concrete image or anecdote
- Provide any relevant background information
- Define pertinent terms
- State claim (or thesis statement)

Part II: Concession and Refutation

A writer's credibility depends on expertise in the subject; hence, to ignore the other side of the controversial issue is dangerous. The concession/refutation first briefly recognizes and then at length argues against *opposing viewpoints,* perhaps by finding weaknesses within the opposing reasons, facts, testimony, or logical development. In other words, it is the "yes...but" part of the argument. "Yes" is the concession; "but" is the refutation. Concession and refutation allow writers to grant validity to or acknowledge opposing views; however, they must demonstrate that their claims are more valid. Writers may choose to concede and refute within introductory paragraphs or throughout body paragraphs as they introduce each new premise. Ideas of concession often appear as subordinated thoughts in dependent clauses of the syntax.

Part III: Confirmation Paragraphs

The confirmation is the most important and the longest section of the argument for it provides the *reasons* and the *evidence* of a writer's claim. The confirmation section is the body of the essay that shows the logical development of the argument. The confirmation should include not only logical reasons and evidence but also emotional appeals to human needs or values. Furthermore, writers should consciously incorporate the other modes of discourse to develop the logic of their argument (see "Modes of Discourse").

Part IV: Concluding Paragraph

- Wrap up the argument.
- Restate the *claim*.
- Provide a new appeal to needs or values.
- Enrich with additional commentary.
- Voice a final plea for readers to take action or to change thinking.
- Refrain from repeating any information.

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

Note: The following graphic organizer*** is intended as a guide only. All parts of the model above must be included in the essay if the student is to be successful in his or her persuasion; however, the arrangement of the information within boxes can appear in a variety of ways to meet the logical and structural needs of each essay.

Title of Selection

Introduction → Issue and Image
Introduction → Background Information
Introduction → Definition of Terms

Claim → Thesis Statement (claim)

Reasons and Evidence → Reason 1—Type of Evidence
Reasons and Evidence → Reason 2—Type of Evidence
Reasons and Evidence → Reason 3—Type of Evidence

Emotional Appeals → Need or Value 1
Emotional Appeals → Need or Value 2
Emotional Appeals → Need or Value 3

Opposing Viewpoints → Opposing View 1—Concede/Refute
Opposing Viewpoints → Opposing View 2—Concede/Refute
Opposing Viewpoints → Opposing View 3—Concede/Refute

Conclusion → Restatement of Claim
Conclusion → Revisit Image
Conclusion → Urge Leader to Take Action

***Adapted from McWhorter, Kathleen T. *Successful College Writing: Skills, Strategies, Learning Styles.* Boston, Mass: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000.

Analyzing an Argument Using the Graphic Organizer

The following passage appeared as Question 2 of the 1982 AP English Language and Composition Examination. It is a particularly apt sample for studying the parts of an effectively written argument. Students will benefit from deconstructing the argument, while simultaneously recognizing how the parts of the argument work together to form the whole. After becoming familiar with the graphic organizer, students may be instructed to carefully read Stevenson's veto and then analyze it according to the components of the graphic organizer. The graphic organizer showcases the **what** in the argument, while the annotation showcases the **how**.

To the Honorable, the Members of the Senate of the Sixty-sixth General Assembly:

I herewith return, without my approval, Senate Bill No. 93 entitled "An Act to Provide Protection to Insectivorous Birds by Restricting Cats." This is the so-called "Cat Bill." I veto and withhold my approval from this bill for the following reasons:

It would impose fines on owners or keepers who permitted their cats to run at large off their premises. It would permit any person to capture, or call upon the police to pick up and imprison, cats at large. It would permit the use of traps. The bill would have statewide application—on farms, in villages, and in metropolitan centers.

This legislation has been introduced in the past several sessions of the Legislature, and it has, over the years, been the source of much comment—not all of which has been in a serious vein. It may be that the General Assembly has now seen fit to refer it to one who can view it with a fresh outlook. Whatever the reasons for passage at this session, I cannot believe there is a widespread public demand for this law or that it could, as a practical matter, be enforced.

Furthermore, I cannot agree that it should be the declared public policy of Illinois that a cat visiting a neighbor's yard or crossing the highway is a public nuisance. It is in the nature of cats to do a certain amount of unescorted roaming. Many live with their owners in apartments or other restricted premises, and I doubt if we want to make their every brief foray an opportunity for a small game hunt by zealous citizens—with traps or otherwise. I am afraid this bill could only create discord, recrimination and enmity. Also consider the owner's dilemma: To escort a cat abroad on a leash is against the nature of the cat, and to permit it to venture forth for exercise unattended into a night of new dangers is against the nature of the owner. Moreover, cats perform useful service, particularly in rural areas, in combating rodents—work they necessarily perform alone and without regard for property lines.

We are all interested in protecting certain varieties of birds. That cats destroy some birds, I well know, but I believe this legislation would further but little the worthy cause to which its proponents give such unselfish effort. The problem of cat versus bird is as old as time. If we attempt to resolve it by legislation who knows but what we may be called upon to take sides as well in the age-old problems of dog versus cat, bird versus bird, or even bird versus worm. In my opinion, the State of Illinois and its local governing bodies already have enough to do without trying to control feline delinquency.

For these reasons, and not because I love birds the less or cats the more, I veto and withhold my approval from Senate Bill No. 93.

Respectfully,
Adlai E. Stevenson, Governor

Graphic Organization of Cat Bill Veto

Title: Statement of Veto of Senate Bill No.93

Introduction: Issue: Disposition of the Senate Bill 93, entitled, "An Act to Provide Protection to Insectivorous Birds by Restraining Cats (The 'Cat Bill')."

Background Information: "Legislation has been introduced in the past several sessions of the Legislature, and it has, over the years, been the source of much comment—not all of which has been in a serious vein. . . . General Assembly has now seen fit to refer it to one who can view it with a fresh outlook."

Claim (Thesis): "I veto and withhold my approval from this bill...."

Body Paragraphs (Reasons & Evidence): Reason One: "It would impose fines on owners or keepers who permitted their cats to run at large off their premises."

Evidence for Reason One:

- Cannot agree that public policy of Illinois would declare such activity a public nuisance.
- "It is the nature of cats to do a certain amount of unescorted roaming."

Reason Two: "It would permit any person to capture, or call upon the police to pick up and imprison, cats at large."

- Evidence for Reason Two: "Many [cats] live with their owners in apartments or other restricted premises, and I doubt if we want to make their every brief foray an opportunity for a small game hunt by zealous citizens—with traps or otherwise."

Reason Three: "...this bill could only create discord, recrimination and enmity."

Evidence for Reason Three: "...Bill would have statewide application—on farms, in villages, and in metropolitan centers."

- It would only create dilemma for cat owners and cats.
- "I cannot believe...that it could, as a practical matter, be enforced."
- Raises other larger, more complicated issues: "If we attempt to resolve [the cat problem] by legislation who knows but what we may be called upon to take sides as well in the age-old problems of dog versus cat, bird versus bird, or even bird versus worm."

Appeals [Made] Used:

- Appeal to humor
- Appeal to intellect
- Appeal to animal lover's instinct
- Appeal to understanding of irony

Counter Arguments: Yes...but:
Interest in "protecting certain varieties of birds"
"Cats perform useful service, particularly in rural areas...."

Conclusion: Stevenson restates his claim, "For these reasons, and not because I love birds the less or cats the more, I veto and withhold my approval from Senate Bill No. 93."

Stevenson's writing sample provides a rich field for student analysis of the close connection between technique (rhetorical strategies) and purpose. Stevenson's gentle use of satire, bordering on the absurd, is especially poignant here. His veiled, mocking, tongue-in-cheek tone is cleverly crafted. Directing students to the questions posed earlier in this chapter will help in their analysis of Stevenson's technique and purpose. Students may also be asked to annotate or may be guided through an annotation of this veto.

Salutation=elevated diction sets tone (sarcasm)

To the Honorable, the Members of the Senate of the Sixty-sixth General Assembly:

I herewith return, without my approval, Senate Bill No. 93 entitled "An Act to Provide Protection to Insectivorous Birds by Restricting Cats." This is the so-called "Cat Bill." I veto and withhold my approval from this bill for the following reasons:

CLAIM

Listing reasons- parallel structure delineates order

It would impose fines on owners or keepers who permitted their cats to run at large off their premises. It would permit any person to capture, or call upon the police to pick up and imprison, cats at large. It would permit the use of traps. The bill would have statewide application—on farms, in villages and in metropolitan centers.

Parallel structure suggests the universal

slight concession

This legislation has been introduced in the past several sessions of the Legislature, and it has, over the years, been the source of much comment—not all of which has been in a serious vein. It may be that the General Assembly has now seen fit to refer it to one who can view it with a fresh outlook. Whatever the reasons for passage at this session, I cannot believe there is a widespread public demand for this law or that it could, as a practical matter, be enforced.

Argues from precedent (silly then, silly now)—appeal to common sense

Reducing the idea to absurd

Furthermore, I cannot agree that it should be the declared public policy of Illinois that a cat visiting a neighbor's yard or crossing the highway is a public nuisance. It is in the nature of cats to do a certain amount of unescorted roaming. Many live with their owners in apartments or other restricted premises, and I doubt if we want to make their every brief foray an opportunity for a small game hunt by zealous citizens—with traps or otherwise. I am afraid this bill could only create discord, recrimination and enmity. Also consider the owner's dilemma: To escort a cat abroad on a leash is against the nature of the cat, and to permit it to venture forth for exercise unattended into a night of new dangers is against the nature of the owner. Moreover, cats perform useful service, particularly in rural areas, in combating rodents—work they necessarily perform alone and without regard for property lines.

Using a chain of reasoning with transitional directives

Yes—but

We are all interested in protecting certain varieties of birds. That cats destroy some birds, I well know, but I believe this legislation would further but little the worthy cause to which its proponents give such unselfish effort. The problem of cat versus bird is as old as time. If we attempt to resolve it by legislation who knows but what we may be called upon to take sides as well in the age-old problems of dog versus cat, bird versus bird, or even bird versus worm. In my opinion, the State of Illinois and its local governing bodies already have enough to do without trying to control feline delinquency.

CONCESSION

Sarcastic diction

For these reasons, and not because I love birds the less or cats the more, I veto and withhold my approval from Senate Bill No. 93.

CLAIM RESTATED

Students may be directed to focus on Stevenson's awareness of his audience, his use of diction as it discloses his tone, and his use of parallel structure as it strengthens his supportable evidence. The subtle but effective use of allusion and his tongue-in-cheek admonishment of the Senate should also be noted.

Writing Prompt: In a well-organized essay, analyze the strategies or devices (organization, diction, tone, use of detail) that make Governor Stevenson's argument effective for his audience. Substantiate observations with specific examples from the text.

PASSAGES FOR RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

The following passages are included to provide additional practice for students in their exposure to and subsequent mastery of the skill of analyzing rhetorical arguments and in identifying and examining the effect of rhetorical techniques. In analyzing texts, students commonly make the mistake of discussing *what* the author's message is, rather than *how* the author delivers the message. So teachers need to explain that analyzing language involves determining an author's purpose, not interpreting an author's meaning. Not the *what,* but the *how.* Refer to the sections—"Close Reading" and "Literary Analysis"—for more information on how tone, diction, and close reading strategies will assist students in their analysis of an author's language and, subsequently, in the construction of their own arguments.

A Controversial Issue

Read the following selection carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the rhetorical strategies Ruth Macklin uses to convey her attitude toward human cloning. Pay particular attention to her claims, evidence, diction, and organization.

Human Cloning? Don't Just Say No* by Ruth Macklin

Last week's news that scientists had cloned a sheep sent academics and the public into a panic at the prospect that humans might be next. That's an understandable reaction. Cloning is a radical challenge to the most fundamental laws of biology, so it's not unreasonable to be concerned that it might threaten human society and dignity. Yet much of the ethical opposition seems also to grow out of an unthinking disgust—a sort of "yuk factor." And that makes it hard for even trained scientists and ethicists to see the matter clearly. While human cloning might not offer great benefits to humanity, no one has yet made a persuasive case that it would do any real harm, either.

Theologians contend that to clone a human would violate human dignity. That would surely be true if a cloned individual were treated as a lesser being, with fewer rights or lower stature. But why suppose that cloned persons wouldn't share the same rights and dignity as the rest of us? A leading lawyer-ethicist has suggested that cloning would violate the "right to genetic identity." Where did he come up with such a right? It makes perfect sense to say that adult persons have a right not to be cloned without their voluntary, informed

consent. But if such consent is given, whose "right" to genetic identity would be violated?

Many of the science-fiction scenarios prompted by the prospect of human cloning turn out, upon reflection, to be absurdly improbable. There's the fear, for instance, that parents might clone a child to have "spare parts" in case the original child needs an organ transplant. But parents of identical twins don't view one child as an organ farm for the other. Why should cloned children's parents be any different?

Vast Difference. Another disturbing thought is that cloning will lead to efforts to breed individuals with genetic qualities perceived as exceptional (math geniuses, basketball players). Such ideas are repulsive, not only because of the "yuk factor" but also because of the horrors perpetuated by the Nazis in the name of eugenics. But there's a vast difference between "selective breeding" as practiced by totalitarian regimes (where the urge to propagate certain types of people leads to efforts to eradicate other types) and the immeasurably more benign forms already practiced in democratic societies (where, say, lawyers freely choose to marry other lawyers). Banks stocked with the frozen sperm of geniuses already exist. They haven't created a master race because only a tiny number of women have wanted to impregnate themselves in this way. Why think it will be different if human cloning becomes available?

So who will likely take advantage of cloning? Perhaps a grieving couple whose child is dying. This might seem psychologically twisted. But a cloned child born to such dubious parents stands no greater or lesser chance of being loved, or rejected, or being warped than a child normally conceived. Infertile couples are also likely to seek out cloning. That such couples have other options (in vitro fertilization or adoption) is not an argument for denying them the right to clone. Or consider an example raised by Judge Richard Posner: a couple in which the husband has some tragic genetic defect. Currently, if this couple wants a genetically related child, they have four not altogether pleasant options. They can reproduce naturally and risk passing on the disease to the child. They can go to a sperm bank and take a chance on unknown genes. They can try in vitro fertilization and dispose of any afflicted embryo—though that might be objectionable, too. Or they can get a male relative of the father to donate sperm, if such a relative exists. This is one case where even people unnerved by cloning might see it as not the worst option.

Even if human cloning offers no obvious benefits to humanity, why ban it? In a democratic society, we don't usually pass laws outlawing something before there is actual or probable evidence of harm. A moratorium on further research into human cloning might make sense, in order to consider calmly the grave questions it raises. If the moratorium is then lifted, human cloning should remain a research activity for an extended period. And if it is ever attempted, it should—and no doubt will—take place only with careful scrutiny and layers of legal oversight. Most importantly, human cloning should be governed by the same laws that now protect human rights. A world not safe for cloned humans would be a world not safe for the rest of us.

"Human Cloning? Don't Just Say No" lends itself nicely to the graphic organizer and to annotation. Students may note the effect of a well-placed rhetorical question, a technique used quite effectively in the above passage. Students may also be drawn to Ms. Macklin's varied sources, the magnitude of her evidence, and her concession/refutation strategies.

Comparison and Contrast: Truth and Cooper

The two speeches below were prompted by a comment spoken by a male attendee at a national conference in Ohio, in December 1851, against the idea of equal rights for women. The attendee based his argument on the notion that a woman was too weak to perform her share of manual labor and that she was innately the physical, mental, and moral inferior to man. Analyze both responses in terms of their structure, use of language, and rhetorical techniques. Students may use the graphic organizer and/or annotation (either individually or in small groups) to facilitate their analysis and full understanding of the speeches.

Speech One

Ain't I a Woman?
Sojourner Truth

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

That man over there says women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place. And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [Intellect, someone whispers.] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negro's rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half-measure full?

Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him. If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside

down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them. Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say.

Truth, Sojourner. *African-American Literature: Voices in a Tradition.* Orlando: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. 1992.

Speech Two

About forty years later in 1892, Anna Cooper responds to the same argument in an address before an audience of women.

Let women's claims be as broad in the concrete as in the abstract. We take our stand on the solidarity of humanity, the oneness of life, and the unnaturalness and injustice of all special favoritism, whether of sex, race, country, or condition. If one link of the chain is broken, the chain is broken. A bridge is no stronger than its weakest part, and a cause is not worthier than its weakest element. Least of all can woman's cause afford to decry the weak. We want, then, as toilers for the universal triumph of justice and human rights, to go to our homes from the Congress demanding an entrance not through a gateway for ourselves, our race, our sex, or our sect, but a grand highway for humanity. The colored woman feels that women's cause is one and universal; and that not till the image of God whether in parian or ebony, is sacred and inviolable; not till race, color, sex, and condition are seen as accidents, and not the substance of life; not till the universal title of humanity to life, liberty, and to the pursuit of happiness is conceded to be inalienable to all; not till then is woman's cause won—not the white woman's, nor the black woman's, nor the red woman's, but the cause of every man and woman who has writhed silently under a mighty wrong. Women's wrongs are thus indissolubly linked with all undefended woe, and the acquirement of her "rights" will mean the final triumph of all right over might, the supremacy of the moral forces of reason, and justice and love in the government of the nations of earth.

Hooks, Bell. *Ain't I A Woman: black women and feminism.* Boston: South End Press, 1981.

Students may consider the following questions after reading and analyzing these speeches:

- What does each speech reveal about the speaker?
- Which speech is more effective? Why?
- Are the rhetorical techniques more similar than different?
- What may account for the differences in the language of the two speeches?

Analysis of the Sojourner Truth Passage

One method for analyzing a persuasive or argumentative speech or essay is the SMELL strategy.

The acronym **SMELL** helps students remember the five questions.

S sender-receiver relationship
M message
E emotional strategies
L logical strategies
L language

1. What is the sender-receiver relationship? Who are the images and language meant to attract? Describe the speaker of the text.
2. What is the message? Summarize the statements made in the text.
3. What is the desired effect?
4. What logic is operating? How does it (or its absence) affect the message? Consider the logic of the images as well as the words.
5. What does the language of the text describe? How does it affect the meaning and effectiveness of the writing? Consider the language of the images as well as the words.

An example of using the **SMELL** strategy to analyze Sojourner Truth's speech follows.

Sender-receiver relationship: Sojourner Truth, a freed slave, abolitionist, and women's rights activist is addressing a women's rights convention in Akron, Ohio, in 1851. She is responding to a man in the audience who had argued that women are too frail and weak to have equal rights with men and that they need to be taken care of by men. Realizing that she was addressing a hostile audience and that only a few people would agree with her, Truth had to choose her words carefully.

Message: Her main message seems to be that Negroes and women should share equal rights with men. She also seems to suggest that black women should receive the same care and consideration as white women.

Effect: Perhaps the desired effect was to refute the opposition which had claimed that women are weak and frail, that they need to be taken care of, that they are not as intelligent as men, and that they should not have as many rights as men because Christ was not a woman. Additionally, Sojourner wanted her audience to see her not merely as a black woman, but as a woman.

Logic: Truth's logic seems to consist of four parts.

Although she, too, is a woman, men do not help her into carriages, over mud-puddles, or give her the best places. She was pointing out the flaw in the man's logic. On the one hand he claimed that women should be helped and taken care of, but what about Sojourner Truth? She is evidently exempt from those entitlements reserved for her gender.

To the assertion that women are weak and frail, Truth points to her own strength by asking the audience to turn their eyes toward her and to look at her

muscular arm while she describes the hard labor she has performed—as much as a man—and the suffering she has endured throughout her life at the hands of men.

In response to the white man's assumption that Negroes and women are intellectually inferior to white men, Truth dismisses this argument by asking what intellect has to do with basic human rights. She uses imagery and metaphorical language (cups holding differing amounts) to emphasize her point.

> *If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half-measure full?*

Responding to the man who claimed that women should not have as many rights as men because Christ was not a woman, Sojourner argues that Christ came from God and a woman, and that man had nothing to do with him. Therefore, should not woman, from whom Christ came, share equal rights with her offspring?

Language: Truth uses loaded words and phrases that appeal to the emotions by referring to Christ, motherhood, and grief, and asking the audience to look at her and consider the hardships she has endured. Truth's use of nonstandard language may make her message more effective due to its "plain folks" appeal that identifies her with common people and universal common needs. Perhaps it stirs within them a sense of empathy and identification with the dilemma she presents. Her skillful repetition of the phrase "Ain't I a Woman?" is an effective use of persuasive language aimed at gaining a sympathetic response from as many people in the audience as possible.

Chief Speckled Snake Replies

This speech was delivered at a council of Indian chiefs, assembled to have President Jackson's talk read to them.

From *Niles' Weekly Register*, June 20, 1829

Brothers! We have heard the talk of our great father; it is very kind. He says he loves his red children. *Brothers!* When the white man first came to these shores, the Muscogees gave him land, and kindled him a fire to make him comfortable; and when the pale faces of the south (the Spanish in Florida) made war on him, their young men drew the tomahawk, and protected his head from the scalping knife.

But when the white man had warmed himself before the Indian's fire, and filled himself with the Indian's hominy, he became very large; he stopped not for the mountain tops, and his feet covered the plains and the valleys. His hands grasped the eastern and western sea.

Then he became our great father. He loved his red children; but said, "You must move a little farther, lest I should by accident tread on you." With

one foot he pushed the red man over the Oconee, and with the other he trampled down the graves of his fathers.

But our great father still loved his children, and he soon made them another talk. He said much; but it all meant nothing, but "move a little farther; you are too near me." I have heard a great many talks from our great father, and they all began and ended the same.

Brothers! When he made us a talk on a former occasion, he said, "Get a little farther; go beyond the Oconee and the Oakmulgee; there is a pleasant country." He also said, "It shall be yours forever."

Now he says, "The land you live on is not yours; go beyond the Mississippi; there is game; there you may remain while the grass grows or the water runs."

Brothers! Will not our great father come there also? He loves his red children, and his tongue is not forked.

From *The Georgia Studies Book.* Athens, GA: Carl Vinson Institute of Government, 1992.

Note: Students should be able to identify the use of concession/refutation as a persuasive device. The use of contrast and the juxtaposition of kind words followed by acts of brutality and subterfuge is a pattern that is used throughout the speech. Metaphorical language describes the enormity of the white man's acts of betrayal. Anecdotes refute the claim and premise of Jackson's speech by providing contrary evidence. In all of the situations, the white man says one thing but does another. Note the repeated use of "talks" and "says." Finally, students should be able to identify how the whole speech and pattern of the argument build to the concluding paragraph. The use of the words "our great father" and "He loves his red children" is ironic at the end, since the listener now understands the nature of his "love" and how unlike a father he is. The final line, "He loves his red children, and his tongue is not forked," is a wonderful *coup de grace* as it inverts the truth for effect. A powerful rhetorical device, it matches the inversion of the white man's talk to action.

Students can analyze the argument by using the Graphic Organizer (see p. 129) or the Checklist for the Argumentative Essay (see p. 152). This activity should be done in groups and followed by a whole-group discussion of the features of Chief Speckled Snake's speech. The writing prompt may be used as a culminating activity. In addition, this speech is similar in structure to Mark Anthony's eulogy at Julius Caesar's funeral, which uses refutation and repetition, "But Brutus says he was ambitious, and Brutus is an honorable man" (*Julius Caesar* III, ii, 84). Dramatization, especially at the middle grade level, would be a very effective way for students to understand the nuances and power of the rhetorical devices used.

Writing prompt: Using your notes from the Graphic Organizer and/or Checklist for the Argumentative Essay, write a well-developed essay in which you discuss how Chief Speckled Snake's speech uses repetition, refutation, diction, tone,

and other rhetorical strategies to erode the image of the white man that President Jackson presented.

Students might read or listen to one or more of the following argumentative speeches and make Venn diagrams comparing and contrasting them with Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?" speech.

- Frederick Douglass (1865): "Untie His Hands"
- Susan B. Anthony (1873): "On a Woman's Right to Vote"
- Chief Joseph (1877): "I Will Fight No More Forever"
- Martin Luther King, Jr. (1963): "I Have a Dream"

Teachers could ask students to imagine that they are one of the authors planning one of the above speeches. Thinking about possible objections that might be raised, students could make charts listing the objections in a column on the left side of the page, and the facts that refute those objections on the right.

Students could use the SMELL strategy or the Graphic Organizer to analyze one or more of the famous persuasive speeches listed above.

Comparison and Contrast: Creon and King Henry

Passage One

The following excerpt from *Oedipus the King* is translated by Robert Fagles. In it, Creon tries to defend his honor against Oedipus' accusation of treason. First, analyze Creon's argument using the Graphic Organizer.

> Not at all.
> Not if you see things calmly, rationally,
> as I do. Look at it this way first:
> who in his right mind would rather rule
> and live in anxiety than sleep in peace?
> Particularly if he enjoys the same authority.
> Not I, I'm not the man to yearn for kingship,
> not with a king's power in my hands. Who would?
> No one with any sense of self-control.
> Now, as it is, you offer me all I need,
> not a fear in the world. But if I wore the crown . . .
> there'd be many painful duties to perform,
> hardly to my taste.
>
> How could kingship
> please me more than influence, power
> without a qualm? I'm not that deluded yet,
> to reach for anything but privilege outright,
> profit free and clear.
> Now all men sing my praises, all salute me,
> now all who request your favors curry mine.
> I am their best hope: success rests in me.
> Why give up that, I ask you, and borrow trouble?

A man of sense, someone who sees things clearly
would never resort to treason.
No, I have no lust for conspiracy in me,
nor could I ever suffer one who does.

Do you want proof? Go to Delphi yourself,
examine the oracle and see if I've reported
the message word-for-word. This too:
if you detect that I and the clairvoyant
have plotted anything in common, arrest me,
execute me. Not on the strength of one vote,
two in this case, mine as well as yours.
But don't convict me on sheer unverified surmise.
How wrong it is to take the good for bad,
purely at random, or take the bad for good.
But reject a friend, a kinsman? I would as soon
tear out the life within us, priceless life itself.
You'll learn this well, without fail, in time.
Time alone can bring the just man to light—
the criminal you can spot in one short day.

Passage Two

Now consider the following passage that appeared in Question 1 of the 1990 Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition Examination. In the following soliloquy from Shakespeare's *Henry IV,* Part II, King Henry laments his inability to sleep. Analyze the soliloquy in terms of its overall structure and its rhetorical strategies. Use the graphic organizer for analyzing an argument.

King Henry: How many thousand of my poorest subjects
Are at this hour asleep! O sleep! O gentle sleep!
Nature's soft nurse, how have I frighted thee,
That thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down,
And steep my senses in forgetfulness?
Why rather, sleep, liest thou in smoky cribs,*
Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee,
And hush'd with buzzing night-flies to thy slumber,
Than in the perfum'd chambers of the great,
Under the canopies of costly state,
And lull'd with sound of sweetest melody?
O thou dull god, why liest thou with the vile
In loathsome beds, and leav'st the kingly couch
A watch-case or a common 'larum-bell?
Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains
In cradle of the rude imperious surge,
And is the visitation of the winds,
Who take the ruffian billows by the top,

Curling their monstrous heads and hanging them
With deaf'ning clamour in the slippery clouds,
That with the hurly death itself awakes?
Canst thou, O partial** sleep, give thy repose
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude,
And in the calmest and most stillest night,
With all appliances and means to boot,
Deny it to a King? Then, happy low, lie down!
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

* huts
** not impartial

Shakespeare, William. *Henry IV, Part II.*

Note: This soliloquy provides a perfect opportunity for the study or reinforcement of the power of figurative language in the creation of image. Note the syntactical pattern of the sentences/questions; the elliptical rhetorical question, punctuated with either a period or an exclamation point; the repeated use of an *apostrophe;* and the descriptive *allusions.*

Writing prompt: After a careful analysis of this soliloquy, write a well-developed essay in which you discuss how King Henry's soliloquy provides irrefutable support for Creon's argument to Oedipus. In your essay, comment on the use of rhetorical strategies, the structure of each argument, and the use of allusion, diction, and tone.

Comparison and Contrast: Antigone and M. L. King, Jr.
Carefully read the following two excerpts. The first is taken from Sophocles' play, *Antigone.* In it Antigone explains her actions defying Creon's edict that prohibited any Theban citizen from burying Eteocles, her brother. The second is Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous "Letter from Birmingham City Jail." King chose to go to jail rather than to obey a court order to end civil rights demonstrations. Analyze both arguments in terms of their structure, their consideration of audience, and their use of rhetorical techniques. The graphic organizer would facilitate understanding and create concrete areas of focus for writing a comparison and contrast essay. The teacher could also ask students to answer the following question in a persuasive essay: Might both Antigone and Martin Luther King, Jr. be considered tragic heroes, according to the Aristotelian definition of the tragic hero?

Antigone: Of course I did it. It wasn't Zeus, not in the least,
who made this proclamation—not to me.
Nor did that Justice, dwelling with the gods
beneath the earth, ordain such laws for men.

Nor did I think your edict had such force
that you, a mere mortal, could override the gods,
the great unwritten, unshakable traditions.
They are alive, not just today or yesterday:
they live forever, from the first of time,
and no one knows when they first saw the light.

These laws—I was not about to break them,
not out of fear of some man's wounded pride,
and face the retribution of the gods.
Die I must, I've known it all my life—
how could I keep from knowing?—even without
your death-sentence ringing in my ears.
And if I am to die before my time
I consider that a gain. Who on earth,
alive in the midst of so much grief as I,
could fail to find his death a rich reward?
So for me, at least, to meet this doom of yours
is precious little pain. But if I had allowed
my own mother's son to rot, an unburied corpse—
that would have been an agony! This is nothing,
And if my present actions strike you as foolish,
let's just say I've been accused of folly
by a fool.

Letter from Birmingham City Jail

While confined here in the Birmingham City Jail, I came across your recent statement calling our present activities "unwise and untimely."

I think I should give the reason for my being [here], since you have been influenced by the argument of "outsiders coming in."...I am here, along with several members of my staff, because we were invited here. I am here because I have basic organizational ties here. Beyond this, I am here in Birmingham because injustice is here....

You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. This is certainly a legitimate concern. Since we so diligently urge people to obey the Supreme Court's decision of 1954 outlawing segregation in the

public schools, it is rather strange and paradoxical to find us consciously breaking laws. One may well ask, "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer is found in the fact that there are two types of laws: There are just laws and there are unjust laws. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with Saint Augustine that "An unjust law is not law at all."

Now what is the difference between the two? How does one determine when a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a mode that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of Saint Thomas Aquinas, an unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust....

You spoke of our activity in Birmingham as extreme....

But as I continued to think about the matter, I gradually gained a bit of satisfaction from being considered an extremist....Was not Martin Luther an extremist—"Here I stand; I can do none other, so help me God." Was not John Bunyan an extremist—"I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience." Was not Abraham Lincoln an extremist—"This nation cannot survive half slave and half free." Was not Thomas Jefferson an extremist—"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

So the question is not whether we will be extremist but what kind of extremist will we be. Will we be extremists for hate or will we be extremists for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice—or will we be extremists for the cause of justice?...

Writing prompt: In a well-developed essay, compare and contrast the stance Antigone takes as she rebels against Creon's edict with the stance Martin Luther King, Jr. assumes as he tries to explain his behavior from a jail cell in Birmingham in 1968. How are their arguments similar or different in terms of rhetorical strategies, structure, kinds of evidence used to support their claims, consideration of audience, and use of diction and tone? Again, the use of the organizer along with annotation will provide critical entry into these two dynamic pieces.

Additional Classroom Activities

A teacher can select ideas that are appropriate for a particular grade level from the following list of suggestions.

Analyze a Passage

Read the following humorous passage. It is obvious that the writer has observed children carefully and that she has been able to capture the strange ways children often behave.

How to Eat Like a Child

Peas: Mash and flatten into thin sheet on plate. Press the back of the fork into the peas. Hold fork vertically, prongs up, and lick off the peas.

Mashed potatoes: Pat mashed potatoes flat on top. Dig several little depressions. Think of them as ponds or pools. Fill the pools with gravy. With your fork, sculpt rivers between pools and watch the gravy flow between them. Decorate with peas. Do not eat.

Alternative method: Make a large hole in center of mashed potatoes. Pour in ketchup. Stir until potatoes turn pink. Eat as you would peas.

Animal crackers: Eat each in this order—legs, head, body.

Sandwich: Leave the crusts. If your mother says you have to eat them because that's the best part, stuff the crusts into your pants pocket or between the cushions of the couch.

Spaghetti: Wind too many strands on the fork and make sure at least two strands dangle down. Open your mouth wide and stuff in spaghetti; suck noisily to inhale the dangling strands. Clean plate, ask for seconds, and eat only half. When carrying your plate to the kitchen, hold it tilted so that the remaining spaghetti slides off and onto the floor.

Ice-cream cone: Ask for a double scoop. Knock the top scoop off while walking out the door of the ice-cream parlor. Cry. Lick the remaining scoop slowly so that ice cream melts down the outside of the cone and over your hand. Stop licking when the ice cream is even with the top of the cone. Be sure it is absolutely even. Eat a hole in the bottom of the cone and suck the rest of the ice cream out the bottom. When only the cone remains with ice cream coating the inside, leave on car dashboard.

Cooked carrots: On way to mouth, drop in lap. Smuggle to garbage in napkin.

Spinach: Divide into little piles. Rearrange into new piles. After five or six maneuvers, sit back and say you are full.

Chocolate-chip cookies: Half-sit, half-lie on the bed, propped up by a pillow. Read a book. Place cookies next to you on the sheet so that crumbs get in the bed. As you eat the cookies, remove each chocolate chip and place it on your stomach. When all the cookies are consumed, eat the chips one by one, allowing two per page.

Milk shake: Bite off one end of the paper covering the straw. Blow through straw to shoot paper across table. Place straw in shake and suck. When the shake just reaches your mouth, place a finger over the top of

the straw—the pressure will keep the shake in the straw. Lift straw out of shake, put bottom end in mouth, release finger, and swallow. Do this until the straw is squished so that you can't suck through it. Ask for another. Open it the same way, but this time shoot the paper at the waitress when she isn't looking. Sip your shake casually—you are just minding your own business—until there is about an inch of shake remaining. Then blow through the straw until bubbles rise to the top of the glass. When your father says he's had just about enough, get a stomachache.

Chewing gum: Remove from mouth and stretch into spaghetti-like strand. Swing like a lasso. Put back in mouth. Pulling out one end and gripping the other end between teeth, have your gum meet your friend's gum and press them together. Think that you have done something really disgusting.

Baked apple: With your fingers, peel skin off baked apple. Tell your mother you changed your mind, you don't want it. Later, when she is harassed and not paying attention to what she is doing, pick up the naked apple and hand it to her.

French fries: Wave one French fry in air for emphasis while you talk. Pretend to conduct orchestra. Then place four fries in your mouth at once and chew. Turn to your sister, open your mouth, and stick out your tongue coated with potatoes. Close mouth and swallow. Smile.

The following are writing activities related to the preceding passage.

- Imagine that you are a 4-year-old child out for dinner with your family at a restaurant. Write a humorous account of the event and title your composition, "How to Behave in a Restaurant."
- From the perspective of a 5-year-old, give humorous advice to one of your friends on how to make your mother crabby or bug your little brother.
- You have decided to give advice to your classmates who are in the same second grade class as you are. Summarize the techniques involved in how to drive a grade two teacher crazy.
- Persuade your parents that you should receive an increase in your weekly allowance or that you should be allowed to stay up an hour past your current bedtime. Write from the point of view of a 7-year-old child.

Analyze Advertising Appeals

If students are to reason clearly and argue persuasively, they will need a variety of skills, so they should encounter a variety of texts. Advertisements provide readily available, varied, and relevant texts in which students can identify assumptions and fallacies; distinguish between statements of fact, opinion, and belief; and separate appeals to emotion from appeals to logic.

Analyses of advertisements also provides two benefits for students. It trains them to become intelligent and informed consumers, and because ads are primarily persuasive texts, analyses of ads help students recognize the techniques used by propagandists and others who rely on irrational appeals.

Summarize, Paraphrase, and Abstract a Passage

These three reading and writing exercises are similar. Both the summary and paraphrase require that students understand the contents of a passage and record them in their own words. The abstract or précis is a concise summary of the facts in an article, but it may also reflect the attitudes and emphasis of the original.

In any case, students must first read the text carefully and then extract the major points, usually in the order in which they are presented. The emphasis is on objectivity. Regardless of how students may feel about the argument, they must first indicate that they understand the scope of the issue. In developing their own arguments, students will find that the summary allows them to refer to points to which they intend to respond.

Analyze a Variety of Documents

Students are given—or they may choose as a class—a subject of inquiry. Then they gather a variety of documents related to that subject. These documents can include such items as political cartoons, editorials, charts, essays, and maps. Students then evaluate these sources and the information contained in them as they form an opinion based on this evidence. The opinion serves as either the thesis for an argumentative essay or the proposition for a debate. The Advanced Placement United States History and the Advanced Placement European History Examinations provide useful models for such activities.

Compare "Pro" and "Con" Newspaper Editorials

Students search editorial or opinion pages of appropriate daily newspapers for articles that present differing views on the same topic. Students work in collaborative groups to create an outline that compares the arguments. After discussion, have the group decide on an assertion that supports or negates the argument. This statement should be brief and fairly general and should contain the word "because" (X will not prevent Y because it...).

Analyze and Respond to Editorials

This exercise is much like the preceding activity except that only one article is used. Students analyze the article by paraphrasing the argument and by listing the details through which the writer supports the argument. Students then either indicate agreement with the details or provide an opposing opinion. Finally, students write a brief response, following precisely the same format as that of the original editorial.

Analyze Text

At first, some students have difficulty managing the concepts of assertion, evidence, and commentary. All three must be present for any argument to progress. At the beginning of a lesson, allow students to color code or highlight each of the three concepts.

- *Assertion* = yellow. This is a qualitative statement supporting or negating a thesis or resolution: e.g., "Wearing uniforms allows for no self-expression."
- *Evidence* = blue. This is cited material found within texts, speeches, or any published material: e.g., "The Constitution allows for freedom of expression" (quote the Constitution).

- *Commentary* = green. This allows the student to become creative. The writer must demonstrate his or her reasoning for applying the quotation to the assertion: e.g., "I'm a citizen of the United States, and all benefits of citizenship belong to me. Therefore, I'm allowed to express myself as I wish. In this example, my choice of clothing expresses my individual freedom."

For the argument to become complete, each subset must comprise the three concepts listed above. As the students move from the general resolution, "The school board should establish a uniform dress code for all students," each subpoint used in support must deal with the three concepts. The students can move from paragraph to paragraph using the highlighters. Any subargument paragraphs should contain all three colors. This technique works well in a collaborative session as students exchange papers.

Suggested Prose Selections for Rhetorical Analysis

Jonathan Edwards	"Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"
Thomas Paine	"Common Sense"
Thomas Jefferson	*The Declaration of Independence*
De Crevecoeur	"What is an American?"
Patrick Henry	Speech in the Virginia Convention
	"The American Crisis"
George Washington	Farewell Address
Abraham Lincoln	"The Gettysburg Address"
	The House Divided Speech
Frederick Douglass	*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
	Speech to the American Anti-Slavery Society
Ralph Waldo Emerson	"Self-Reliance"
Henry David Thoreau	"Civil Disobedience"
	Walden
Susan B. Anthony	"Women's Right to Vote"
W. E. B. Du Bois	"Advice to a Black Schoolgirl"
Franklin Delano Roosevelt	First Inaugural Address
E. B. White	"Freedom"
Harry S. Truman	Inaugural Address
Dwight D. Eisenhower	Farewell Address
Malcolm X	"Necessary to Protect Ourselves"
Martin Luther King, Jr.	"Stride Toward Freedom"
Zora Neale Hurston	"How It Feels to Be Colored Me"
John F. Kennedy	Inaugural Address
	"In Praise of Robert Frost"
	Speech at the Berlin Wall
Amy Tan	"Mother Tongue"
Harvey Milk	"A City of Neighbors"
Ronald Reagan	Speech at Moscow State University
Jesse Jackson	Speech to the Democratic National Convention
Sandra Cisneros	"Straw into Gold: The Metamorphosis of the Everyday"
Toni Morrison	"Thoughts on the African-American Novel"

Suggested Poetry Selections for Rhetorical Analysis	
Rupert Brooke	"The Soldier"
Claude McKay	"If We Must Die"
Langston Hughes	"Harlem"
Claude McKay	"America"
John Donne	"A Valediction Forbidding Mourning"
Langston Hughes	"Preference"
Emily Dickinson	"Because I Could Not Stop for Death"
Emily Dickinson	"Tell All the Truth"
Sara Teasdale	"Barter"
William Shakespeare	"Like as the Waves"
William Shakespeare	"My Mistress' Eyes Are Nothing Like the Sun"
Dylan Thomas	"Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night"

ACTIVITIES FOR WRITING ARGUMENTS

Write Specific Appeals to Emotion, Ethics, or Logic
Any appeal requires the student to determine the best method or "hook" to achieve the desired goal. This activity requires the student to research the task, comprehend the target audience, select the best method of appeal, plan a verbal or visual message or both, and implement the appeal.

Write an Argument
Read the following excerpt from *Oedipus the King*. Then in a well-developed paragraph agree or disagree with this statement:

> *...Time alone can prove a just man just,*
> *though you can know a bad man in a day.*

Prepare Letters to the Editor
Have students read letters to the editor in local newspapers and decide on elements that are effective or ineffective. Choose a topic of current local interest and have all students write about the same issue. Let the class choose one or two examples to be sent to the local newspaper.

Write Proposals and Formal Letters
In these activities, the student has the responsibility to present himself or herself to an unknown audience.

Examples:
- First letter to a pen pal in a foreign country
- Job applications
- College applications and an essay
- Proposals for future actions

The activities require students to prepare autobiographical statements, describe and detail their abilities, or plan for the future.

Prepare an Election Speech
This activity achieves some of the same goals as the preceding activity;

however, this task requires students not only to plan a proposal but also to practice the skills of making a presentation to an audience. The teacher can choose to make this a written or an oral presentation.

Writing Arguments with Rowling's *Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone*

- **The Ministry of Magic does not want** the Muggles (non-wizards) to learn that there are real witches and wizards around. They think the Muggles would always be asking for magical solutions to their problems and the ministry does not want to be bothered. Do you agree with the Ministry of Magic or would it be better if the Muggles knew? In groups, students could write the pros and cons of each position. Then two people from each group could debate the issue in front of the entire class. Each side could present five reasons in support of their argument.
- **Imagine that Hagrid has been caught** with his illegal dragon, and write a speech called "The Heart of Hagrid" trying to convince the headmaster that Hagrid should not be forced to leave his groundskeeper's position at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.
- **Quidditch is a wizard sport** that is played while flying on a broomstick. Using details from Harry's first Quidditch match, write an argument to support the thesis that Quidditch is the greatest, most exciting, action-packed sport ever invented. Provide four or more details from the story to support your thesis, and then write your concluding paragraph.
- **If you could choose to be** in any Hogwarts house (dormitory), Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, or Slytherin, which would you choose and why? Write a persuasive essay answering this question.

An AP Writing Prompt

The excerpt below appeared in Question 3 of the 1995 Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Examination and comes from a 1979 essay by expatriate African American writer James Baldwin. Read the paragraph carefully and then write an essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies Baldwin's ideas about the importance of language as a "key to identity" and to social acceptance. You may also cite evidence from your observation, experience, or reading to develop your position.

> It goes without saying, then, that language is also a political instrument, means, and proof of power. It is the most vivid and crucial key to identity: It reveals the private identity, and connects one with, or divorces one from, the larger, public, or communal identity. There have been, and are, times, and places, when to speak a certain language could be dangerous, even fatal. Or, one may speak the same language, but in such a way that one's antecedents are revealed, or (one hopes) hidden. This is true in France, and is absolutely true in England: The range (and reign) of accents on that damp little island make England coherent for the English and totally incomprehensible for everyone else. To open your mouth in England is (if I may use black English) to "put your business in the street": You have confessed your parents, your youth, your school, your salary, your self-esteem, and, alas, your future.
>
> Baldwin, James.

Checklist for the Argumentative Essay

ELEMENT	QUESTIONS
1. The issue	• What is disputed?
2. The claim	• Is the claim stated or implied? • Is it a claim of fact, value, or policy? • Does the writer give reasons for making the claim?
3. The support	• What facts, statistics, expert opinions, examples, and personal experiences are presented? • Are appeals made to needs, values, or both?
4. The writer's purpose	• What is the writer's purpose for writing the argument? • Why does the writer want to convince the audience to accept the claim? • What does the writer stand to gain if the claim is accepted?
5. The intended audience	• Where might the argument be published? • To whom do the reasons, evidence, and emotional appeals, examples, and comparisons seem targeted?
6. Definitions	• Are key terms in the writer's claim clearly defined, especially terms that have ambiguous meanings?
7. The writer's credibility	• Is the writer qualified, fair to the opposition, and knowledgeable? • Does the author establish a common ground with readers?
8. The strength of the argument: reasons and evidence	• Does the writer supply several reasons to back up the claim? • Is the evidence relevant, accurate, current, and typical? • Are the cited authorities reliable experts? • Are fallacies or unfair emotional appeals used?
9. Opposing viewpoints	• Does the writer address opposing viewpoints clearly, fairly, and completely? • Does the writer acknowledge, accommodate, or refute opposing viewpoints with logic and relevant evidence? • Does the writer use emotional appeals appropriately? • Has the writer used any logical fallacies?
10. The conclusion	• Does the writer conclude the argument effectively?

AP PROMPTS AND WRITING SAMPLES

The following 1999 Advanced Placement English Language and Composition prompts show what is required of students when they take the AP Exam. Through practice with actual AP prompts, students will build skill levels and confidence. The first free response is Q2 and requires the students to analyze rhetoric. The second free response is Q3, to which students responded by writing an argument. The student samples included are typed exactly as the students wrote them, and the essays appear with their permission. Included, then, are two free-response prompts, their rubrics, Chief Reader comments, two average student samples, and two excellent student samples.

1999 Question 2
Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Exam

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts one-third of the total essay section score.)

The passage below (on this page and on the following page) is from the opening of an essay, "On Seeing England for the First Time," by Jamaica Kincaid. Kincaid grew up on the Caribbean island of Antigua before it became independent from England in 1981. Read the entire passage carefully. Then write an essay analyzing the rhetorical strategies Kincaid employs to convey her attitude toward England.

When I saw England for the first time, I was a child in school sitting at a desk. The England I was looking at was laid out on a map gently, beautifully, delicately, a very special jewel; it lay on a bed of sky blue—the background of the map—its yellow form mysterious, because though it looked like a leg of mutton, it could not really look like anything so familiar as a leg of mutton because it was England—with shadings of pink and green, unlike any shadings of pink and green I had seen before, squiggly veins of red running in every direction. England was a special jewel all right, and only special people got to wear it.

The people who got to wear England were English people. They wore it well and they wore it everywhere: in jungles, in deserts, on plains, on top of the highest mountains, on all the oceans, on all the seas, in places where they were not welcome, in places they should not have been. When my teacher had pinned this map up on the blackboard, she said, "This is England"—and she said it with authority, seriousness, and adoration, and we all sat up. It was as if she had said, "This is Jerusalem, the place you will go to when you die but only if you have been good." We understood then—we were meant to understand then—that England was to be our source of myth and the source from which we got our sense of reality, our sense of what was meaningful, our sense of what was meaningless—and much about our own lives and much about the very idea of us headed that last list.

At the time I was a child sitting at my desk seeing England for the first time, I was already very familiar with the greatness of it. Each morning before I left for school, I ate a breakfast of half a grapefruit, an egg, bread and butter and a slice of cheese, and a cup of cocoa; or half a grapefruit, a bowl of oat porridge, bread and butter and a slice of cheese, and a cup of cocoa. The can of cocoa was often left on the table in front of me. It had written on it the name of the company, the year the company was established, and the words "Made in England." Those words, "Made in England," were written on the box the oats came in too. They would also have been written on the box the shoes I was wearing came in; a bolt of gray linen cloth lying on the shelf of a store from which my mother had bought three yards to make the uniform that I was wearing had written along its edge those three words. The shoes I wore were made in England; so were my socks and cotton undergarments and the satin ribbons I wore tied at the end of two plaits of my hair. My father, who might have sat next to me at breakfast, was a carpenter and cabinet maker. The shoes he wore to work would have been made in England, as were his khaki shirt and trousers, underpants, and undershirt, his socks and brown felt hat. Felt was not the proper material from which a hat that was expected to provide shade from the hot sun should be made, but my father must have seen and admired a picture of an Englishman wearing such a hat in England, and this picture that he saw must have been so compelling that it caused him to wear the wrong hat for a hot climate most of his long life. And this hat—a brown felt hat—became so central to his character that it was the first thing he put on in the morning as he stepped out of bed and the last thing he took off before he stepped back into bed at night. As we sat at breakfast a car might go by. The car, a Hillman or a Zephyr, was made in England. The very idea of the meal itself, breakfast, and its substantial quality and quantity was an idea from England; we somehow knew that in England they began the day with this meal called breakfast and a proper breakfast was a big breakfast. No one I knew liked eating so much food so early in the day; it made us feel sleepy, tired. But this breakfast business was Made in England like almost everything else that surrounded us, the exceptions being the sea, the sky, and the air we breathed.

At the time I saw this map—seeing England for the first time—I did not say to myself, "Ah, so that's what it looks like," because there was no longing in me to put a shape to those three words that ran through every part of my life, no matter how small; for me to have had such a longing would have meant that I lived in a certain atmosphere, an atmosphere in which those three words were felt as a burden. But I did not live in such an atmosphere. My father's brown felt hat would develop a hole in its crown, the lining would separate from the hat itself, and six weeks before he thought that he could not be seen wearing it—he was a very vain man—he would order another hat from England. And my mother taught me to eat my food in the English way: the knife in the right hand, the fork in the left, my elbows held still close to my side, the food carefully

balanced on my fork and then brought up to my mouth. When I had finally mastered it, I overheard her saying to a friend, "Did you see how nicely she can eat?" But I knew then that I enjoyed my food more when I ate it with my bare hands, and I continued to do so when she wasn't looking. And when my teacher showed us the map, she asked us to study it carefully, because no test we would ever take would be complete without this statement, "Draw a map of England."

I did not know then that the statement, "Draw a map of England" was something far worse than a declaration of war, for in fact a flat-out declaration of war would have put me on alert, and again in fact, there was no need for war—I had long ago been conquered. I did not know then that this statement was part of a process that would result in my erasure, not my physical erasure, but my erasure all the same. I did not know then that this statement was meant to make me feel in awe and small whenever I heard the word "England"; awe at its existence, small because I was not from it. I did not know very much of anything then—certainly not what a blessing it was that I was unable to draw a map of England correctly.

Scoring Guide English Language Question 2

The score you assign each essay should reflect your judgment of its quality as a whole. You should reward writers for what they do well in response to the question. Remember that students had 40 minutes to read and write. The essays should thus be thought of as comparable to essays produced in final exams, not judged by standards appropriate for out-of-class writing assignments.

All essays, even those scored 8 and 9, are likely to exhibit occasional flaws in analysis or in prose style and mechanics; such lapses should enter into your holistic judgment of the essay's quality. In no case should an essay with many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics be scored higher than 2.

9 Essays earning a score of 9 meet all the criteria for 8 papers and, in addition, are especially full or apt in their analysis or demonstrate particularly impressive stylistic control.

8 Essays earning a score of 8 effectively analyze the rhetorical strategies Kincaid employs to convey her attitude about England. They refer to the passage directly or indirectly and explain convincingly how specific strategies such as choice of detail, development of persona, creation of tone, and use of figurative language contribute to an understanding of the writer's attitude. Their prose demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not flawless.

7 Essays earning a score of 7 fit the description of 6 essays but employ more complete analysis or more mature prose style.

6 Essays earning a score of 6 adequately analyze how the rhetorical strategies Kincaid employs in her narrative reveal her attitude about England. They refer to the passage directly or indirectly, and they recognize Kincaid's

attitude and how it is conveyed by strategies such as choice of detail, development of persona, creation of tone, and use of figurative language. A few lapses in diction or syntax may be present, but generally the prose of 6 essays conveys ideas clearly.

5 Essays earning a score of 5 analyze Kincaid's rhetorical techniques, but the development of those techniques or the understanding of Kincaid's attitude is limited. They may treat techniques superficially or develop ideas about Kincaid's attitude inconsistently. A few lapses in diction or syntax may appear, but usually the prose in these essays conveys the writers' ideas adequately.

4 Essays earning a score of 4 inadequately respond to the question's tasks. They may misrepresent Kincaid's attitude or analyze rhetorical strategies inaccurately or with little understanding of how strategies reveal her attitude. The prose of 4 essays may convey the writers' ideas adequately but may suggest immature control over organization, diction, or syntax.

3 Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but are less perceptive about how rhetorical strategies convey attitude or are less consistent in controlling elements of writing.

2 Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate little success in analyzing how rhetorical strategies convey Kincaid's attitude about England. These essays may pay little attention to rhetorical features and generalize about, or seriously misread, attitude or tone. They may simply paraphrase or comment on the passage without analyzing strategies. The prose of 2 papers often reveals consistent weaknesses in writing, such as a lack of development or organization, grammatical problems, or a lack of control.

1 Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but are especially simplistic in their discussion or weak in controlling elements of language.

0 Indicates an on-topic response that receives no credit, such as one that merely repeats the prompt.

— Indicates a blank response or one that is completely off topic.

Chief Reader Comments 1999 Question 2

Jamaica Kincaid's reflection on her attitude toward England as a child growing up in the Caribbean island of Antigua was a long narrative, and students were asked to examine how the story Kincaid tells exposes her feelings toward Antigua's colonial status. The task is complex because Kincaid's attitude is itself complex, a combination of awe and ire, as the writer confronts both herself as a child and as an adult looking back through the child's eyes. Students appeared to have little trouble with the length of the passage; it is a compelling and interesting narrative that propels readers through it. And most students caught the most telling details of the story—the descriptions of dress and food and education—that Kincaid used to explore her anger and disaffection, as well as her attraction. Even many of the poorest responses had much to say about Kincaid's attitude. The best responses indicated that complexity of feeling and discussed Kincaid's rhetorical strategies of repetition, metaphor, and persona, among others, to demonstrate how her rhetoric allowed readers to understand her adult perspective toward England. Less successful essays misrepresented

the duality of Kincaid' s attitude, summarized rather than analyzed, or failed to explain in detail rhetorical strategies that contributed to the attitude. Because of the complexity and open-endedness of the question, there were few formulaic, patterned responses.

1999, Q2 Student Sample, scored a 6

In the passage from the essay "On Seeing England for the First Time," the author, Jamaica Kincaid employs different strategies to convey her attitude toward England. Her underlying meanings, repetition, and realizations are only some of the strategies Kincaid uses to relay her feelings on England.

The first strategy a reader will come upon in the essay is Kincaids use of underlying meaning. The title itself "On Seeing England for the First Time," is obviously not meant to only be understood superficially, but also with deeper meaning. When the author discusses "seeing England" she is also explaining that she is finally understanding what Englands true intentions are. Kincaid is able to see that England is no better that Antigua, it just considers itself superior.

Another strategy Kincaid employs is repetition. She repeats the phrase "made in England" countless times throughout the passage. Through her repeating of the phrase, the reader can determine that "made in England" is not so important in the eyes of Kincaid.

Lastly, Kincaid's stating of her realizations at the end of the passage clearly state her thoughts on England. Realizing that she "had long ago been conquered," Kincaid's "erasure" is felt by the reader. Her and her whole islands broken moral is described by her statement "awe at its existence, small because I was not from it."

Jamaica Kincaid's saddness and anger toward England is made apparent by her feelings of England's false superiority. Using rhetorical strategies, Kincaid succeeds in conveying her negative attitude toward the "very special jewel" she never wants to wear.

1999, Q2 Student Sample, scored a 9

Elton John's second-to-last album, *Made in England,* described the island nation from the perspective of someone born and raised in the UK. In Jamaica Kincaid's "On Seeing England for the First Time," the first-person narrator had not yet visited the country, yet has been so profoundly influenced by it that she develops some every strong opinions and attitudes towards England. Through her stylistic shifts, use of detail, and straightforward structure, Kincaid expresses her negative attitude.

The passage shifts in its style several times. In the introductory paragraph, the speaker is an elementary school student in class, confronted with a map of England. Within the paragraph, however, one can see the progression of time—the speaker's "squiggly veins of red" become "our sense of what was meaningless." The intermingling of the two narrative voices—a young child and a

mature adult—reflects the author's long-held opinions of England. The shifts from schoolroom, where the child spends most of her time, with descriptions of her closest memories of meals and parents, show the entirety with which England enveloped her—and the way she rejected it.

Kincaid expresses her deep rooted distaste for England by using highly specific details to illustrate vivid memories. The mutton-like England of the map and the remembrances of other minor details such as the articles of clothing of her father serve to demonstrate how England denominated her entire life. England had established colonies "in jungles, in deserts, on plains, on top of the highest mountains" and had imposed a common culture throughout. The details of what she ate for breakfast: "half a grapefruit, a bowl of oat porridge, bread and butter and a slice of cheese... " show her intolerance for a nation that had superimposed non-native foods and customs onto a tropical island in the Caribbean. The improper use of a felt hat in the heat was dictated by England. Kincaid's inner rebellion of the influence of England was manifests itself in eating with a bare hands when "she [her mother] wasn't looking." The vivid details spawn a vivid dislike for England, which has brought her whole life under its control.

Kincaid also uses simple structure to convey her direct dislike for England. The sentences are all very direct, and the author minimizes the use of complex literary devices. Very plainly are the readers told, "I was unable to draw a map of England correctly"—a final expression of her inability to reconcile her differences with the country. Detail after detail expresses the author's yearning to escape England's influence. This yearning even leads to disobedience of her mother in eating style and criticism of her father's vanity. There are no complicated schemes to subvert England, only a visceral distrust and discontent with the creation of England's domination. She does not rebel openly because, quite simply, she "had long ago been conquered." Her simplicity leads to her not recognizing her "erasure" as a result of England's pernicious destruction.

The English once ruled an empire on which the sun never set—an empire that produced Elton John's joyful refrain, "I was made in England." Yet England's empire also trampled indigenous cultures in establishing a uniform system worldwide. Jamaica Kincaid rebels in the face of this, but not until much after this section of the essay. For her, it does not matter how "nicely she can eat," but rather that this process would "result in my erasure." Kincaid's employment of shifts, as well as detail and structure, show her malevolent attitude toward the mother country, an attitude of feeling "in awe and small" throughout her early years.

1999 Question 3
Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Exam

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts one-third of the total essay section score.)

In the following excerpt from *Antigone,* by the classical Greek playwright Sophocles, the wise Teiresias observes

Think; all men make mistakes,
But a good man yields when he
Knows his course is wrong,
And repairs the evil: The only
Crime is pride.

Take some time to think about the implications of the quotation. Then write a carefully reasoned essay that explores the validity of the assertion, using examples from your reading, observation, or experience to develop your position.

Scoring Guide English Language Question 3
The score you assign each essay should reflect your judgment of its quality as a whole. You should reward writers for what they do well in response to the question. Remember that students had 40 minutes to read and write. The essays should thus be thought of as comparable to essays produced in final exams, not judged by standards appropriate for out-of-class writing assignments.

All essays, even those scored 8 and 9, are likely to exhibit occasional flaws in analysis or in prose style and mechanics; such lapses should enter into your holistic judgment of the essay's quality. In no case should an essay with many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics be scored higher than 2.

9 Essays earning a score of 9 meet all the criteria for 8 papers and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their argument or demonstrate particularly impressive stylistic control.

8 Essays earning a score of 8 effectively evaluate Teiresias's assertion about goodness and pride as the only crime. They present a well-developed argument in support of their position by using appropriate examples from the writers' reading, knowledge, or experience. The prose of 8 essays demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not flawless.

7 Essays earning a score of 7 fit the description of 6 essays but are distinguished by more complete or more purposeful evaluation of the assertion and more persuasive arguments or stronger prose style.

6 Essays earning a score of 6 adequately evaluate Teiresias's assertion and take a position on his claim. They present arguments that are generally sound and use appropriate examples, but they are less developed or less cogent than essays earning higher scores. A few lapses in diction or syntax may be present, but for the most part the prose of 6 essays conveys the writers' ideas clearly.

5 Essays earning a score of 5 understand the task. They take a position on Teiresias's claim and evaluate the validity of the assertion. Their arguments are generally clear but are limited, inconsistent, or unevenly developed. A few lapses in diction or syntax may be evident, but for the most part, the prose of 5 essays conveys the writers' ideas clearly.

4 Essays earning a score of 4 inadequately respond to the question's tasks. They may misunderstand, misrepresent, or oversimplify the assertion advanced by Teiresias. They may use examples that are inappropriate or insufficient to develop their own position. The prose of 4 essays usually conveys the writers' ideas but may suggest immature control over organization, syntax, or diction.

3 Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but are less persuasive in evaluating and defending a position or less consistent in controlling elements of writing.

2 Essays earning a score of 2 achieve little success in evaluating Teiresias's assertion. These essays may misread the passage or substitute a simpler task, not developing an argument but merely summarizing or tangentially responding to the question with unrelated or inappropriate examples. The prose of 2 essays often reveals consistent weaknesses such as a lack of organization, faulty syntax, or poor diction.

1 Essays earning the score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but in addition are especially simplistic in their arguments or weak in controlling language.

0 Indicates an on-topic response that receives no credit, such as one that merely repeats the prompt.

— Indicates a blank response or one that is completely off topic.

Chief Reader Comments, 1999 Question 3

The argument question this year took as its prompt a quotation from *Antigone* in which Teiresias describes the difference between good and evil men, commenting that the only crime is pride. Students were asked to 1) explore the validity of Teiresias' assertion and 2) create an argument that develops a position on Teiresias' claim. Students are familiar with the form of the argument question, which asks them to provide evidence for their own arguments and to use the passage as a springboard to their own response. Students had little trouble interpreting Teiresias's meaning, and most responses thoughtfully considered the implications of the claim. The question demonstrates how useful it is to have students read and discuss a wide variety of texts and genres in their AP class. The classical Greek play was a fine prompt for the arguments made, and students' success in this question hinged upon their ability to apply it to literature or to life in organized, rhetorically persuasive ways. The range of examples was impressive, from Plato to Clinton, and from a wide variety of literary works. Excellent papers demonstrated an ability to sustain an argument, to make examples relevant, and to think through complexities. Less adept essays recapitulated the argument from the passage or used examples in undeveloped or unrelated ways.

1999, Q3 Student Sample, scored a 6

The statement by the playwright Sophocles I believe to be extremely valid. While everybody makes mistakes, the person who has too much pride to admit that he is wrong only causes further damage. I have found this to be true in my reading, such as Frankenstein and MacBeth, as well as my own personal observations.

Both Frankenstein and MacBeth are literary characters who "make mistakes" and follow through with the "crime of pride." Victor Frankenstein makes the mistake of unleashing an uncontrolled creature into the world who ends up killing most of visitor's family. Instead of admitting his mistake, his pride interferes when he fears that people will think he is insane. As a result, the innocent Justine Moritz is falsely executed for killing Victor's brother William, and the creature poses a potential threat to whoever he encounters. In the same way, MacBeth makes the mistake of being persuaded to kill King Duncan. Instead of confessing his wrongdoing, he continues to kill others, including Banquo to cover his tracks. As evidenced by these two characters, the crime of pride prevents them from repairing the evil they cause and leads to further damage.

In my own observations, however, I have seen incidents where people admit their mistakes to prevent disaster. For example, I recently saw a news story of a baby car seat manufacturer who was recalling a certain model of car seat due to a potentially dangerous flaw in the assembly process. The manufacturer had to admit that a mistake had been made in order to prevent possible infant injuries. A more prideful manufacturer may have been unwilling to admit that mistake, in the hope that the problem wasn't serious enough to cause harm.

In my own experiences, I have learned that it is beneficial to admit mistakes in order to preserve friendships. At times "all men make mistakes," and at some point everyone is going to say something hurtful to another person. A simple apology can do a lot to repair hurt feelings and may ultimately preserve a friendship. If someone is too prideful to admit that a remark or action is inappropriate, a friendship may be ruined due to feelings of resentment.

I completely agree that the statement from Antigone is a very valid one. Literature such as Frankenstein and MacBeth help to support this truth. Personal observations and experiences also contribute to the validity of the statement, in that it is always beneficial to try to account for and repair wrong doings.

1999, Q3 Student Sample, scored a 9

Teiresias, a seer who is renowned for his wisdom and foresight in Antigone, asserts that while everyone makes mistakes, the only real crime is being too prideful to correct them. This statement has its merits, but it does not address the effects peoples' mistakes have on others. If a man makes a mistake that results in the injury of another, but being a good man, he corrects the mistake, hasn't he still committed a crime against another?

About a month ago, a young child fell off a Metro subway platform in Washington, D.C. and was killed by an oncoming subway train because the train was unable to stop in time. The Metropolitan Transit Authority expressed its condolences to the grief-stricken mother. The death, as well as a marked increase in overall Metro ridership in the past couple of years, lead Metro to enact an expensive overhaul of all of its trains and to outfit them with new brakes and steering mechanisms. The improvements, which are expected to take two years to complete, will also include refurbishing the deteriorated upholstery and carpeting. Metro acted promptly to correct the mistake of allowing decrepit trains to continue running the subway system. The new braking system will hopefully prevent any other accidental fatalities and the rejuvenated trains will more efficiently deal with the recent crowding on rush-hour trains, but Metro has not absolved itself from guilt. It may be doing all it can to prevent another accident, but it did not prevent that unfortunate death last month. Metro's crime is not that it had too much pride to admit its subway trains needed renovation to continue operating safely and efficiently; Metro's crime is that its undiagnosed mistake caused an unnecessary death.

Teiresias is correct when he claims that pride is a crime. To not fix a mistake once it is identified because one is worried about public opinion is wrong. Computer companies produce software with occasional operational glitches, or "bugs." Even though all software is extensively tested and retested before it is released to the general populace, unusual or awkward procedures or unanticipated application incompatibility are bugs that computer software companies must fix. Mathmatica is one computer program that has lots of bugs. It is a complicated program with a user manual nearly a thousand pages thick. If the company that produced Mathmatica was embarrassed that it had produced a flawed product when bugs were found, it might be loath to correct such errors and notify the public. However, Mathmatica is not guilty of the crime of pride and regularly posts "patches" for bugs it identifies and corrects.

The statement "all men make mistakes and a good man...repairs the evil" is a true statement. Willingly ignoring your mistakes because of pride can hurt others. However, when Teiresias says "the only crime is pride," he is wrong. The person is still responsible for the injury done to others before the mistake is identified and corrected.

Writing Tactics

INTRODUCTION

One of the most demanding tasks facing all English teachers is to nurture in their students the strong writing skills necessary for success on the AP Examinations and in college-level study. The chief faculty consultant for the 1999 Literature Examination states that these skills include:

- Organization that is appropriate to the design of the essay
- A clearly conceived and well-supported thesis
- Balance between generalization and specific detail
- Precision in diction
- Effective syntax
- A comfortable facility with conventional American English grammar, spelling, and punctuation

The activities in this section provide teachers with many different approaches to this crucial task and are appropriate for students at various levels of writing proficiency.

TIMED WRITINGS

Teachers have traditionally used the timed, in-class essay examination as a way of measuring students' understanding of class material following the completion of a unit. English teachers, in particular, have recognized the value of this form of assessment in measuring other composition skills such as argumentation and analysis. Timed writing assignments allow teachers to help students practice critical thinking, improve their organization, and write with greater economy and coherence.

Students must become aware of the special nature of timed writing assignments and should focus their attention on the fundamentals of composition—a central idea, support backed by evidence, and a clear, coherent order. Also, teachers, when evaluating timed writing papers, need to be aware of the effect that time constraints have on the writing process and give students credit for what they do well rather than penalize them for minor errors.

Some guidelines for students writing under timed conditions are:

- Take a few minutes to plan your essay. Write an outline, a mind map, a list of ideas and strategies—whatever it takes to get you organized.
- Follow the directions exactly. Respond to the prompt as written; do not give a personal spin to it unless this spin is obviously relevant.
- Do not spend a lot of time on the introduction. A few sentences that focus the reader will suffice. Write a thesis that argues a point, takes a stand on the issue, and addresses each task set by the prompt. Your introduction should not simply rephrase the question you are answering or the topic to which you are responding.

- Spend most of your time on the body of the essay. Be sure that each paragraph has a unifying topic sentence. Support your points with specific evidence from the text. If you are writing an open-book essay, use direct quotations. Integrate or embed the quotations smoothly; do not just plop them on the page in haste. Try to give the reader some context for the citation before you quote it.
- The conclusion should provide a sense of closure to the essay, but it certainly should not simply repeat the content of the introduction. Indeed, one good original sentence that truly completes the essay is far more desirable than a dull recap of your major ideas.

DEVELOPING THE THESIS

Whether responding to a prompt for a timed writing or developing a full essay under more relaxed writing conditions, the writer must spend some time generating ideas, mulling over his or her subject, jotting down thoughts, and exploring any insights he or she may have.

The key elements in any writing situation include the subject to be discussed, the sources of available information, the purpose, the audience, and constraints such as length, design, and time limit.

An effective thesis (main focus, central idea) should be a generalization, not a fact, which is limited to the intent or scope of the assignment. In timed writing, such as in the English AP Exams, students must look to the prompt for guidance in developing their thesis. **In fact, understanding the prompt itself is essential before a student even begins to plan any sort of response.**

As a response to a specific prompt, thesis development should be a three-part process. First, the writer must define or identify the **task** set by the prompt. Then, he or she must consider **what** needs to be addressed in the response. Finally, the writer must decide **how** best to respond. The successful thesis in an AP essay response simultaneously identifies those details while grasping the complexities of the prompt. The successful thesis will synthesize the relationship between specific details and abstract ideas.

Prior to, and in conjunction with, lessons on writing good thesis sentences, students must spend time not just reading, but actually decoding essay prompts. Even the best-written essay will not be effective if the student has failed to understand the requirements of the prompt. AP English prompts, in fact, are often two- and even three-pronged in nature. Therefore, it is not unusual for the prompt dealing with prose analysis, for instance, to require the student not only to respond to the passage on several levels, but also to read the passage carefully in order to unravel several layers of meaning within its lines. After such analysis, the students must revisit the prompt to see just what they are being asked to do with this multifaceted piece of prose or poetry.

Consider the prompt and passage from the 2000 AP English Language and Composition Examination. Following it is an analysis using the three-part process to develop a thesis in response to the prompt.

In the following passage from her autobiography, One Writer's Beginnings, *Eudora Welty recalls early experiences of reading and books that had later impact on her craft as a writer of fiction. In a well-organized essay, analyze how Welty's language conveys the intensity and value of these experiences.*

I never knew anyone who'd grown up in Jackson without being afraid of Mrs. Calloway, our librarian. She ran the Library absolutely by herself, from the desk where she sat with her back to the books and facing the stairs, her dragon eye on the front door, where who knew what kind of person might come in from the public? SILENCE in big black letters was on signs tacked up everywhere. She herself spoke in her normally commanding voice; every word could be heard all over the Library above a steady seething sound coming from her electric fan; it was the only fan in the Library and stood on her desk, turned directly onto her streaming face.

As you came in from the bright outside, if you were a girl, she sent her strong eyes down the stairway to test you: if she could see through your skirt she sent you straight back home; you could just put on another petticoat if you wanted a book that badly from the public library. I was willing; I would do anything to read.

My mother was not afraid of Mrs. Calloway. She wished me to have my own library card to check out books for myself. She took me in to introduce me and I saw I had met a witch. "Eudora is nine years old and has my permission to read any book she wants from the shelves, children or adult," Mother said. "With the exception of Elsie Dinsmore*," she added. Later she explained to me that she'd made this rule because Elsie the heroine, being made by her father to practice too long and hard at the piano, fainted and fell off the piano stool. "You're too impressionable, dear," she told me. "You'd read that and the very first thing you'd do, you'd fall off the piano stool." "Impressionable" was a new word. I never hear it yet without the image that comes with it of falling straight off the piano stool.

Mrs. Calloway made her own rules about books. You could not take back a book to the Library on the same day you'd taken it out; it made no difference to her that you'd read every word in it and needed another to start. You could take out two books at a time and two only; this applied as long as you were a child and also for the rest of your life, to my mother as severely as to me. So two by two, I read library books as fast as I could go, rushing them home in the basket of my bicycle. From the minute I reached our house, I started to read. Every book I seized on, from *Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue at Camp Rest-a-While to Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea,* stood for the devouring wish to read being instantly granted. I knew this was bliss, knew it at the time. Taste isn't nearly so important; it comes in its own time. I wanted to read immediately. The only fear was that of books coming to an end.

My mother was very sharing of this feeling of insatiability. Now, I think of her as reading so much of the time while doing something else. In my

mind's eye The *Origin of Species* is lying on the shelf in the pantry under a light dusting of flour—my mother was a bread maker; she'd pick it up, sit by the kitchen window and find her place, with one eye on the oven. I remember her picking up *The Man in Lower Ten* while my hair got dry enough to unroll from a load of kid curlers trying to make me like my idol, Mary Pickford. A generation later, when my brother Walter was away in the Navy and his two little girls often spent the day in our house, I remember Mother reading the new issue of *Time* magazine while taking the part of the Wolf in a game of "Little Red Riding Hood" with the children. She'd just look up at the right time, long enough to answer—in character—"The better to eat you with, my dear," and go back to her place in the war news.

(1983)

*Elsie Dinsmore was the long-suffering young heroine in a popular series of children's books written by Martha Finley and first published in 1868.

Understanding this passage requires students to concentrate on Ms. Welty's language, which conveys the intensity and value of these experiences. The passage itself, however, seems to be a description of the public librarian as "Gorgon of the Stacks." Although the librarian was certainly a moving force in Welty's early reading experiences, students must be able to separate Welty's somewhat amusing description (as simply description) from the task of investigation of the language and how the language itself conveys the information with which to answer the prompt.

The thesis should not be thought of strictly as a single sentence at the end of the introductory paragraph. Instead, the thesis has two purposes. First, it expresses a central idea that states the focus that controls the essay. This idea is then followed by a more directive statement that is really the organizer of the entire essay. It tells just how the student writer intends to show or develop the controlling idea of his or her essay. For example, in the Welty prompt, students must respond to the overlying question concerning the intensity and value of early experiences of reading and books and their later impact on her writer's craft.

Application of the Three-Part Process of Thesis Development

- **Define or identify the TASK:** analyze how language conveys the intensity and value of her experiences.
- **Consider WHAT needs to be addressed:** the prompt directs the student to discuss Welty's language. In particular, students are asked to pay special attention to how her language (diction, tone, syntax, and imagery) conveys her message.
- **Decide HOW best to respond to the prompt:** the "how" of a prompt refers to the author's strategies. After identifying and thinking through these strategies, the student can proceed to develop a framework or organization for his or her response.

The following paragraphs demonstrate two students' introductory paragraphs in response to the Welty prompt. The controlling ideas of the paragraphs are clearly stated and meaningful; in addition, these student writers show that they have moved beyond rigid, formulaic writing techniques and are able to employ original strategies that showcase their original voices and distinctive styles.

One student's opening:

> It's like a hunger, a hunger so inherent that necessity overrides will and pleasure. My mouth waters and my heart pounds as I raise the camera to my eye. The driving need for the pictures that I take is my desire to freeze the artistic moment, just as I suspect Eudora Welty's only need was to lose herself in the fictional words. It is this hunger, this need that fuels the love and inspires the desire to create that dominates the language Welty has used in this piece.

Note how effectively the student purposefully connects personal narrative to the task.

Another responded:

> Welty learned by reading, having progressed beyond the playroom picture books, and it was her love of books at an early age that foreshadowed her career as a fiction writer. Her tone is one of reverence—reverence towards books, reading, and most of all, the "Library," capitalized to emphasize its holiness. She describes the "dragon eye[d]" librarian at length, a tribute to Mrs. Calloway's persistence in guarding the fruit of knowledge from overindulgence by the library patrons. Knowledge was a treasure, and the dragon guarding this treasure limited its enjoyment to "two books at a time and only two," a restriction that only spurred Welty to return again and again. Welty's language clearly conveys her intense love of reading and the high value she places upon it.

In contrast to the former student response, this introduction takes a more direct approach to the task. Both introductions demonstrate understanding and mastery.

TWIST

T tone
W word choice
I imagery and detail
S style
T theme

Some students may find that the acronym **TWIST** may be helpful when they are asked to create a thesis in response to a prompt that refers to a selection of prose or poetry. In such a case, the student is encouraged to consider the following aspects of the piece under investigation. What is the author's **tone**? What particular **word choice** may be indicative of the author's feelings? Is there any specific **imagery** or use of **detail** that indicates the author's attitude or evokes a particular reaction from the reader? Does the author demonstrate any characteristic **style** that may help with interpretation? And, finally, what **theme** does the author present in his or her passage or poem?

Application of the TWIST Process to the Passage

Tone is the attitude of the author or speaker toward the subject.

Welty takes an amused, nostalgic backward look at the roots of her intellectual life in this whimsical, eccentric passage. She shows her admiration for, and appreciation of, having had a mother who was an unusually passionate reader and who served as her guardian and guide into the scary world of the dim, hushed library. She gives the reader a sense of the awe and apprehension the author felt as a child when she entered, not the library, but the "Library," a place of majesty and mystery, a fairy tale world peopled with witches and dragons. And finally, the author's intense love of reading, formed early, is clearly evident as she describes her "devouring" wish to read and the "insatiable" desire for books that she shared with her mother, daring even the larger-than-life, frightening Sphinx of a librarian in order to pursue the world of the imagination.

Word choice or diction are terms referring to the specific words or clusters of words in the selection that are loaded with connotation, associations, or emotional impact.

The language that Welty uses to describe her feelings for reading is intense. She "rushes" home and leaps upon the books she has "seized" from the library, gratifying her "devouring wish to read," and feeling "bliss" when she enters the world of fiction. Her "insatiable" appetite for reading must be fulfilled "immediately," as must her mother's, who cannot wait for leisure time to read books but intersperses reading with her daily activities.

Imagery is a term referring to sense impressions created by the writer: images may be those of sound, touch, smell, taste, or sight. *Detail* refers to facts or objects.

The image of Welty's mother reading *Time* magazine while playing at "Little Red Riding Hood" with her children reinforces the fairy-tale motif that runs through this passage. It is most appropriate that the mother, whose "insatiable" appetite for reading causes her to read while baking, curling hair, and playing games with her children, should say, as she looks up from her periodical, "The better to eat you with, my dear" taking, in the pretend game, the part of the voracious

Big Bad Wolf. In fact, both Eudora and her mother "wolf" down imaginative fiction. The fantasy images introduced by Welty with the "dragon eye" of Mrs. Calloway and the image of the "steady seething sound" coming from her fan like hissing steam from the dragon's den continue throughout the passage. The librarian is a "witch," and Eudora herself, like the fictional character Elsie Dinsmore, with whom the little reader identifies and about whom she is forbidden to read, is a "heroine." The cavelike library, fit lair for a dragonish denizen such as Mrs. Calloway, seems "dim inside" after the bright light of the outside world. The librarian turns from a hot, harried woman with a sweaty, "streaming face" into the guardian at the threshold, forbidding entrance into the Eden of the imagination, and whetting Eudora's avid desire for the forbidden fruit of books even further. Indeed, through these images, the reader begins to see the books as rich treasure suited to heroic endeavor.

Style is a term referring to the author's characteristic use of language and the tools of a writer: figurative language, point of view, literary techniques, etc.

Welty employs a variety of characteristic stylistic devices. She writes with an adult's understanding of her childhood experience, using a point of view that lends itself to humorous self-reflection. Her use of capital letters for emphasis, as in the ubiquitous "SILENCE" signs in the Library; her lavish employment of the colon and semicolon to link related, complex ideas; her use of hyperbole ("I would do anything to read") and irony, all contribute to her characteristic way of writing.

Theme concerns the meaning of the passage, the insight, both particular and universal, that an author has to offer about life itself and has to do with the overall effect or impact of a piece of writing. It is the core of the work, its reason for being.

Sample Thesis Statements Derived from TWIST Analysis

A wide variety of thematic statements might be derived from the Welty passage and the reader's **TWIST** analysis of it. Some samples follow.

- Through her use of language related to the world of fairy tales, archetypes, and heroic fantasy, Eudora Welty makes the world of books seem like a magical and perilous realm of mystery and adventure.
- The challenge of obtaining books from the strict, stern, rule-bound librarian who haunted Eudora Welty's childhood reading experiences made reading seem even more desirable because the difficulty of getting them made books seem like "forbidden fruit."
- Reading is as natural and as necessary as breathing to people such as Eudora Welty and her mother; to such readers, the experience of reading is "bliss" and the delight of reading lends a charm to life that is more precious than any treasure.

After the student writer has read the passage and thought about it using the TWIST structure, proving a thesis is an approachable process: using evidence from each part of the acronym, the writer constructs an essay grounded in the text itself and linked to a thematic idea.

For another example, consider the following excerpt from "The Knife" by Richard Selzer.

> One holds the knife as one holds the bow of a cello or a tulip—by the stem. Not palmed nor gripped nor grasped, but lightly, with the tips of the fingers. The knife is not for pressing. It is for drawing across the field of skin. Like a slender fish, it waits, at the ready then, go! It darts, followed by a fine wake of red. The flesh parts, falling away to yellow globules of fat. Even now, after so many times, I still marvel at its power—cold, gleaming, silent. More, I am still struck with a kind of dread that it is I in whose hand the blade travels, that my hand is its vehicle, that yet again this terrible steel-bellied thing and I have conspired for a most unnatural purpose, the laying open of the body of a human being.
>
> A stillness settles in my heart and is carried to my hand. It is the quietude of resolve layered over fear. And it is this resolve that lowers us, my knife and me, deeper and deeper into the person beneath. It is an entry into the body that is nothing like a caress; still, it is among the gentlest of acts. Then stroke and stroke again, and we are joined by other instruments, hemostats and forceps, until the wound blooms with strange flowers whose looped handles fall to the sides in steely array.
>
> There is sound, the tight click of clamps fixing teeth into severed blood vessels, the snuffle and gargle of the suction machine clearing the field of blood for the next stroke, the litany of monosyllables with which one prays his way down and in: clamp, sponge, suture, tie, cut. And there is color. The green of the cloth, the white of the sponges, the red and yellow of the body. Beneath the fat lies the fascia, the tough fibrous sheet encasing the muscles. It must be sliced and the red beef of the muscles separated. Now there are retractors to hold apart the wound. Hands move together, part, weave. We are fully engaged, like children absorbed in a game or the craftsmen of some place like Damascus…
>
> You turn aside to wash your gloves. It is a ritual cleansing. One enters this temple doubly washed. Here is man as microcosm, representing in all his parts the earth, perhaps the universe.
>
> I must confess that the priestliness of my profession has ever been impressed on me. In the beginning there are vows, taken with all solemnity. Then there is the endless harsh novitiate of training, much fatigue, much sacrifice. At last one emerges as celebrant, standing close to the truth lying curtained in the Ark of the body. Not surplice and cassock, but mask and gown are your regalia. You hold no chalice, but a knife. There is no wine, no wafer. There are only the facts of blood and flesh.

> And if the surgeon is like a poet, then the scars you have made on countless bodies are like verses into the fashioning of which you have poured your soul. I think that if years later I were to see the trace from an old incision of mine, I should know it at once, as one recognizes his pet expressions.
>
> But mostly you are a traveler in a dangerous country, advancing into the moist and jungly cleft your hands have made. Eyes and ears are shuttered from the land you left behind; mind empties itself of all other thought. There is risk everywhere.
>
> "The Knife" from *Mortal Lessons*, by Richard Seltzer. Reprinted by permission of Georges Borchardt, Inc., on behalf of the author.

Application of the TWIST Process to the Passage

Tone

Tone should be expressed in emotion or opinion words. In "The Knife," the speaker is writing about surgery as a profession and reveals a complex attitude toward his work comprised of wonder, courage, fascination, trepidation, reverence, dread, excitement, and awe. The writer's use of diction, imagery, and detail leads the reader toward a determination of tone. For example, the speaker's comparison of surgery to the priesthood makes the reader connect a priest's feelings of reverence and awe towards his vocation to Selzer's similar feelings for surgery. His metaphor comparing the surgeon to a "traveler in a dangerous country" leads the analytical reader toward a tone of excitement, trepidation, and courage, those feelings that might be expected of such a traveler. The other comparisons Selzer makes are equally revealing in terms of tone.

Word Choice or Diction

When the speaker of the passage refers to the knife as "cold, gleaming, silent," there is a kind of dread that settles in the reader's mind, as well as in that of the speaker, because of all of the possible associations of these words when clustered together. Instruments in a dental office, morgues, strange silvery robots gliding silently from ominous spacecraft: all these and many other frightening things might be described in a similar way. When Selzer refers to the surgeon's eyes and ears as "shuttered" as he makes his descent into the body, the reader feels that there is self-protection going on here, that just as a householder "battens down the hatches" in preparation for a storm, the surgeon is protecting himself from his own emotions as he cuts into a human body. This passage is filled with such revealing instances of diction, and the alert reader will find clues to meaning and tone everywhere in the writer's emotionally loaded language.

Imagery and Detail
When the author refers to the "tight click of clamps" or the "snuffle and gargle of the suction machine," he creates in the mind of the reader a sense impression that, again, may be a clue to tone and/or meaning in the passage. In this case, the reader gets an uncomfortable, smothered feeling, listening to the strange noises in the operating room itself.

Style
In this case, Selzer uses first person point of view to give the reader an interior view of the body through the surgeon's eyes. Later, he will shift his point of view to that of the patient to allow his reader a glimpse of the opposite perspective and to show that he feels the surgeon should be able to see the experience of surgery through the patient's eyes as well as through his own. In addition, Selzer employs a variety of literary devices such as assonance, consonance, and alliteration to enhance both the sound and the sense of his description.

Theme
In "The Knife," Selzer's words and images suggest thematic statements like this: *A surgeon's task is dangerous but thrilling; like an ancient hero, he must defeat death with only a knife as his weapon.*

Sample Thesis Statements Derived from TWIST Analysis

In Richard Selzer's essay "The Knife," the author expresses his sense of wonder and excitement about his profession through images of exploration.

In his essay, "The Knife," Richard Selzer feels that the field of surgery is a limitless frontier containing countless wonders; however, like any explorer, he also fears the unknown dangers of his task and must summon all his courage to reach his objective.

In the essay, "The Knife," Richard Selzer moves the physician to the level of the muses by transcending the blood and gore of the operating room and presenting his profession not as a well-honed skill but as a masterpiece of art.

Poetry Analysis Using the TWIST Acronym
Prompt: Carefully read the following poem by Howard Nemerov. Then write an essay in which you explain how the author uses language to create both a literal and a symbolic level of meaning.

Lobsters

Here at the Super Duper, in a glass tank
Supplied by a rill of cold fresh water
Running down a glass washboard at one end
And siphoned off at the other, and so
Perpetually renewed, a herd of lobster

Is made available to the customer
Who may choose whichever one he wants
To carry home and drop into boiling water
And serve with a sauce of melted butter.

Meanwhile, the beauty of strangeness marks
These creatures, who move (when they do)
With a slow, vague wavering of claws,
The somnambulist's effortless clambering
As he crawls over the shell of a dream
Resembling himself. Their velvet colors,
Mud red, bruise purple, cadaver green
Speckled with black, their camouflage at home,
Make them conspicuous here in the strong
Day-imitating light, the incommensurable
Philosophers and at the same time victims
Herded together in the marketplace, asleep
Except for certain tentative gestures
Of their antennae, or their imperial claws
Pegged shut with a whittled stick at the wrist.

We inlanders, buying our needful food,
Pause over these slow, gigantic spiders
That spin not. We pause and are bemused,
And sometimes it happens that a mind sinks down
To the blind abyss in a swirl of sand, goes cold
And archaic in a carapace of horn,
Thinking: There's something underneath the world.
The flame beneath the pot that boils the water.

Nemerov, Howard. "Lobsters" in *The Premier Book of Major Poets.* ed. Anita Dore. New York: Fawcett Columbine/Ballentine Books, 1970.

Tone

The speaker's tone is complex, shifting from a reflective, thoughtful, musing attitude at the beginning of the poem to a playfully gruesome acknowledgement of the irony of the food chain, and finally resolving itself in an ominous, disturbed perception of the relationship between the lobsters' precarious, oblivious condition and the limits of human existence and perception.

Word Choice

The author describes the lobsters as "victims," "herded" together; their gestures are "tentative," their "imperial" claws impotent. They are "somnambulists" or "spiders." The observer's mind goes "cold" and "archaic" when contemplating these creatures and their ancient relationship to human development. The potential purchasers of the lobsters are "inlanders," fundamentally other than and indifferent to the ocean creatures. The author begins the poem ironically, naming the supermarket the "Super Duper," a nonsensical, jingling, childish name to reflect the jolly horror of shopping for lobsters.

Imagery and Detail
The observer enters a "blind abyss," and sees a "swirl of sand," thus moving into the primeval world to which T. S. Eliot's Prufrock longs to return, lamenting: "I should have been a pair of ragged claws/scuttling across the floors of silent seas." The lobsters' colors are "velvet colors," "mud red, bruise purple, cadaver green, speckled with black," colors steeped in the deep, disturbing hues of death. The image of the "strong/day-imitating light" in combination with the term "philosophers" brings to the reader's mind the image of Plato's "Allegory of the Cave," that frightening thought-experiment in which Plato sees humankind chained, staring at flickering shadows on a wall, barred from enlightenment and understanding.

Style
The author uses allusion when he says of the lobsters that they "spin not," a reference to the lilies of the field who "toil not, neither do they spin, yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as these." This line provides a subtle recognition of both the strange, alien beauty of the sea creatures and their inherent worth as living beings. Antithesis and paradox characterize the author's style as he explores the weird relationship between the lobsters and their human observers and consumers.

Theme
On one level, human beings seem no better than executioners when they pen up beautiful living creatures (beautiful, even if a bit slow on the uptake) and then buy them, take them home, and drop them into boiling water in order to eat them. On another, people, like the lobsters, can be oblivious, blind, vague, and unaware of their own limited life spans and imminent danger in the face of fate, time, and circumstance.

The student reader analyzes the poem using the TWIST structure as an aid, then uses the insights gleaned from the examination of the poem in the thesis statement and the proof.

WRITING AN ESSAY

Students will find that a carefully thought-out thesis facilitates the writing of their essays. Under timed conditions, students spend the majority of their planning time constructing a strong thesis and writing a short introduction.

Most writing under timed conditions should be devoted to the body of the essay. Students need to support their points with specific evidence from the text. In the AP English essay prompts, students are directed to look for or at specific elements within the reading passage from which to develop and support their thesis. For example, a prompt may ask students to address the author's shifting attitude within a poem or piece of prose, paying particular attention to diction, syntax, and tone within the piece of writing. Or, perhaps, two passages (or poems) may be presented with the prompt, directing students to compare and contrast one with the other and then make some sort of judgment about the success of one versus the other.

Practice in writing body paragraphs can sometimes be accomplished as group work, wherein each member of a group is responsible for building the ideas within a paragraph. At other times, teachers may ask for an introduction and a thesis with body paragraphs just outlined, or with only one body paragraph written out and the others outlined. **Not every writing assignment has to culminate in a full-blown essay to be turned in and laboriously graded by the English teacher.** Indeed, students must be given a variety of approaches and opportunities for brainstorming and quickly organizing their ideas. One effective way of practicing this skill is by critically analyzing the directives of a prompt and then planning the paragraphs that will explain and support the thesis or claim writers have presented in the introduction.

Different writing situations and different prompts require a variety of approaches from the student writer. For instance, they need to know which pattern of organization, or mode, will best fit their writing task. They may develop their body paragraphs using primarily examples and illustrations, narration and anecdote, description, analogy, comparison and contrast, or another strategy.

Another important aspect of successful essay development is paragraphing. Sentences and paragraphs must flow from one to another without discernible bumps, gaps, or shifts. This can best be done when students learn to strengthen ties between old information and new; therefore, ideas must be clearly linked. Readers expect to learn a paragraph's main point in a topic sentence early in the paragraph. Then, whatever development for this topic sentence is used, the details, facts, and examples presented should all tie into the topic sentence. Repeating key words, using parallel structure, maintaining consistency, and providing transitions are all skills that students can practice to enhance the paragraphs within their essays.

Beginning writers may find the **three-fold transition sentence** helpful for establishing coherence in their essays. The three-fold transition sentence does the following:

- Refers subtly to the idea discussed in the previous paragraph
- Refers briefly to the overall thesis idea
- Refers more specifically to any new ideas to be discussed in the next paragraph; for example:

  Thesis: Throughout Jane Eyre *by Charlotte Bronte, Jane Eyre uses her dominant personality traits of passion, independence, and faith in God to make important decisions with confidence.*

Transition Sentence #1
Jane's sometimes concealed but ardent passion defines many decisions in her life.

Transition Sentence #2
In addition to being passionate, Jane is a very independent person who insists on distinguishing her views from others in order to make intelligent decisions.

Transition Sentence #3
Over and above Jane's passion and independence, faith in God leads Jane along the right path, grants her the gift of unconditional love, and wisely influences her decisions.

Conclusion: Passion, independence, and faith in God enable Jane to trust herself to make the right decision.

Composing a Conclusion
The conclusion of an essay should echo the main idea, without dully repeating it. For students preparing for timed AP English essay writing, conclusions are of particular importance. AP English essay readers will readily agree that a poor introduction can be counteracted by a strong finish, but a poor conclusion cannot be overlooked by the readers.

In addition to echoing the main idea, students might choose to summarize the essay's most salient points, pose a question for further study, offer advice, or even propose a course of action. Of course, there are many ways to write a conclusion, but the effectiveness of choosing any one way over another depends on the appropriateness of the finale to what has preceded it. Some students find conclusions troublesome. What they often realize is that the trouble is not in their conclusion, but in the essays themselves. This discernment should develop with time and practice. Frequently, writers do not know when to end because they are not sure about their overall purpose in the first place. Of course, this goes back to planning the introduction and creating a clearly defined controlling idea and thesis. With guidance from teachers throughout middle school and high school, as well as ample opportunities for practice, students will become better at critiquing their own writing and recognizing their weaknesses and strong points. Although the conclusion should echo what has been said at the beginning, it should be an echo, not a repetition. The most satisfying essay is one in which the conclusion provides an interesting way of wrapping up ideas introduced in the beginning and developed throughout.

Novice writers may benefit most from practicing paragraph development before writing multiparagraph compositions, especially at the beginning of the school year. The student's focus would be on writing a strong, clear, organizing topic sentence and developing it with detail, analysis, interpretation, and explanation. Each of the modes of discourse may be practiced in this way, as in the following example, which is based on the novel *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone.*

Expository—Process
Explain how the Sorting Hat selects new students for the four houses of Hogwarts.

Expository—Compare and Contrast
Compare and contrast Harry with Dudley Dursley or Ron Weasley.

Persuasive
Write a note convincing the Dursleys to let Harry have his own room.

Descriptive
How does the author of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone *use imagery to create a sense of mystery in her description of Hogwarts?*

Write a paragraph describing Diagon Alley and its shops and eating establishments.

How does the author use detail to make the reader like, rather than fear, the character of Hagrid?

Narrative
Write a new chapter in which Harry and his friends have further adventures. Try to imitate the author's characteristic style, including her word choice and sentence structure.

Narrative—Personal
Write a diary entry in which you take on Hermione's persona. From her point of view, describe the first few days she spent at Hogwarts.

Essay Form
In AP and advanced-level writing classes, teachers should encourage students to break out of formulaic molds of essay development. For many novice writers, a tightly organized structure is a trustworthy way to begin. Once students have learned the basic tenets of essay writing, however, teachers should encourage them to develop their own "style" for presenting ideas. Indeed, many essays may be comprised of five paragraphs, but many others may have only two and some may have eight. AP English teachers, in fact most college English composition instructors, do not prescribe a specific number of paragraphs in order for an essay to be deemed successful. The most commendable AP English essay responses usually demonstrate that the students have moved beyond the mechanical strictures of the five-paragraph essay.

AP English teachers do not prescribe a specific number of paragraphs or a regimented formula of writing in order for an essay to be deemed successful. It is important that students be allowed a wide latitude of forms in order to develop an original writing structure, style, and voice.

STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION

The following three activities help students develop self-evaluation skills.

1. PAMDISS: A Way to Reflect upon Your Own Prose

This is a handy self-evaluation guide to help students critique their own writing. It is more inclusive than many other self-assessments. It requires students to reflect thoughtfully, not just upon what they have written, but upon why they have chosen to write it that way.

Directions to Students: Writers spend time thinking about their own writing. PAMDISS gives you the power to justify how you wrote your piece. In complete sentences, answer each of the following sets of questions/prompts thoughtfully.

- **PURPOSE:** What was your purpose? What did you want your readers to understand or think about after reading what you have written?
- **AUDIENCE:** What assumptions have you consciously made about your readers' experience with and knowledge of this topic?
- **MODE** (exposition, argumentation, narration, or description): Briefly explain how you used one secondary mode in addition to your primary mode and how this strategy was especially useful and effective. If you used only one mode in your essay, explain why this strategy was the better choice.
- **DICTION:** List two specific word choices you made to convey your attitude toward your subject or to make a subtle point. What other word choices had you considered in these instances?
- **IMAGES/CONCRETE DETAILS:** Select one sentence that illustrates your effective use of imagery. Briefly explain why you think your use of concrete details is effective in this part of your writing.
- **SYNTAX:** Identify one or more sentences that illustrate how you deliberately manipulated either the sentence structure, rhythm, or length. Then, briefly explain your reason for doing so.
- **STRUCTURE:** Briefly explain why you constructed the piece of writing the way you did. Why did you start your essay the way you did? What internal logic is there to the way the ideas in your body paragraphs move from one to the next? Why did you end your essay the way you did? Did you wish to surprise, perplex, or provoke your audience in some part of your essay's structure?

PAMDISS is an advanced strategy that is most often used in high school students' reflections about their writing. The form that follows might be a viable alternative for younger students.

2. FORM FOR SELF-EVALUATION AND REVISION: THE FOUR BASES OF EFFECTIVE WRITING

Title of your paper:_____

Your name:_____

Base 1: Unity and Support

- Write the thesis statement of your paper.
- Briefly list the evidence you use to support the thesis.
- Check to make sure that the topic sentences of your paragraphs are formed from these pieces of evidence.
- Make a one-sentence assessment of how well you supported your thesis.

Base 2: Clarity

- Choose two sentences that seem a bit awkward or unclear.
- Rewrite each sentence to make it more understandable or better written.

Base 3: Coherence

- Describe the strategy or organizational pattern you used to structure your information or major points (list of items or chronological order, abstract to concrete organization, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, or another strategy).
- Check to make sure that each sentence is connected to the previous one by a linking idea or transitional expression. Check to make sure that paragraphs seem to flow naturally into one another.

Base 4: Sentence Skills

- List the different kinds of sentences you have used to provide variety and interest in your paper. You might begin by listing how many simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex sentences you have used. Other kinds of sentences include loose or periodic, cumulative, and balanced sentences. Did you use any interesting syntax techniques such as chiasmus or polysyndeton? If so, make a list of these techniques. If not, try using one in your revision.
- Evaluate the beginnings of your sentences and change them if they are too similar.

3. The rubric, or scoring guide, which follows assists a student who wants to evaluate a persuasive essay.

Gradations of Quality

Criteria	4	3	2	1
The claim	I make a claim and explain why it is controversial.	I make a claim but don't explain why it is controversial.	My claim is buried, confused, and/or unclear.	I don't state what my argument or claim is.
Reasons in support of the claim	I give clear and accurate reasons in support of my claim.	I give reasons in support of my claim, but I overlook other important reasons.	I give one or two weak reasons that don't support my claim and/or irrelevant or confusing reasons.	I don't give reasons in support of my claim.
Reasons against the claim	I discuss the reasons against my claim and explain why it is valid anyway.	I discuss the reasons against my claim, but neglect some or don't explain why the claim still stands.	I say that there are reasons against the claim, but I don't discuss them.	I don't acknowledge or discuss the reasons against the claim.
Organization	My writing has a compelling opening, an informative middle, and a satisfying conclusion.	My writing has a beginning, a middle, and an end.	My organization is rough but workable. I may sometimes get off topic.	My writing is aimless and disorganized.
Voice and tone	It sounds like I care about my argument. I tell how I think and feel about it.	My tone is OK, but my paper could have been written by anyone. I need to tell how I think and feel.	My writing is bland or pretentious. There is either no hint of a real person in it, or it sounds like I'm faking it.	My writing is too formal or too informal. It sounds like I don't like the topic of the essay.
Word choice	The words that I use are striking but natural, varied, and vivid.	I make some fine and some routine word choices.	The words that I use are often dull or uninspired or sound like I'm trying too hard to impress.	I use the same words over and over. Some words may be confusing.
Sentence fluency	My sentences are clear, complete, and of varying lengths.	I have well-constructed sentences. My essay marches along but doesn't dance.	My sentences are often awkward, run-ons, or fragments.	Many run-on sentences and sentence fragments make my essay hard to read.
Conventions	I use correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling.	I have a few errors to fix, but I generally use correct conventions.	I have enough errors in my essay to distract a reader.	Numerous errors make my paper hard to read.

Note: The strength of this type of rubric is that it moves the teacher away from **score** assessment and into **skill** assessment.

PEER EDITING

Peer editing is an evaluation technique used to train a student to become a reliable respondent to other students' work. It provides a realistic context in which to learn to identify errors in text.

Most students find it easier to detect errors in the work of others rather than in their own papers. Once the student editor becomes skilled at detecting errors in others' work, he or she will find it easier to do so in his or her own writing.

Peer editors are NOT expected to be "English Teacher for a Day." They are legitimate members of the paper's audience but, better yet, they also have struggled with the same assignment.

Peer editors are expected to provide an honest, detailed response to the paper they read. The editor may not know the name of a particular error or may not be able to propose a remedy for the error. If something is troublesome, just circle that portion, or note, "Something wrong here."

The peer editor should not worry about grammar and spelling. Instead, peer editors should indicate what they like, ask questions where they want more details, seek clarification if they are confused, and respond to content wherever they have ideas to add.

Peer editors should not concern themselves with the eventually grading of the writing assignment. Editors edit. By helping other writers, they are improving their own writing skills and assisting the other writers.

The writer, of course, is the owner of the paper and can decide which, if any, of the peer editors' suggestions to use.

Questions to Consider When Evaluating a Paper

1. What is the author's topic? Restate it in your own words.
2. Does any single sentence in the essay state or suggest the above topic? If so, list it.
3. Is the topic as limited in scope as it needs to be? If not, help the author revise it.
4. Has the author provided adequate detail to support his or her topic? Summarize the support the author provides.
5. Consider the kinds of patterns a writer might use to arrange an essay. What kind of pattern(s) does the author use in this writing sample? Is this the best type of pattern to use with the material the author provides in this essay? Why or why not?
6. Does the idea from one paragraph flow logically to the next?
7. What seems to be the purpose of this writing?
8. Does the writer succeed in this purpose? What does the author do to succeed? What more should the author do to achieve his or her purpose?
9. Who is the intended audience? Describe this audience in terms of age, education, values, and interests.

10. Describe the author as he or she is projected in this piece of writing (considering matters such as age, education, values, interests, and trustworthiness).

ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHERS

Teacher-Made Scoring Guides and Rubrics

Scoring guides or rubrics can be very helpful to teachers who want to give frequent writing assignments and specific, guided feedback to their students. In many cases, this commentary can be supplied to students in the form of rubrics, which allow teachers the flexibility of designing specific criteria for each assignment and the convenience of a range of comments that are focused and meaningful.

- **Rubrics can save teachers both time and aggravation,** as students supplied with a scoring-guide evaluation have an immediate and specific answer to the question, "Why didn't I get a perfect score?"
- **Rubrics allow teachers to standardize their responses to student papers,** scoring from the same criteria on each essay and making the grading process far less subjective and much more reliable. Scoring guides help teachers to clarify their expectations for their students, their students' parents, and for themselves. If students want to know how to improve their writing, a rubric can help them know exactly how and what to work on.

Rubrics and scoring guides can be as simple or as complex as the teacher wishes them to be. Some important considerations when designing rubrics include the following:

- **While designing the rubric, consult the assignment sheet,** project guidelines, or prompt that was given to the students when they first were assigned the task that is now being scored. Assess what was assigned.
- **Choose broad categories of assessment** such as organization, ideas, content, word choice, sentence structure and variety, mechanics, introductions and conclusions, transitions, voice, and style; then **specifically describe the various degrees of competence** a student may display in each area. Some teachers may choose to assign a certain number of points or a letter grade to each level; others may prefer simply to indicate the student's performance level by highlighting the characteristics that best describe the student's paper or project.
- Read through a stack of student papers and **list characteristics that stand out at each end of the spectrum of quality.** Use some of these characteristics to design the rubric for that assignment.
- Consider **making up the rubric as you create the assignment, and consider giving students the rubric before they write so that they will know what the target is.**
- Rubrics can be helpful at all grade levels. Often, the students themselves can suggest meaningful criteria for the evaluation of their essays.

The following pages contain some teacher-made rubrics and scoring guides. Some are generic; the user can plug in a few specifics about a certain type of assignment and be ready to assess student essays immediately. Others are keyed to a particular prompt. The examples represent ways in which teachers might assess a large volume of student writing in a short amount of time while still giving specific and meaningful commentary to the student about what was done well and what was done less well in a piece of student writing.

The following scoring guide is derived from the criteria used for the reading of the Advanced Placement English Examinations and adapted for classroom use. Teachers may wish to use this scoring guide as a basis for writing their own rubrics.

Teacher-Designed AP English-Type Rubrics

Rubrics used for assessing the free responses on AP English Exams are always prefaced with reminders to the readers. These directions include such things as telling readers that scores should reflect their judgment of the essay as a whole and reminding them to reward the student writers for what they do well. They must remember that students had only 40 minutes to read and write. Thus, the essays should be thought of as comparable to essays produced in final exams, not judged by standards appropriate for out-of-class writing assignments. They also remind readers that even essays deserving an 8 or 9 will not be without flaws.

The following is a four-step breakdown of how teachers can construct nine-point rubrics or scoring guides similar to those used by the ETS and the College Board to assess AP English free responses. Teachers can adapt this guideline in order to create a number of rubrics for assessing a variety of writing assignments.

Step One: The teacher should consider exactly the prompt and the directions within the prompt. This should be the focus of the rubric.

First, the teacher has to decide what qualifications are necessary for the essay to receive an upper one-half score. These responses must demonstrate that the student understands both the prompt and the text. Likewise, lower one-half responses show the student writer does not understand the prompt or the text, or possibly misunderstands both.

Step Two: The teacher must now develop descriptors for each number of the rubric. The following are simply suggestions that might be included at each level of assessment.

9 Not perfect, but eloquent and keenly perceptive
8 Keenly perceptive and well-written
7 Very good insight and skillfully written
6 Several good insights and adequately written

5 Ambiguous evidence of comprehension of the text or of the task

4 Shows inadequate writing and/or serious deficits or misinterpretations
3 Major problems with understanding, inadequate writing
2 Unacceptably brief, serious misunderstanding, poorly written
1 Especially inexact, brief, vacuous, unsuccessfully written
0 No more than a reference to the task
— Blank response, or completely off topic

Step Three: This step is up to individual teacher discretion. A score may be raised one point for fluency and expression. A score may be lowered one point when language/writing problems seriously interfere with communication. Rubrics that are used by AP English free-response readers remind the readers that, if an essay is fraught with too many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics it cannot be scored higher than a 2.

Step 4: Finally, this AP English free-response rubric format can be converted to fit the teacher's (or school's) own grading system. The important thing is that the teacher use this rubric consistently so that students will learn what is expected of their writing.

A graphic organizer of the same rubric follows.

Scoring Impromptu Essays

Guiding principle: Reward students for what they do well. Do not run a subtraction process to penalize each error, slip, or omission.

FIRST DECISION	SECOND DECISION	Develop Descriptors (such as)	Optional FOURTH DECISION
Upper-half papers show the writer understands BOTH A. The prompt and B. The text.	9	Not perfect, but eloquent and keenly perceptive	Create a conversion to fit your grading system and use it consistently
	8	Keenly perceptive	
	7	Very good insight	
	6	Several good insights	
	5	Ambiguous evidence of comprehension of the text or of the task	
	4	Shows serious deficits or misinterpretations	
Lower-half papers show the writer does not understand: A. The prompt or B. The text or C. Probably BOTH.	3	Major thinking problems, gross inaccuracies	
	2	Unacceptably brief, serious misunderstanding, poorly written	
	1	Especially inexact, brief, vacuous, and/or mechanically unsound	
	0	No more than a reference to the task	
	—	Blank response, or completely off topic	

THIRD DECISION

Score may be raised one point for fluency and expression.

Score may be lowered one point when language problems seriously interfere with communication.

The rubric which follows seeks only to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the student's writing, not to assign a numerical score or grade to the piece of writing. This type of evaluation can be a powerful way to improve student writing.

Diagnostic Writing Rubric

Writer's Choice	Thinking	Organization	Content	Sentence Structure	Language	Mechanics
Writer's choice of voice, audience, form, and purpose	Development of ideas	Clarity and logic details	Supporting sentences	Variety and quality	Effective variety, figurative language, dialogue	Spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing
EXEMPLARY						
Skillfully uses variety of voices	Synthesizes complex ideas	Clearly and artfully ordered	Rich and substantive	Variety enhances style and effect	Rich, effective vocabulary	Very few or no errors
Sophisticated sense of audience	Sophisticated evaluation of ideas	Organization enhances meaning	Stimulates new responses	Sophisticated patterns	Sophisticated figurative language	Use of mechanics furthers meaning
Sees complexities and implications	Generates original insights	Sophisticated integration of sources	No errors in structure or usage	Artful use of dialogue/quotations		
Sophisticated choice of form	Keen insight		Sophisticated use of title	Elegant sentences		Breaks rules artfully
COMMENDABLE						
Powerful and consistent voice	Synthesizes ideas	Clearly focused	Interesting and meaningful	Appropriate variety	Effective, furthers meaning	Few errors
Clear sense of audience	Careful evaluation of data	Skillful transitions	Effective/"telling" details	Some use of sophisticated structures	Generally uses rich language	Capitalization and punctuation correct
Ambitious purpose achieved	Evidence of original thinking	Skillful development of ideas	Effective integration of sources	Few errors in structure or usage	Effective figurative language	
Effective choice of form	Displays insight	Effective intro. and conclusion	Effective title	Effective use of syntax	Effective use of dialogue/quotations	Effective paragraphs
EFFECTIVE						
Effective voice	Attempts synthesis	Generally focused	Many details	Some sentence variety	Acceptable vocabulary	Errors don't interfere with meaning
Sense of audience	Evidence of evaluation	Consistent point of view	Details support focus	Attempts sophisticated patterns	Attempts sophisticated language	Spelling generally correct
Purpose stated and achieved	Evidence of analysis	Adequate introduction and conclusion	Information is correct	Errors do not interfere with meaning	Generally correct usage	Simple punctuation
Appropriate use of form	Some insight		Adequate integration of sources		Some figurative language	
			Adequate title			
APPROACHES EFFECTIVE						
Inappropriate or stilted voice	Lacks original ideas	Focus limited/ too broad	Insufficient detail	Little sentence variety	Simple vocabulary	Frequent errors distract
Some sense of audience	Recognizes important data	Awkwardly organized	Some details don't support focus	Relies on a few simple patterns	Some errors in usage	Errors in spelling, punctuation, or capitalization
Some awareness of purpose	Attempts analysis	Needs additional transitions	Information is incorrect	Errors interfere with meaning	Too wordy	
Awkward use of form	Correct analysis	Awkward introduction or conclusion	Attempts integration of sources	Repetitive structure awkward syntax		
	Little insight					

Modification of Advanced Placement Examination Questions to Meet Classroom Objectives

Teachers familiar with AP English Examinations realize that the types of questions presented in the examinations are often useful for instruction, writing assignments, and tests in AP classes. AP Vertical Team for English members may wish to peruse examinations from previous years to determine AP performance standards and to construct their own classroom activities and examinations.

Teachers can use AP Examination questions to meet their classroom objectives in several ways. First, teachers should familiarize themselves with examination questions used in previous years to become aware of what college-level students are required to do. In addition, they should determine how examination questions might be adapted for their own English classes. Through the teachers' modification of AP Examination questions, students will be encouraged to analyze literature and to write compositions that are appropriate for their various levels of achievement.

Open-ended questions readily lend themselves to modification because teachers can revise both the topic and the literature to levels suitable for their students' abilities. The two questions that ask students to analyze literature may require more extensive modifications. Teachers can choose to adapt only a small part of the original question to make the topic appropriate for their students. They can also substitute more suitable passages from literature while maintaining the themes used in the original examination questions. Teachers may wish to replace both the literature and examination questions with new selections. Finally, teachers can select terminology (e.g., diction, syntax, point of view, etc.) found on AP English Examinations and use that terminology when constructing new written response topics.

MODIFICATION OF FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Modification of Close Reading Question

Two AP Examination questions have been modified so that portions of the original question are still present. Although this type of modification is carried out most easily with the "open-ended" topics, the two questions from former AP Exams deal with a passage in which close reading is required.

The first question is from AP English Language and Composition Examination Question 2 (1996).

Read carefully the following autobiographical narrative by Gary Soto. Then, in a well-written essay, **analyze some of the ways in which Soto recreates the experience of his guilty 6-year-old self.** You might consider such devices as contrast, repetition, pacing, diction, and imagery.

I knew enough about hell to stop me from stealing. I was holy in almost every bone. Some days I recognized the shadows of angels flopping on the backyard grass, and other days I heard faraway messages in the plumbing that howled underneath the house when I crawled there looking for something to do.

But boredom made me sin. Once, at the German market, I stood before a rack of pies, my sweet tooth gleaming and the juice of guilt wetting my underarms. I gazed at the nine kinds of pie, pecan and apple being my favorites, although cherry looked good, and my dear, fat-faced chocolate was always a good bet. I nearly wept trying to decide which to steal and, forgetting the flowery dust priests give off, the shadow of angels and the proximity of God howling in the plumbing underneath the house, sneaked a pie behind my coffeelid Frisbee and walked to the door, grinning to the bald grocer whose forehead shone with a window of light.

"No one saw," I muttered to myself, the pie like a discus in my hand, and hurried across the street, where I sat on someone's lawn. The sun wavered between the branches of a yellowish sycamore. A squirrel nailed itself high on the trunk, where it forked into two large bark-scabbed limbs. Just as I was going to work my cleanest finger into the pie, a neighbor came out to the porch for his mail. He looked at me, and I got up and headed for home. I raced on skinny legs to my block, but slowed to a quick walk when I couldn't wait any longer. I held the pie to my nose and breathed in its sweetness. I licked some of the crust and closed my eyes as I took a small bite.

In my front yard, I leaned against a car fender and panicked about stealing the apple pie. I knew an apple got Eve in deep trouble with snakes because Sister Marie had shown us a film about Adam and Eve being cast into the desert, and what scared me more than falling from grace was being thirsty for the rest of my life. But even that didn't stop me from clawing a chunk from the pie tin and pushing it into the cavern of my mouth. The slop was sweet and gold-colored in the afternoon sun. I laid more pieces on my tongue, wet finger-dripping pieces, until I was finished and felt like crying because it was about the best thing I had ever

tasted. I realized right there and then, in my sixth year, in my tiny body of two hundred bones and three or four sins, that the best things in life came stolen. I wiped my sticky fingers on the grass and rolled my tongue over the corners of my mouth. A burp perfumed the air.

I felt bad not sharing with Cross-Eyed Johnny, a neighbor kid. He stood over my shoulder and asked, "Can I have some?" Crust fell from my mouth, and my teeth were bathed with the jam-like filling. Tears blurred my eyes as I remembered the grocer's forehead. I remembered the other pies on the rack, the warm air of the fan above the door and the car that honked as I crossed the street without looking.

"Get away," I had answered Cross-Eyed Johnny. He watched my fingers greedily push big chunks of pie down my throat. He swallowed and said in a whisper, "Your hands are dirty," then returned home to climb his roof and sit watching me eat the pie by myself. After a while, he jumped off and hobbled away because the fall had hurt him.

I sat on the curb. The pie tin glared at me and rolled away when the wind picked up. My face was sticky with guilt. A car honked, and the driver knew. Mrs. Hancock stood on her lawn, hands on hip, and she knew. My mom, peeling a mountain of potatoes at the Redi-Spud factory, knew. I got to my feet, stomach taut, mouth tired of chewing, and flung my Frisbee across the street, its shadow like the shadow of an angel fleeing bad deeds. I retrieved it, jogging slowly. I flung it again until I was bored and thirsty.

I returned home to drink water and help my sister glue bottle caps onto cardboard, a project for summer school. But the bottle caps bored me, and the water soon filled me up more than the pie. With the kitchen stifling with heat and lunatic flies, I decided to crawl underneath our house and lie in the cool shadows listening to the howling sound of plumbing. Was it God? Was it Father, speaking from death, or Uncle with his last shiny dime? I listened, ear pressed to a cold pipe, and heard a howl like the sea. I lay until I was cold and then crawled back to the light, rising from one knee, then another, to dust off my pants and squint in the harsh light. I looked and saw the glare of a pie tin on a hot day. I knew sin was what you took and didn't give back.

PROMPT MODIFICATIONS

Think about a time you did something wrong. Discuss your reactions, including the similarities and differences to what Gary Soto experienced.

Analyze some of the ways in which Soto recreates the experience of his guilty 6-year-old self. Consider devices such as repetition and imagery in your response.

Write about a time you did something wrong and felt guilt as a result.

The following piece, "The Company Man," is by the columnist Ellen Goodman. Read the passage and then write an essay analyzing the rhetorical techniques Goodman uses to convey her attitude toward Phil.

He worked himself to death, finally and precisely, at 3:00 a.m. Sunday morning.

The obituary didn't say that, of course. It said that he died of a coronary thrombosis—I think that was it—but everyone among his friends and acquaintances knew it instantly. He was a perfect Type A, a workaholic, a classic, they said to each other and shook their heads—and thought for five or ten minutes about the way they lived.

This man who worked himself to death finally and precisely at 3:00 a.m. Sunday morning—on his day off—was fifty-one years old and a vice-president. He was, however, one of six vice-presidents, and one of three who might conceivably—if the president died or retired soon enough—have moved to the top spot. Phil knew that.

He worked six days a week, five of them until eight or nine at night, during a time when his own company had begun the four-day week for everyone but the executives. He worked like the Important People. He had no outside "extracurricular interests," unless, of course, you think about a monthly golf game that way. To Phil, it was work. He always ate egg salad sandwiches at his desk. He was, of course, overweight, by 20 or 25 pounds. He thought it was okay, though, because he didn't smoke.

On Saturdays, Phil wore a sports jacket to the office instead of a suit, because it was the weekend.

He had a lot of people working for him, maybe sixty, and most of them liked him most of the time. Three of them will be seriously considered for his job. The obituary didn't mention that.

But it did list his "survivors" quite accurately. He is survived by his wife, Helen, forty-eight years old, a

good woman of no particular marketable skills, who worked in an office before marrying and mothering. She had, according to her daughter, given up trying to compete with his work years ago, when the children were small. A company friend said, "I know how much you will miss him." And she answered, "I already have."

"Missing him all these years," she must have given up part of herself which had cared too much for the man. She would be "well taken care of."

His "dearly beloved" eldest of the "dearly beloved" children is a hard-working executive in a manufacturing firm down South. In the day and a half before the funeral, he went around the neighborhood researching his father, asking the neighbors what he was like. They were embarrassed.

His second child is a girl, who is twenty-four and newly married. She lives near her mother and they are close, but whenever she was alone with her father, in a car driving somewhere, they had nothing to say to each other.

The youngest is twenty, a boy, a high school graduate who has spent the last couple of years, like a lot of his friends, doing enough odd jobs to stay in grass and food. He was the one who tried to grab at his father, and tried to mean enough to him to keep the man at home. He was his father's favorite. Over the last two years, Phil stayed up nights worrying about the boy.

The boy once said, "My father and I only board here."

At the funeral, the sixty-year-old company president told the forty-eight-year-old widow that the fifty-one-year-old deceased had meant much to the company and would be missed and would be hard to replace. The widow didn't look him in the eye. She was afraid he would read her bitterness and, after all, she would need him to straighten out the finances—the stock options and all that.

Phil was overweight and nervous and worked too hard. If he wasn't at the office, he was worried about it. Phil was a Type A, a heart-attack natural. You could have picked him out in a minute from a lineup. So when he finally worked himself to death, at precisely 3:00 a.m. Sunday morning, no one was really surprised.

By 5:00 p.m. the afternoon of the funeral, the company president had begun, discreetly of course, with care and taste, to make inquiries about his replacement. One of three men. He asked around: "Who's been working the hardest?"

PROMPT MODIFICATIONS

Read the passage and write an essay showing how diction and point of view convey Ms. Goodman's attitude toward "The Company Man."

After reading the passage with your teacher, write an essay giving the reasons that contributed to the early death of Phil, "The Company Man."

After reading lines 1–28 from "The Company Man," create a humorous diary entry using the dead man's point of view. You are writing from "beyond the grave" and are explaining what you have learned about working too hard at your job. Remember to be witty and creative.

MODIFICATION OF OPEN-ENDED TOPIC

The following is from the AP English Literature and Composition Examination Question 3 (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.

The Age of Innocence
The Awakening
The Birthday Party
Bless Me, Ultima
Ceremony
The Color Purple
Daisy Miller
The Dead
Delta Wedding
Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant
The Glass Menagerie
The Great Gatsby
Hamlet
Invisible Man
Jane Eyre
Julius Caesar
The Joy Luck Club
The Member of the Wedding
Mrs. Dalloway
Much Ado About Nothing
Our Town
Pride and Prejudice
Romeo and Juliet
The Shipping News

The Sound and the Fury
Sula
Things Fall Apart
Wuthering Heights

PROMPT MODIFICATIONS FOR PRE-AP

Choose a novel, play, or short story in which a particular episode or scene helps you understand a major or minor character. In an essay discuss this understanding.

Think of a scene from a story you have studied in class that reveals the truth behind a character's struggles or problems in life. Explain the situation and how that situation lead to the truth being revealed.

MODIFICATION OF BOTH TOPIC AND LITERATURE SELECTION

AP English Literature and Composition Examination Question 2 (1989) has been modified in two ways. First, the literature used in the examination has been retained and the original topic has been modified. Second, new literature has been selected and the topic has been modified as well. Note that the literature chosen corresponds thematically.

Read the following poem 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. In a well-organized essay, discuss the events leading to the speaker's epiphany.

The Great Scarf of Birds

Playing golf on Cape Ann in October,
I saw something to remember.

Ripe apples were caught like red fish in the nets
of their branches. The maples
were colored like apples,
part orange and red, part green.
The elms, already transparent trees,
seemed swaying vases full of sky. The sky
was dramatic with great straggling V's
of geese streaming south, mare's-tails above them.
Their trumpeting made us look up and around.
The course sloped into salt marshes,
and this seemed to cause the abundance of birds.

As if out of the Bible
or science fiction,
a cloud appeared, a cloud of dots
like iron filings which a magnet
underneath the paper undulates.

It dartingly darkened in spots,
paled, pulsed, compressed, distended, yet
held an identity firm: a flock
of starlings, as much one thing as a rock.
One will moved above the trees
the liquid and hesitant drift.

Come nearer, it became less marvellous,
more legible, and merely huge.
"I never saw so many birds!" my friend exclaimed.
We returned our eyes to the game.
Later, as Lot's wife must have done,
in a pause of walking, not thinking
of calling down a consequence,
I lazily looked around.

The rise of the fairway above us was tinted,
so evenly tinted I might not have noticed
but that at the rim of the delicate shadow
the starlings were thicker and outlined the flock
as an inkstain in drying pronounces its edges.
The gradual rise of green was vastly covered;
I had thought nothing in nature could be so broad but grass.
And as
I watched, one bird,
prompted by accident or will to lead,
ceased resting; and, lifting in a casual billow,
the flock ascended as a lady's scarf,
transparent, of gray, might be twitched
by one corner, drawn upward and then,
decided against, negligently tossed toward a chair:
the southward cloud withdrew into the air.

Long had it been since my heart
had been lifted as it was by the lifting of that great scarf.

PROMPT MODIFICATIONS FOR PRE-AP

Read the following poem carefully. Then, using quotations from the poem to support your views, describe the poet's feelings for the migrating wild geese.

Wild Geese

Omen of sterner days:
  You leave us all too soon,
Arrowing the breast of night,
  Dark wings against the moon.

Clear on the frosty night
  I hear your homing cry,
A lonely, last salute,
  A trumpet in the sky.

O fortunate fugitives,
  To journey towards the sun
When winter winds approach
  And summer's smile is done!

From brown paludal* haunts
  Here in the northern brake
You seek the lushy marge
  Of some far, southland lake.

Pursued by sullen snows,
  In squadrons strong and free
You etch upon the clouds
  Symbols of victory.

*marshy

Dumbrille, Dorothy. From *Poems for Boys and Girls, Book 3.* eds. G. Morton and C. B. Routley. Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Co., 1956.

Read the following poem carefully. Think about the changes that occur in autumn and write a composition in which you describe the changes that come about in the fall.

Something Told the Wild Geese

Something told the wild geese
  It was time to go.
Though the fields lay golden
  Something whispered—"Snow."
Leaves were green and stirring,
  Berries, lustre-glossed,
But beneath warm feathers
  Something cautioned—"Frost."
All the sagging orchards
  Steamed with amber spice,
But each wild breast stiffened
  At remembered ice.
Something told the wild geese

It was time to fly—
Summer sun was on their wings,
Winter in their cry.

Rachel Field. "Something Told the Wild Geese," from the Rachel Field Papers. Radcliffe Archives, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University..

MODIFICATION OF MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

The AP English Examinations contain a multiple-choice component; however, it is difficult to modify these questions so that they are suitable for students at Pre-AP levels. To help students become familiar with the multiple-choice section of the examination, teachers may want to construct test items of a similar style based on literature the students are reading at their particular levels. Test questions constructed with three incorrect responses, along with the one correct response, give students a better chance of success than do five response choices. Also, teachers probably will not want to adjust the scores for guessing and will give the students credit for the total number of questions answered correctly rather than deduct a quarter of a point for each wrong answer. (Note that the multiple-choice sections of the AP Literature and Language Examinations consist of four distractors and one correct response and that one-quarter of a point is deducted for an incorrect answer.)

A passage and test items from the AP English Language and Composition Examination (1987) follow:

Instructions to students: Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

The vacant ice looked tired, though it shouldn't have. They told him it had been put down only ten minutes ago following a basketball game, and ten minutes after the hockey match it would be taken up again to make room for something else. But it looked not expectant but resigned, like the mirror simulating ice in the Xmas store window, not before the miniature fir trees and reindeer and cozy lamplit cottage were arranged upon it, but after they had been dismantled and cleared away.

Then it was filled with motion, speed. To the innocent, who had never seen it before, it seemed discorded and inconsequent, bizarre and paradoxical like the frantic darting of the weightless bugs which run on the surface of stagnant pools. Then it would break, coalesce through a kind of kaleidoscopic whirl like a child's toy, into a pattern, a design almost beautiful, as if an inspired choreographer had drilled a willing and patient and hardworking troupe of dancers—a pattern, design which was trying to tell him something, say something to him urgent and important and true in that second before, already bulging with the motion and the speed, it began to disintegrate and dissolve.

> Then he learned to find the puck and follow it. Then the individual players would emerge. They would not emerge like the sweating bare-handed behemoths from the troglodyte mass of football, but instead as fluid and fast and effortless as rapier-thrusts or lightning—Richard with something of the passionate glittering fatal alien quality of snakes, Geoffrion like an agile ruthless precocious boy who maybe couldn't do anything else but then he didn't need to; and others—the veteran Laprade, still with the know-how and the grace. But he had time too now, or rather time had him, and what remained was no longer expendable that recklessly, heedlessly, successfully; not enough of it left now to buy fresh passion and fresh triumph with.
>
> Excitement: men in rapid hard close physical conflict, not just with bare hands, but armed with the knifeblades of skates and the hard fast deft sticks which could break bones when used right. He had noticed how many women were among the spectators, and for just a moment he thought that perhaps this was why—that here actual male blood could flow, not from the crude impact of a heavier fist but from the rapid and delicate stroke of weapons, which like the European rapier or the Frontier pistol, reduced mere size and brawn to its proper perspective to the passion and the will. But only for a moment because he, the innocent, didn't like that idea either. It was the excitement of speed and grace, with the puck for catalyst, to give it reason, meaning.

The following items are from the AP English Language and Composition Examination (1987). (An asterisk indicates the correct answer.)

(1) The passage describes the responses of
- (A) an enthusiastic fan
- (B) a cynical observer
- (C) an unwilling participant
- * (D) a first-time spectator
- (E) a sports broadcaster

(2) In the passage, one goal of the speaker is to
- (A) report events as objectively as possible
- (B) display knowledge of a difficult subject
- * (C) discover meaning in apparent confusion
- (D) understand the basic humanity of the participants
- (E) confirm previous prejudices

(3) In the first paragraph, the ice is described with adjectives that seem to
- (A) emphasize its texture
- (B) emphasize its aesthetic quality
- * (C) give it personality
- (D) make it seem dangerous
- (E) give it a heroic dimension

MODIFICATION FOR PRE-AP

Students in the early Pre-AP years should be able to read the passage and answer some questions from the examination with only a few modifications of vocabulary. The **boldface** words given below have been modified from original examination items.

(1) The passage describes the responses of
(A) an enthusiastic fan
(B) an **unhappy** observer
(C) an unwilling participant
* (D) a first-time spectator
(E) a sports broadcaster

(2) In the passage, one goal of the speaker is to
(A) report events as objectively as possible
(B) display knowledge of a difficult subject
* (C) discover meaning in apparent confusion
(D) understand the **nature** of the participants
(E) confirm previous prejudices

(3) In the first paragraph, the ice is described with adjectives that seem to
(A) emphasize its texture
(B) emphasize its **beauty**
* (C) give it personality
(D) make it seem dangerous
(E) give it a heroic dimension

It is possible for teachers to use a portion of an AP Examination to construct items for students at intermediate levels. In the example that follows, only the first paragraph has been taken from an English Language and Composition Examination, and a question has been constructed from the shortened passage. The original examination question has been revised so that the vocabulary level is more appropriate, and one incorrect response has been eliminated. The item then becomes workable for students at intermediate levels.

> The vacant ice looked tired, though it shouldn't have. They told him it had been put down only ten minutes ago following a basketball game, and ten minutes after the hockey match it would be taken up again to make room for something else. But it looked not expectant but resigned, like the mirror simulating ice in the Xmas store window, not before the miniature fir trees and reindeer and cozy lamplit cottage were arranged upon it, but after they had been dismantled and cleared away.

(1) In the first paragraph the speaker describes the ice with adjectives that
(A) emphasize its beauty
(B) make it appear dangerous
* (C) give it personality
(D) make it seem heroic

(2) The words "it looked not expectant but resigned, like the mirror simulating ice in the Xmas store window" contain a figure of speech called
(A) pun
* (B) simile
(C) metaphor
(D) oxymoron

(3) The mood of the passage is BEST expressed in the words
* (A) "The vacant ice looked tired, though it shouldn't have"
(B) "They told him it had been put down only ten minutes ago"
(C) "the mirror simulating ice in the Xmas store window"
(D) "miniature fir trees and reindeer and cozy lamplit cottage"

MODIFICATION FOR PRE-AP

Because the literature used in the multiple-choice section of an AP English Examination may be inappropriate for some beginning students, the teacher should choose literature that is more suitable.

On a Christmas Day we were mushing our
way over the Dawson Trail.
Talk of your cold! Through the parka's fold
it stabbed like a driven nail.
If our eyes we'd close, then the lashes froze
till sometimes we couldn't see;
It wasn't much fun, but the only one to
whimper was Sam McGee.

And that very night as we lay packed tight
in our robes beneath the snow,
And the dogs were fed, and the stars
o'erhead were dancing heel and toe,
He turned to me, and, "Cap," says
he, "I'll cash in this trip, I guess;
And if I do, I'm asking that you won't
refuse my last request."

Service, Robert. Excerpt from "The Cremation of Sam McGee." Vanguard. eds. Pooley, et al. Glenview, Ill.: Scott Foresman and Company, 1967. Used by permission of Estate of Robert Service c/o M. Wm. Krasilovsky Agent.

(1) The setting of the poem is BEST established with the words
* (A) "Christmas Day" and "Dawson Trail"
(B) "Christmas Day" and "the stars o'erhead"
(C) "Dawson Trail" and "beneath the snow"
(D) "the stars o'erhead" and "beneath the snow"

(2) Sam McGee's words, "I'll cash in this trip, I guess," mean that he
(A) plans to earn a lot of money because of their travel
(B) realizes he will soon cash his pay check at a bank
C) wants to stop traveling in the cold with the narrator
* (D) supposes he will not live because of the extreme cold

(3) The words "through the parka's fold it stabbed like a driven nail" contain an example of
(A) irony
* (B) simile
(C) metaphor
(D) alliteration

SAMPLE MULTIPLE-CHOICE ITEMS

The following excerpt from "The Outlaw" and the 10 questions that follow will be the basis for discussing correct and incorrect multiple-choice questions.

> She was beautiful but dangerous. She had thrown one man and killed him, thrown another and broken his collar bone, and my parents, as if they knew what the sight of her idle in her stall was doing to me, never let a day go by without giving lurid details, everything from splints and stitches to the undertaker, of the painful and untimely end in store for me should I ever take it into my fool young head to try to ride her.
>
> "I've got troubles enough without having you laid up with broken bones and doctor bills. She's a sly one, mind, and no good's ever come of her."
>
> "Besides, you're only turned thirteen, and a grown man, a regular cowboy at that, would think twice before tackling her. Another year and then we'll see. You'll both be that much older. In the meantime nobody expects it of you."
>
> In the meantime, though, she was captive, pining her heart away. Week after week she stamped and pawed, nosed the hay out of her manger contemptuously, flung her head and poured out wild, despairing neighs into the prairie winds and blizzards streaming past. It was mostly, of course, for my benefit. She had sized me up, evidently, as soft-hearted as well as faint-hearted, and decided there was just a chance that I might weaken and go riding. Her neighs, just as she intended they should, tormented and shamed me.
>
> She was a good horse, but a reprobate [reprobate—immoral, unprincipled character]. That was how we came to own her. At the auction sale where she was put up, her reputation as a killer spread among the crowd, and my father got her cheap. He was such a practical, level-headed man, and she was so obviously a poor investment, that I suspect it was because of me he bought her. As I stood at his side in the front row of the crowd and watched them lead her out, poised, dramatic, radiant, some of the sudden desire that overwhelmed me must have leaped from my face and melted him.

"Anyway, she's a bargain," he defended himself that evening at the supper table. "I can always sell her and at least get back what I paid. But first I want to see what a taste of good hard work will do."

He tried it. His intention was to work her on the land a month or two, just until she was tamed down to make an all-round, serviceable saddle horse, but after a painful week of half-days on the plow he let her keep her stall. She was too hard on his nerves, he said, straining ahead and pulling twice her share. She was too hard on his self-respect, actually, the slender limbs, the imperious head.

For she was a very lovely reprobate. Twenty years of struggle with the land had made him a determined, often hard man, but he couldn't bring himself to break her spirit with the plow.

Answer questions 1–10 based upon the story you have just read.

(1) The word "lurid" [paragraph 1] is similar in meaning to the word
(A) lengthy
* (B) gruesome
(C) numerous
(D) threatening

(2) The narrator thinks that the mare "flung her head and poured out wild, despairing neighs" [paragraph 4] to
* (A) tempt him to ride her
(B) show how tormented she is
(C) prove she is a reprobate
(D) show how wild she is

(3) The statement "She had sized me up, evidently, as soft-hearted as well as faint-hearted" [paragraph 4] suggests that the horse is
(A) unpredictable
(B) temperamental
* (C) clever
(D) cranky

(4) In paragraph 5, the word "reprobate" is used to describe the horse's
(A) cost
(B) training
(C) strength
* (D) personality

(5) Which of the following statements BEST CONTRADICTS the idea that the narrator's father is a "practical, level-headed man"?
(A) He intends to break the mare with the plow even though she is a thoroughbred.
* (B) He buys the mare for the child even though the mare is not suitable for riding.
(C) He warns his child to stay away from the mare because she is dangerous.
(D) He gets the mare cheaply because she has the reputation of being a reprobate.

(6) The narrator's attitude toward the mare can be described as one of
* (A) admiration
(B) disappointment
(C) confusion
(D) annoyance

(7) Which of the following statements BEST expresses the irony in the relationship between the narrator's father and the horse?
(A) When the man buys the mare, she is "so obviously a poor investment."
(B) Following the purchase of the mare, the man wants to give her "a taste of good hard work."
(C) In an effort to tame the mare, the man decides "to work her on the land a month or two."
* (D) Even though the man became determined, often hard, "he couldn't bring himself to break her spirit."

(8) The sentences that begin paragraphs 1, 5, and 8 serve to create
* (A) contrast
(B) understatement
(C) motivation
(D) suspense

(9) The final paragraph of the short story suggests that the MOST important reason for the farmer's reluctance to break the mare is that
(A) she is such a strong and willful creature
* (B) he recognizes that her pride is similar to his own
(C) he realizes that she is far too stubborn to tame
(D) she is too high-strung to be a good plow-horse

(10) The point of view used in this short story is that of
* (A) first person
(B) third person
(C) objective
(D) omniscient

Questions 1–9 were taken from the Grade 12 Diploma Examination English 33 Part B: Reading (Multiple Choice) January, 1984 [Alberta Education] and have been reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Education, Province of Alberta, Canada, 1994.

SAMPLE MULTIPLE-CHOICE ITEMS CONTAINING COMMONLY MADE ERRORS

The items listed below contain errors that examination writers commonly make. The questions have been designed so they are similar to the previous 10 sample items that have also been provided.

Ridiculous choice (kangaroo). In the context of the following sentence, the word "farmer" [response D] could not possibly be the correct answer.

(1) The word "lurid" [paragraph 1] is similar in meaning to the word
(A) lengthy
* (B) gruesome
(C) numerous
(D) farmer

Wordy stem or instructional aside. The first sentence below is giving unnecessary information about horses. The stem should be shortened.

(2) Some horses seem to be devious and cunning, and able to outsmart a person who is not alert to their ways. An example is when the narrator thinks that the mare "flung her head and poured out wild, despairing neighs" [paragraph 4] to
* (A) tempt him to ride her
(B) show how tormented she is
(C) prove she is a reprobate
(D) show how wild she is

Unnecessary repetition in choices. The four responses below contain words ("the horse is") that can be put into the stem, thus avoiding repetition.

(3) The statement "She had sized me up, evidently, as soft-hearted as well as faint-hearted" [paragraph 4] suggests that
(A) the horse is unpredictable
(B) the horse is temperamental
* (C) the horse is clever
(D) the horse is cranky

Incomplete stem. When the reader comes to the end of the stem, the task should be clear. This is not the case when the stem consists of only a single word.

(4) "Reprobate" [paragraph 5]
* (A) describes the horse's personality
(B) is not a good word to describe a horse

(C) means beautiful but dangerous
(D) is what the narrator thought of his father

Inappropriate choices. Responses C and D should be avoided whenever possible. They are often included by teachers merely because the instructor cannot create enough responses that fit the question.

(5) Which of the following statements BEST CONTRADICTS the idea that the narrator's father is a "practical, level-headed man" [paragraph 5]?
(A) He intends to break the mare with the plow even though she is a thoroughbred.
* (B) He buys the mare for the child even though the mare is not suitable for riding.
(C) All of the above
(D) None of the above

Grammatical clue to correct answer. Articles may contain clues to the correct response. Place the appropriate article in each of the following responses to eliminate the problem.

(6) The narrator's attitude toward the mare can be described as an
* (A) admiring one
(B) disappointing one
(C) confusing one
(D) annoying one

Answer clue because of length. The longest (or sometimes the shortest) answer may be the best choice. Try to make the four responses below approximately the same length.

(7) The sentences that begin paragraphs 1, 5, and 8 serve to create
* (A) an effective example of contrast
(B) understatement
(C) motivation
(D) suspense

Nonparallel response. If the first two responses contain a response and a quotation, make the last two responses parallel by including a response and a quotation.

(8) Which of the following statements BEST expresses the irony in the relationship between the narrator's father and the horse?
(A) In an effort to tame the mare, the man decides "to work her on the land a month or two."
* (B) Even though the man became determined, often hard, "he couldn't bring himself to break her spirit."
(C) A cow would have been a better buy than a horse.
(D) Race horses are often temperamental and high-strung.

Three-one split. If three of the responses begin with the same letter, the correct answer is almost certainly one of those three responses. Revise the item so that the fourth response also begins with the same letter. A second possibility is to make two of the responses begin with the same letter and the other two with another letter.

(9) The statement "She had sized me up, evidently, as soft-hearted as well as faint-hearted" [paragraph 4] suggests that the horse is
(A) unpredictable
(B) confused
* (C) clever
(D) cranky

Another type of three-one split. Word the following question so that two of the responses deal with numbers (first person, third person) and the other two deal with terms (e.g., omniscient, objective, selective omniscient, etc.).

(10) The point of view used in this short story is that of
* (A) first person
(B) second person
(C) third person
(D) objective

Choices in illogical order. The responses below should be arranged either by length (shortest to longest, longest to shortest) or in alphabetical order according to the first letter.

(11) In paragraph five, the word "reprobate" is used to describe the horse's
* (A) personality
(B) training
(C) cost
(D) strength

Numerical choices in illogical order. Arrange the responses below in ascending or descending order. Random order makes the student look for "tricks" to the question.

(12) How many people has the outlaw killed or injured?
(A) 10
(B) 0
* (C) 2
(D) 1

SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES FOR WRITING SOUND MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

Competency in the discipline or skill being tested is mandatory for writing sound questions.

- Clearly state questions in the stem.
- Have a single clear answer (key).
- Include options that are uniform and logically ordered.
- Use plausible distractors.
- Avoid repeating the same words in several options. Try to move repeated words to the stem.
- Never use both "None of the above" and "All of the above" as options.
- Use the Roman numeral format only when necessary.
- Pitch the difficulty of the item to the intended population and the purpose of the test.
- Write items clearly, concisely, and accurately.
- Randomize answer key positions.
- Avoid extraneous clues.
- Avoid options that logically overlap.
- Use the negative format only if the question seems to require it.
- Use charts, tables, graphs, diagrams, or pictures whenever helpful.
- Include units with numbers.
- Items in a set should depend on introductory information but not on each other. Test-takers should have to read the stimulus materials before answering any questions.

VERTICAL ALIGNMENT OF MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

The passage from Cormac McCarthy's *The Crossing* appeared in the 1999 English Literature and Composition Exam as a close reading. Teachers of grades 6–12 studied the passage and created multiple-choice items which are appropriate for their students. This AP Vertical Team for English activity can be used as a method of articulation to explore the different levels of the students' abilities, to demystify the Advanced Placement Program, and to supply an additional method to ensure understanding.

In the following passage from Cormac McCarthy's novel *The Crossing* (1994), the narrator describes a dramatic experience. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-organized essay, show how McCarthy's techniques convey the impact of the experience on the main character.

> By the time he reached the first talus[1] slides under the tall escarpments[2] of the Pilares the dawn was not far to come. He reined the horse in a grassy swale and stood down and dropped the reins. His trousers were stiff with blood. He cradled the wolf in his arms and

lowered her to the ground and unfolded the sheet. She was stiff and cold and her fur was bristly with the blood dried upon it. He walked the horse back to the creek and left it standing to water and scouted the banks for wood with which to make a fire. Coyotes were yapping along the hills to the south and they were calling from the dark shapes of the rimlands above him where their cries seemed to have no origin other than the night itself.

He got the fire going and lifted the wolf from the sheet and took the sheet to the creek and crouched in the dark and washed the blood out of it and brought it back and he cut forked sticks from a mountain hackberry and drove them into the ground with a rock and hung the sheet on a trestlepole where it steamed in the firelight like a burning scrim standing in a wilderness where celebrants of some sacred passion had been carried off by rival sects or perhaps had simply fled in the night at the fear of their own doing. He pulled the blanket about his shoulders and sat shivering in the cold and waiting for the dawn that he could find the place where he would bury the wolf. After a while the horse came up from the creek trailing the wet reins through the leaves and stood at the edge of the fire.

He fell asleep with his hands palm up before him like some dozing penitent. When he woke it was still dark. The fire had died to a few low flames seething over the coals. He took off his hat and fanned the fire with it and coaxed it back and fed the wood he'd gathered. He looked for the horse but could not see it.

The coyotes were still calling all along the stone ramparts of the Pilares and it was graying faintly in the east. He squatted over the wolf and touched her fur. He touched the cold and perfect teeth. The eye turned to the fire gave back no light and he closed it with his thumb and sat by her and put his hand upon her bloodied forehead and closed his own eyes that he could see her running in the mountains, running in the starlight where the grass was wet and the sun's coming as yet had not undone the rich matrix of creatures passed in the night before her. Deer and hare and dove and groundvole all richly empaneled on the air for her delight, all nations of the possible world ordained by God of which she was one among and not separate from. Where she ran the cries of the coyotes clapped shut as if a door had closed upon them and all was fear and marvel. He took up her stiff head

out of the leaves and held it or he reached to hold what cannot be held, what already ran among the mountains at once terrible and of a great beauty, like flowers that feed on flesh. What blood and bone are made of but can themselves not make on any altar nor by any wound of war. What we may well believe has power to cut and shape and hollow out the dark form of the world surely if wind can, if rain can. But which cannot be held never be held and is no flower but is swift and a huntress and the wind itself is in terror of it and the world cannot lose it.

1. A sloping mass of rock debris at the base of a cliff.
2. Steep slopes.

McCarthy, Cormac. *The Crossing.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994, pp. 126–127.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE MODIFICATIONS

Vertically aligned multiple-choice questions based on the 1999 AP Literature Free Response Exam (Question 2 *The Crossing*) follow. These items deal with ten important skills tested on AP English Examinations: diction, tone, inference, vocabulary in context, syntax, main idea/purpose, function, grammar, figures of speech, and point of view. The items are arranged in order of difficulty and reflect a progression in levels of maturity for Pre-AP students, grades six through twelve.

Modifications for Pre-AP

The first group of questions, appropriate for students in the early Pre-AP years, is based on lines 31–53 from the passage.

Diction

The word "seething" (line 33) provides an example of

* (A) diction
(B) rhythm
(C) point of view
(D) figure of speech

Tone

In lines 39–47 the tone can best be described as

(A) sentimental
(B) hateful
(C) serious
* (D) caring

Inference
The reader can infer that the boy is concerned about nature by the way he

(A) falls asleep peacefully in the great outdoors
(B) looks for his horse until he finds it
* (C) touches the wolf very carefully
(D) listens to the coyotes

Vocabulary in Context
The word "groundvole" (line 48) refers to a

(A) clean cloth
(B) dead wolf
* (C) small animal
(D) flightless bird

Syntax
The words "The eye turned to the fire gave back no light and he closed it with his thumb and sat by her and put his hand upon her bloodied forehead and closed his own eyes that he could see her running..." [lines 40–44] serve to show

* (A) the boy's contemplation of the wolf's beauty
(B) the boy's concern about the lives of all creatures
(C) how the boy has buried the wolf in a careful way
(D) how the boy has been upset by the death of the wolf

Main Idea/Purpose
The purpose of the boy's envisioning the wolf running in the mountains (lines 40–53) is to

(A) keep him from falling asleep
* (B) reveal the beauty of the wolf
(C) illustrate the boy's mental state
(D) cheer him up because he is depressed

Function
The function of the lines "graying faintly in the east" (lines 38–39) is to show that the

(A) sun is setting
* (B) sun is rising
(C) moon is setting
(D) moon is rising

Grammar
The words "He looked for the horse" (lines 35–36) is an example of a/an

* (A) independent clause
(B) dependent clause
(C) independent phrase
(D) dependent phrase

Figures of Speech
The words "with his hands palm up before him like some dozing penitent" (lines 31–32) is an example of

* (A) simile
(B) metaphor
(C) alliteration
(D) personification

Point of View
The point of view of the passage is

(A) first person
(B) second person
* (C) third person
(D) fourth person

These next questions, which are a bit more difficult, are based on lines 1–30 from the passage.

Diction
The word "yapping" (line 11) provides an

* (A) effective use of diction
(B) accurate point of view
(C) incomplete figure of speech
(D) ineffective use of personification

Tone
In paragraph one the tone can best be described as

(A) dreamy and fanciful
* (B) sensitive and caring
(C) hateful and disgusting
(D) serious and objective

Inference
The reader can infer that the boy cares about nature by the way he

(A) ties his horse up to drink
(B) cuts down wood for the fire
* (C) takes care of the wolf
(D) waits peacefully for dawn

Vocabulary in Context
The meaning of the word "scrim" (line 21) is a

* (A) durable cloth
(B) tool the boy uses
(C) smoldering torch
(D) burning tree branch

Syntax
The author's purpose in using a compound-complex sentence (lines 15–24) is to

(A) show the steps the boy takes to assist in the healing of the wolf
(B) outline the steps the boy goes through to protect himself from danger
* (C) show the steps the boy takes to bury the dead wolf
(D) outline the steps the boy goes through to prepare his resting place

Main Idea/Purpose
The boy builds the fire mainly to

* (A) keep warm
(B) cook his dinner
(D) cremate the wolf's body
(D) ward off feelings of danger

Function
The function of the long sentence in lines 15–24 is to reveal the boy's

(A) goals
(B) wishes
(C) emotions
* (D) activities

Grammar
The words "where it steamed in the firelight like a burning scrim" (lines 20–21) provide an example of a

(A) nominative clause
* (B) dependent clause
(C) relative clause
(D) main clause

Figures of Speech
The words "like a burning scrim" (line 21) provide an example of

* (A) simile
(B) metaphor
(C) onomatopoeia
(D) personification

Point of View
The point of view found in the first paragraph is

(A) first person
(B) objective
* (C) third person
(D) omniscient

The next group of questions, which are somewhat more challenging, are based on lines 1–30 in the passage.

Diction
The author's choice of words in the first paragraph can best be described as

(A) plain
* (B) eloquent
(C) colloquial
(D) ponderous

Tone
The tone of lines 20–24 can be identified as

(A) mocking
(B) malicious
(C) mischievous
* (D) melancholic

Inference
It may be inferred from the first paragraph that in the near future the boy will

(A) desert the wolf and leave it for dead
(B) return home safely to care for the wolf
(C) cook the wolf and eat it out of necessity
* (D) protect the wolf's body from natural forces

Vocabulary in Context
The meaning of the word "origin" (line 13) is

(A) birth
* (B) cause
(C) existence
(D) parentage

Syntax
In paragraph one, the author uses long, elaborate sentences for the purpose of

(A) providing a nostalgic tone
(B) producing a serious effect
(C) using emotion as a primary emphasis
* (D) giving a sense of the boy's struggles

Main Idea/Purpose
The author's main purpose in the first paragraph is to

(A) persuade and inform
* (B) entertain and describe
(C) inform and entertain
(D) narrate and persuade

Function
The words "above him where their cries seemed to have no origin other than the night itself" (lines 13–14) serve to

(A) convey the death of a friend
(B) give a sense of extreme coldness
* (C) provide a feeling of extreme isolation
(D) portray the loneliness of wild animals

Grammar
The word "it" (line 17) refers to the

(A) fire
(B) wolf
(C) wood
* (D) sheet

Figures of Speech
The words "it streamed in the firelight like a burning scrim standing in a wilderness" (lines 20–22) contain examples of

(A) simile and metaphor
(B) consonance and metaphor
* (C) simile and alliteration
(D) alliteration and consonance

Point of View
The point of view of the first paragraph of the passage is

* (A) third person limited omniscient
(B) first person with the narrator as a major character
(C) third person omniscient
(D) first person with the narrator as a minor character

This group of questions, even more challenging, is based on the entire passage.

Diction
In a connotative sense, the adjective "graying" (line 38) refers to

(A) dark storm clouds
* (B) the break of day
(C) the Pilares' color
(D) a cloudy sunset
(E) time of day

Tone
With the words "The eye turned . . . in the night before her" (lines 40–47), the speaker's attitude shifts from

* (A) despondent to nostalgic
(B) angry to exhilarated
(C) indifferent to committed
(D) depressed to cheerful
(E) fearful to light-spirited

Inference
The words "where she ran the cries of the coyotes clapped shut as if a door had closed upon them and all was fear and marvel" (lines 52–54) imply that

(A) when the wolf walked by, the coyotes gave obeisance
(B) when the wolf walked by, the coyotes surrounded her
* (C) the presence of the wolf intimidated the coyotes
(D) the coyotes were frightened away by the wolf
(E) the coyotes were rendered mute by the wolf

Vocabulary in Context
The word "penitent" (line 32) is best interpreted to mean

(A) a thief who goes uncaught
(B) an unscrupulous undertaker
(C) an unrepentant sinner
* (D) a person who repents of sin
(E) a minister or priest

Syntax
The type of subordinate clause used in lines 55–56 is

* (A) noun
(B) adverb
(C) adjective
(D) complex
(E) compound

Main Idea/Purpose
The primary purpose of the passage is to

(A) depict the tendencies of coyotes in the Pilares
(B) portray the omniscient power of God over worldly beings
(C) depict the gruesome and poignant death of a wolf
* (D) describe the unifying element of nature in all living creatures
(E) outline the relationship between man and wild animals

Function
The words "the sun's coming as yet had not undone the rich matrix of creatures passed in the night before her" (lines 45-47) serve to

(A) show that the woods have a diverse population of animals
(B) warn of the imminent rising of the sun
* (C) intertwine the woods and the creatures that reside there
(D) give religious overtones to the description
(E) describe the events associated with the passing of the night

Grammar
The primary effect of the final two sentences of the passage (lines 57–64) is to

(A) emphasize the solemnity and finality of death
(B) explain the rain's influence on shapes in nature
(C) explain the wolf's hierarchy in the animal kingdom
(D) illustrate that the wolf is an efficient hunter that does not often lose
* (E) demonstrate the transcendental idea of the wolf's place in creation

Figures of Speech
In the words "where she ran the cries of the coyotes clapped shut as if a door had closed upon them" (lines 51–52), the speaker employs all of the following except

(A) simile
(B) imagery
(C) alliteration
(D) figurative diction
* (E) colloquial diction

Point of View
The narrator's perspective in the passage as a whole is that of

(A) an eyewitness
(B) a detached third party
(C) an animal rights activist
* (D) an involved party with the main character
(E) a commentator on effective survival strategies

The most difficult level of questions, which follows, is also based on the entire passage.

Diction
The shift in diction between the first two paragraphs and the final paragraph can best be described as

(A) simple to complex
(B) lyrical to dramatic
(C) narrative to mysterious
* (D) didactic to transcendental
(E) religious to philosophical

Tone
The tone of the passage as a whole shifts from

(A) hopeful to gloomy
(B) somber to whimsical
* (C) reverential to elegiac
(D) prosaic to melancholic
(E) compassionate to scornful

Inference
It may be inferred from the passage beginning with "He got the fire" (line 15) to the words "burning scrim" (line 21) that the main character

(A) lacks respect for the wolf
(B) thinks of the wolf's painful death
(C) shows remorse for the wolf's death
* (D) feels the sacredness of the wolf's death
(E) dislikes the surroundings in which he finds himself

Vocabulary in Context
The connotation of the word "celebrants" (line 22) can best be interpreted to mean that one is

(A) undertaking an act of honor
(B) performing an act of rejoicing
* (C) practicing a religious act
(D) following a solemn desire
(E) returning from a religious ceremony

Syntax
When the syntax changes from short to longer sentences, this dichotomy in sentence structure best serves to

* (A) emphasize moments of recollections as well as awareness
(B) show reverence towards the wolf's life as well as death
(C) symbolize that the wolf's death is physical as well as spiritual
(D) infer that the wolf's death is prosaic as well as elegiac
(E) depict mournfulness toward the wolf as well as nostalgia

Main Idea/Purpose
The main purpose of the passage is to

(A) describe the life of the wolf and the effect it has had on the boy
(B) show the mourning of the boy after he loses the wolf
(C) show the boy's enlightenment regarding the beauty of the afterlife
(D) convey the sentiments of the boy towards the wolf
* (E) demonstrate the boy's understanding of life, death, and nature

Function

The words "The eye turned to the fire gave back no light and he closed it" (lines 40–41) primarily serve to

(A) indicate the emptiness of life after death
* (B) signify the wolf's lost soul
(C) parallel the natural world to the supernatural
(D) reveal the wolf's loss of life
(E) intertwine the boy's spiritual imagination and the wolf's freedom

Grammar

The first paragraph of the passage is mainly characterized by

(A) gerund phrases
(B) simple predicates
(C) infinitive phrases
(D) participial phrases
* (E) compound predicates

Figures of Speech

The simile "it steamed in the firelight like a burning scrim" (lines 20–21) serves to

(A) enhance the power of the fire in the night
* (B) enrich the scene with a religious implication
(C) reveal the night as mystical and mysterious
(D) show the scene as being completely peaceful
(E) demonstrate the scene as sanctimonious

Point of View

The point of view in the passage as a whole shifts from the objective nonparticipant to the

(A) second person participant
(B) nonparticipant third person
* (C) omniscient nonparticipant
(D) omniscient participant
(E) nonparticipant stream of consciousness

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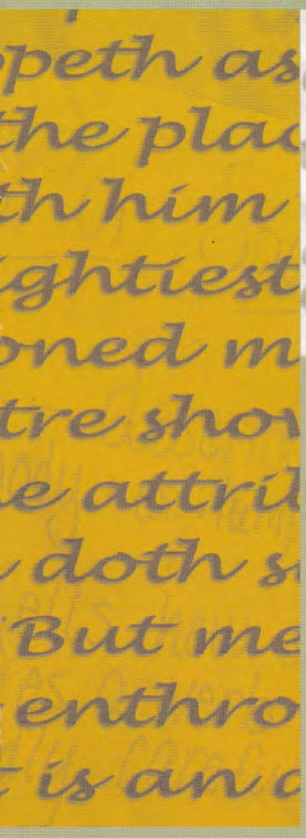

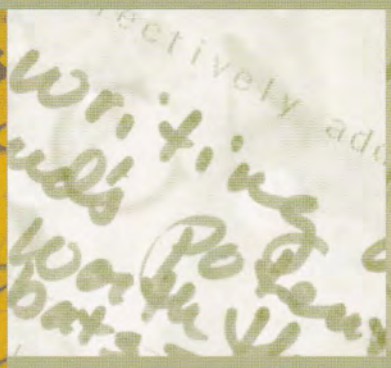

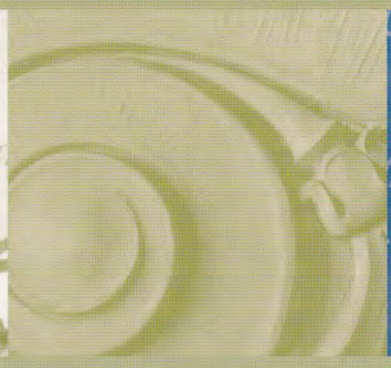

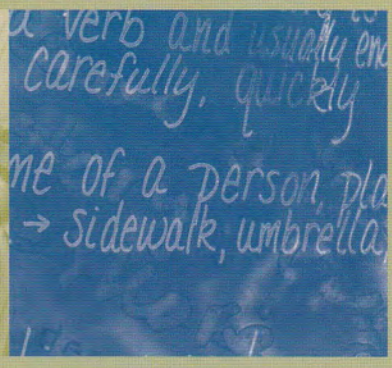

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