**AP Test Strategies**

**Multiple Choice is 40% of final score. Essays are 60% of final grade.**

1. **Writing Process (for essay #1 and #2…*#3 amendments put in italics*)**
	1. T4 the question *(Same)*
	2. Write the thesis, put in blanks if you need to (2-3 devices or aspects of same “device”) *(Same)*
	3. Read and T4 the text to find examples and literary devices *(You already read the text; if needs be, brainstorm a few key points from the book that apply to the question and jot them down, i. e. fill in the blanks of your thesis*
	4. Write the essay (see below) Thesis first, then two topic sentences, then HOW: BE SURE TO MAKE SURE THESIS ANSWERS THE QUESTION AND THE ESSAY PROVES THE THESIS**.**
2. **Structure**
	1. Intro = Fluff is 0-2 sentences ONLY, mention “text” and author, then thesis and examples. Thesis and example (s) can be one sentence like AP World History, or can be two sentences. When listing literary devices, add an adjective before the literary device, such as, "the author used JUVENILE diction..."
	2. Body Paragraph = Topic Sentence (thesis because reason #1), define literary device, mention how it is a literary device in this text-use words from the text to do this, explain HOW the device creates meaning…HOW should be at least 4 sentences
	3. Repeat body paragraphs as necessary. At least 2. Three make create a superficial HOW explanation.
	4. Conclusion = Synthesis statements that encompasses intro and does not introduce new information. If you are running out of time, and you shouldn’t, skip this part.
3. **HOW**
	1. Ask “how” (ask why three times, like a child). Example: Piggy’s death 🡺 savagery
	2. How exactly/specifically does the concrete show the abstract; DESCRIBE THE ATR PATH. Example: Piggy’s death 🡺 savagery
	3. Keep relationship between author 🡪 text🡪 reader in mind; DESCRIBE THE ATR PATH. Example: Piggy’s death 🡺 savagery
	4. Universality: what does the author do to be universal (apply text to society, average Joe, readers of the time of the text)
	5. Show how the opposite doesn’t prove your thesis [ (-) + (-) = (+)],saying how the opposite of your thesis is false.
	6. Propose an alternative and prove how the alternative would be better. DESCRIBE THE ATR PATH Example: Piggy’s death 🡺 savagery
	7. Elaborate clear “how” to connect the specific words in the text to the literary device to the author’s meaning

AP Essay Question: “How does the author use imagery to show mood towards her situation?”

Foster feedback on essay you just wrote: “Make is clear exactly how the metaphor of rain shows sadness”

* + 1. Rain typically connotes sadness (maybe cite Thomas Foster or other text of literary merit)
		2. Falling rain is falling hope (as is seen in character from the text and/or text words)
		3. Rain brings dark clouds and ominous weather which usually connotes depression (T. Foster)
		4. When people are sad, they say they are “blue” (as raindrops) or “down” (like the rain falling down)

**Formula for a “How” body paragraph**

1. Topic Sentence (thesis because reason) (about 1-2 sentences).
2. Explain how the reason is in the text. This usually means explain the author’s attitude or how the character feels about X. (about 2-3 sentences)
3. Introduce that the poetic tool/literary device makes this reason happen. Specify specific lines and/or words fromt eh text that exude this literary tool. (about 2-3 sentences)
4. Apply the text word to the tool/device; explain how the tool/device is in the lines, “…”(about 1-2 sentences)
5. Elaborate clear “how” to connect the lines to the tool to the meaning; “exactly how does the metaphor of rain show sadness?” = rain typically connotes sadness…falling rain is falling hope…rain brings dark clouds and ominous weather usually connotes depression…when people are sad, they say they are “blue” (as raindrops) or “down” (like the rain falling down) **(about 3-6 sentences)**

**Common Writing Errors**

1. Discuss the "narrator" in prose and the "speaker" in poetry rather than the "author".
2. Tense/Person agreement, keep text in same tense and person. Specifically, write in present tense for analysis and only use past tense when describing plot events that are over. They = their; singular = his/her
3. Effective use of mature grammatical conventions, diction and syntax
4. Effective, appropriate use of literary devices- “salt”
5. Possessive s rules
	1. ‘s if one person owns something (ex: the cat’s tail)
	2. s’ if more than one person owns something (the girls’ clothes)
	3. ‘s on last person in a list if they all own the same thing (ex: Sam and Thomas’s sister)
	4. ‘s on all the people in a list if they own a different thing (ex: Mr. Foster’s and Mr. Hundey’s class)

**Tone Words**

* + - Somber = dark, gloomy, dull, melancholic
		- Lugubrious = mournful, dismal, gloomy
		- Candid = free from prejudice, impartial, open, obvious
		- Flippant = Marked by disrespectful humor or casualness, not taking an issue as serious as it should be taken
		- Insolent- insulting, arrogant, rude
		- Contentious- quarrelsome, argumentative, belligerent

**Multiple Choice**

* Think about the text as a whole
* Think of the answers to the questions before you look at the answers they give you. Then compare them to the one you thought of.
* Read the text then read the question? Skim for text as a whole questions, ignore line referenced questions, then read passage, then answer questions? Pick which strategy works for you.
* Look for literary devices as you read the text
* Eliminate answers you know are wrong: two answers that are the same, words from the text that don’t answer the question, the opposite of the right answer.

**Compare and Contrast Essay**: two structure approaches strategies

* 1. How concept “X” is true in text “A” 1. How text “A” and text “B” compare through “X”
	2. How concept “X” is true in text “B” 2. How text “A” and text “B” compare through “Y”
	3. How concept “X” compares in texts “A” and “B”

**Characterization**: how the character is described or created

What the character does What the character says What the character does not do/say

How he/she interacts with other characters Round- well-developed, can logically predict his/her actions

Flat- minor character, cant predict actions because don’t know a lot about them Static-Stay, Dynamic-change

**Synonyms**

* Angry-enraged, irked, infuriated, miffed, provoked, wrathful, furious, hateful, irritated
* Happy- blissful, sublime, joyful, gay, joyous, cheerful, merry, satisfied, delighted
* Important-meaningful, significant, critical, relevant, prominent, vital, imperative
* Small- tiny, miniscule, microscopic, petty, puny, minute
* Large- great, vast, ample, cavernous, wondrous, infamous, bulky, outsized
* Sad-depressed, unhappy, melancholy, cheerless, dejected, heartbroken, poignant, miserable
* Text- book, novel, work, creation, literature, piece
* Character-protagonist, antagonist, entity, hero, being
* Author- writer, creator, maker, inventor, composer, originator, novelist
* Reader- audience, interpreter, public, mankind
* Conflict-duel, rising action, encounter, struggle, clash

**AP Test Set Up**

* Multiple Choice (40%)- 55 questions in 1 hour- test students' ability to read analytically prose and poetry from several periods
* Essays (60 %)- 3 Essays in 2 hours- require students to write critical essays on literary texts.
	+ Essay 1- Analyze a poem
	+ Essay 2- Analyze an excerpt from a novel
	+ Essay 3- Pick a book, poem or play and write about it

Things to keep in mind while writing the essays:

* Literary canon
* Use transitional sentences instead of simple transitional phrases
* Big texts are underlined🡪 small text in quotes
* Get inside the author’s head- he/she did “this” to show “this”
* Brainstorm before hand
* If you have to skip anything, skip conclusion
* DON’T freak out about time
* Use more list in analysis to clarify/exhibit authorship

🡪parallelism-making list grammatically the same

* Don’t ever repeat the same adjective or verb (or talk around it)
* Mis-spelling words is not that big of a deal if it doesn’t distract from the meaning
* List reasons in intro
* Put words from text in quotation marks
* Have to write the whole title the 1st time and then can use an abbreviated version
* Semi-colon sentences need to be simple in structure
* Read all 3 essay questions 1st- do the easiest one first and the hardest one last

AP W.M. Words that are groovy and I can use in my essays

Anecdotal-reports/observations Prognosticate-predict Corpulent-obese and bulky body

Effeminate-unmanly in appearance Jocund-cheerful Ennui-boredom

Schism-separation/division Austere-strict, somber Sanguine-happy

Ostentatious-showy/fancy Terse-concise Ambivalent- undecided

Discern- distinguish Emissary- secret agent Felicity-happiness

Incendiary- explosive Morose- sad/gloomy Ubiquitous- everywhere

Affront- insulting Choleric- easily angered Impasse-situation you cant get out of

Censure- reprimand (to try to get to stop) Indolent-lazy Droll- humorous/funny

Palpitate- throb, beat rapidly Prostrate- still in position of honor Mitigate- lessen, ease, diminish

Acquiesce- agree by giving in Gestalt- all their experiences shape how they view the world

Paradigm- perspective or view of the world Pastoral- country/rural area

Hegemony- authority over others/dominance Alacrity- happiness Discursive- changes from one subject to another

**Advice from AP teacher trainer:**

* Respond to the prompt and the prompt ONLY (AP = Address the Prompt – accurately, completely and specifically). Make sure you have a clear understanding of what the prompt asks before beginning, and don’t twist it into what you really want to write about. We readers need to know what and how you understood the text and its relationship to the prompt. This came up many, many times and is probably the most important part of your task. Too many great essays go down in flames because the student simply did not respond to the prompt.
* Don’t simply list devices; focus on a few and show how AND WHY they are used – what the device adds to the meaning of the text. Literary devices are not important in and of themselves, and truly excellent writers don’t just observe devices, they discuss their consequences. Literary devices are tools the author uses to create meaning. Ask yourself “So what?” If there’s a rhyme scheme, so what? What purpose does it serve?
* Especially when responding to poetry, explain how form relates to content. Form and content are mutually constitutive; any discussion of one should include the other.
* Literary terms should be used correctly and appropriately. If you’re not sure what a term means or refers to, don’t use it in your essay, and don’t make up devices. Finally, don’t take time to define literary terms. We’re English teachers; we already know them. Instead, focus on explaining how the literary device is being used effectively.
* Don’t forget what are often the most important parts of a text, especially a poem: THE TITLE AND THE ENDING.
* When asked to compare and contrast, remember that simply because one text uses devices X, Y and Z does not mean that the second text uses the same devices and, therefore, must be part of your analysis. You should be looking at overall meaning and how the author achieves that meaning regardless of the devices involved for each text.
* Don’t write about ANYTHING which can’t be related back to the theme and the prompt. The “what” and the “how” of the poem are both important.  No author wrote a poem to get the reader to count the similes. He/she wrote to say “what.” The “how” helps us get there. Don't get bogged down in the “how” and miss the “what.” Organize paragraphs of essay according to the “what” and use the “how” to prove each topic sentence. For example, answer the question " how does author feel about work" into one paragraph that starts "author thinks work is private not public" and another topic sentence is "author thinks work is fulfilling".
* When comparing and contrasting, don’t write that the texts are similar and different or that they are “the same and different.” This comment was made MANY times.
* Avoid the use of clichés.
* Ask first, “What does the poem mean?” THEN, ask, “What message does the author have for you?” THEN, ask, “How is that message delivered?” At this point, the devices should suggest themselves in a context in which the technicalities of the work will be seen to create its effectiveness rather than obscuring its power.
* Make sure your essay has a clear ARGUABLE thesis statement which clearly reflects what you intend to discuss. Make sure your thesis is an EXACT reflection of what the prompt is asking WITHOUT simply restating the prompt. A good formula is “The text shows X in order to show/highlight/accomplish Y.” Connect the literary device back to the author’s point.
* The conclusion should be a separate paragraph, even if you only have time for one sentence. Don’t just stop after your last argument, and avoid simply repeating your introduction in your conclusion. A good conclusion could restate the thesis, emphasize salient aspects of the essay and end with a provocative clincher.
* Evidence, evidence, evidence!
* Avoid formulaic writing, especially in the opening of your essay. Readers will read hundreds and hundreds of essays, 90% of which start the same way (think refrigerator word magnets simply rearranged a thousand different ways), and if you can create something memorable (but not wacky), it may bring more attention to your work.
* Take some time to consider point of view and audience before digging in. Many essays confuse the actual purpose of the text by not thinking about or ignoring the proposed audience or point of view.
* Don’t repeat yourself. Find new ways to say the same thing if you must reiterate a point.
* Don’t confuse the characters in a poem or text with the audience or the speaker of the piece. Don’t confuse the speaker with the author, either.
* Writers don’t “use” diction or tone, nor do they “use literary terms” in their writing. ALL sentences have diction and syntax. The questions is, therefore, what kind of diction and syntax is being used AND why. Don’t write that, “The author uses diction (or syntax or whatever) to show his or her meaning.”

**Advice from a very successful former Armada student:**

Introduction with catchy, powerful general statement, a term like "especially amongst literature, such as in (book)," and then thesis. Body one with topic sentence, fluff, main points normally padded with semicolons and dashes for flair, the alternative "if the character HADN'T done this" POV, a little more fluff and a metaphor or two, and then the bread sentence reinforcing the validity of my claim.

Rinse and repeat for however long is necessary. (Usually only one more paragraph) Profound conclusion starting with "ultimately" or "clearly" and that rewords my topic sentences and then adds a universal theme or notion at the end that doubles as an articulately-poised bow. Seriously, THIS ALWAYS WORKS. For you, for the AP graders, for my college professors; for everyone. I'm starting to come to the conclusion that a well-practiced, well-written formula such as this is REALLY what's behind the curtain of the good writer. You've just gotta trust what you know (for me my classic style of arguing a point) and then give it the biggest bang of the canon.

Multiple choice formula: number correct out of 55 times 1.2272 to get the weighted score for section 1.  Then take an each essay score and multiply it by 3.0556. Add up the essays scores and get a weighted score for section 2. Add up the weighted scores from sections one and two. Then use this scale to predict your score:

AP test score   Prediction weighted composite score range
      5                     114-150
      4                     98-113
        3                     81-97
        2                     53-80
        1                       0-52

Here is another solid guide to the test: [http://www1.nsd131.org/classpages/astout/Lists/A%20DAY/Attachments/64/Peterson's%20AP%20English.pdf](http://www1.nsd131.org/classpages/astout/Lists/A%20DAY/Attachments/64/Peterson%27s%20AP%20English.pdf)

**Don’t freak out. Getting half of the multiple choice questions right and 6/9 on the essays will earn a student an overall score of 3/5 on the test. By May, you all will have the ability to do that. ☺**

**Multiple Choice Help from AP Central and Mr. Foster**

* The multiple-choice section constitutes 45 percent of the total exam score.
* Students are often frustrated with their lack of improvement on multiple choice practices.
* On the actual AP Exam, students can get as few as half the multiple-choice questions correct. If they score at least an average of 5 on their free-response questions, they can receive a 3, a passing grade, on the exam. The highest grade in the class on multiple choice practice tests will serve as the curve.
* **T4 the snot out of the passage and the questions and the answers!**
* When students get down to two answers, both of which seem correct, choose the one that is most specific.
* The most difficult kinds of questions are the ones that ask students to find "all of the following **except**" or any questions that require students to reread a large portion of the text. They might want to omit these or leave them until later, as these questions consume an inordinate amount of time.
* A solid foundation in stylistic and rhetorical devices is a requirement for success on the test; master the “Poetry Background” handout on blackboard
* They all are worth the same points. Therefore, a sound strategy for students is to make sure they get credit for all the easy and medium answers first. A student who spends too much time on a single, hard question may not get to answer two or three easy questions in a later part of the exam. The multiple-choice section always presents a combination of easy, medium, and hard questions for each passage. These questions generally follow the chronology of the passage rather than transition from easiest to hardest or vice versa.
* Students need to chart their progress and add this data to their AP notes. Examples of columns: date, passage title, number possible, number correct, percent correct, number guessed percent guessed correctly.
* When the question refers to a word or phrase in context, it is best to go back to the beginning of the sentence or even to the previous sentence and read completely to the end of the sentence to comprehend the meaning.
* As of 2011, there is not a quarter-point penalty for guessing. This means that students should certainly answer every question, regardless of how confident they are in the answer. Answer the ones you are confident with first; fill in a best guess for the ones in which you are less than confident.
* If students find themselves running out of time, they can scan the remaining questions and look for either the shortest questions, questions that direct them to a specific line or lines, or questions that contain the answer without requiring the student to refer to the text. For example, "The sea slid silently from the shore" is an example of (B) alliteration.
* Read all questions first? And then read passage? Points of reference or waste of time?

**Classroom Strategies**

1. Students have a test passage and walk through the text with Foster. Emphasis on the “Why” of correct and incorrect answers. Depth, not breadth. Have students read the passage, T4 it, read first question with the answers covered, write a correct answer (and write an incorrect answer), share some of these answers, pick the multiple choice answer that best fits. Also, rank and categorize answers into the most to least correct.
2. Students are given a passage and categorize each question (without answering them). Different types of questions include main idea/meaning in context/“text as a whole”, refers to/functions, rhetorical strategies, speaker. Evaluate these categories and revise them as necessary. Students then write AP style questions from a given passage according to each of the categories. 2/23
3. Students work in pairs with one passage to get the correct answers. Answers are reviewed with Foster. Emphasis on the “Why” of correct and incorrect answers. Depth, not breadth.
4. Students answer questions for a particular passage alone. Then, they work with a partner to agree on a common answer for each question, so that each partnership has the same answers for all questions. Then, each partnership pairs up with another partnership, so that each quad has the same answers for all questions. Then, each quad pairs up with another quad, so that has each octet has the same answers for all questions. Then, each octet pairs up, so that each group of 16 has the same answers for all questions. Then, each pair of 16 pairs up, so that the entire class has the same answers for all questions. Then, the class checks the right answers with the answer key/teacher. 3/15
5. In pairs, or alone, students read each question and **anticipate** what the answer might be before looking at the answer choices. Student keep answer choices covered, write the correct answer, then find the answer choice that most closely mimics their written response. Then, students add a written explanation about this process for each question. This forces the student to focus on the question, not the answer. Emphasis on the “Why” of correct and incorrect answers. Depth, not breadth.
6. Individual, complete multiple choice test in class. Scores are recorded. Then, students can work with partner in class (or for homework) to review wrong answers, record the correct answer, and write an explanation of each “revised” answer to improve their multiple choice test grade.
7. Individual (or in pairs at first) **entire practice exam, including the multiple-choice and the free-response sections**, before the actual exam so that students get a sense of timing.