

## A Guide for AP Analysis Essays

### Preparation (15 Minutes)

1. Take time to really read the question – underlining the most important parts.
2. Take the time to read the prompt TWICE. Work the test – use all of the clues you see to get specifics about the author, the audience, the purpose, and the rhetorical strategies used to achieve that purpose.
  - a. Rhetorical Purpose: to convince the reader to think, do, or believe X; also personal, expository, and argumentative.
  - b. Rhetorical Modes: narration, description, cause and effect, process analysis, comparison, example, classification, argument (though all communication is argument)
  - c. Rhetorical Strategies: those are the broad categories – remember to be specific
    - i. Ethos – establish credibility of the speaker
    - ii. Pathos – address the needs of the audience
    - iii. Logos – Use one or more rhetorical modes to address purpose
  - d. Style/Rhetorical Language: Diction, Detail, Syntax, Imagery, and Tone
3. Break the reading into several chunks based on purpose or strategy.
4. Plan the essay to address each of those chunks. Discuss each chunk in a separate paragraph.

### Draft Essay (20 Minutes)

#### Introductory Paragraph

- With no time for a general introduction, your first paragraph sets the angle of your analysis
- Make sure your THESIS statement (and whole first paragraph) is a direct and complete response to the prompt. Keep in mind that a fact or summary cannot be a thesis. Do not repeat the prompt, but it is often helpful to use keywords.
- Due to time constraints, the method of development is less likely to be precisely delineated as part of your thesis statement, but the direction of the argument must still be evident to the reader.

#### Body Paragraphs

- The topic sentence of each body paragraph is a CLAIM (not a fact or summary statement) which clearly supports the argument of your thesis.
- Each claim is well SUPPORTED with plenty of concrete evidence (you do not need to waste time copying large sections of the text – use key words in quotation marks, use line or paragraph references) Remember not to leave your claim hanging – it needs to be secured with plenty of prose to the rest of the paragraph.
- INTERPRETATIONS clearly explain how the evidence supports your claim.
- Every claim must be clearly tied to the thesis. Either it is stated clearly or the inference is obvious.

#### Conclusion

- Your concluding paragraph returns to the thesis idea but uses different words and extends the idea. (In effect, it shows the reader that you have proven your thesis, but not in a boring or redundant manner).
- If at all possible; you finish with a fresh, brilliant insight that ties all of your ideas together and at the same time flows logically from your argument.

### Review Essay (5 minutes)

#### TECHNICAL COMMAND OF LANGUAGE

- TRANSITIONS: to link paragraphs you use effective transitions to enhance the overall flow, coherence, and sense of your essay.
- SENTENCE STRUCTURE: You vary your sentence structure and all sentences are punctuated properly. Beware of comma splices.
- CONVENTIONS OF FORMAL WRITING: third person only, no contractions
- GRAMMAR: Be aware of parallel structure, subject-verb agreement, and dangling or misplaced modifiers. Try not to end a sentence with a preposition.
- WORD CHOICE is clear, effective, and precise. Eliminate use of pedestrian words such as “got” or “a lot.” Ineffective words such as “very” or “really,” and non-words such as “irregardless” or “reoccurring.” Avoid “It is” constructions. Avoid passive voice. Do not over use “There is…” Avoid “This shows…”
- The words “quote” and “quotation” are forbidden.

## SHOWING NOT TELLING IN ANALYSIS ESSAYS

Telling	Showing
<i>Peppering prose with Latin and Greek laundry list of terms</i>	<i>Demonstrating understanding of the effects of those strategies</i>
“The writer appeals to pathos”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The author appeals to the emotions of the audience when he...”</li> <li>“The author makes the audience afraid of the consequences, and sways their opinion when she...”</li> </ul>
“The writer uses logos”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The writer uses a carefully-reasoned cause-and-effect argument that shows unequivocally that X leads to Y.”</li> <li>“The writer uses plenty of examples to support her point that...” or “The writer reaches a logical conclusion that...”</li> </ul>
“The writer uses ethos”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The writer establishes his authority by...”</li> <li>“The writer makes herself sympathetic to the audience by...”</li> <li>“The writer clearly has a good reputation because...”</li> </ul>

## VERBS TO USE IN AP WRITING

Weaker verbs: shows uses utilizes

STRONGER VERBS						
Asserts	Hints at	Ignites	Details	Highlights	Changes	Alludes to
Constrains	Invokes	Implies	Explores	Exemplifies	Clarifies	Alters
Conveys	Portrays	Manipulates	Repudiates	Inspires	Conjures up	Compares
Describes	Produces	Masters	Suggests	Evokes	Creates	Connotes
Elicits	Refutes	Reveals	Juxtaposes	Documents	Delineates	Construes
Enunciates	Shifts	Solidifies	Maintains	Specifies	Differentiates	Demonstrates
Evokes	Transcends	Stirs	Notes	Emphasizes	Dispels	Depicts
Explains	Twists	Tackles	Enhances	Elucidates		

## PHRASE BANK TO DESCRIBE:

THE RHETORICAL PURPOSES/FUNCTIONS	
Anticipate objections raised by the ideas presented in X	Presents a misconception that the author will correct
Provides a specific example for the preceding generalization	Provide evidence to contrast with that in X
Introduce a series of generalizations	Provide support for a thesis
Expresses a causal relationship between X and Y	Makes an appeal to authority
Present a thesis that will be challenged in paragraph B	Restates the thesis

STRUCTURE/DEVELOPMENT	
An exaggeration followed by qualifying statements	Presentation of two conflicting ideas followed by a resolution
Chronological examination of a topic	Claim followed by supporting details
Explanation of an issue leading to an examination of the same issue	Historical example followed by contemporary examples
Generalization followed by other generalizations	Movement from particular to general.

TONE			
Acerbic and cynical	Lyrical nostalgia	Harsh and strident	Uncertain
Cautious ambivalence	Feigned innocence	Informal and analytical	Disbelieving
Contemplative and conciliatory	Poignant remorse	Irate but carefully judicious	Relieved
Enthusiastic	Reverent and respectful	Serious but faintly condescending	Objective
Self-deprecating humor	Scornful and unsympathetic	Superficial and capricious	Exasperated

ATTITUDE				
Awe	Profound admiration	Feigned intimacy	Reasoned objectivity	Reasoned Objectivity
Disapproval	Qualified enthusiasm	Idolatrous devotion	Suspicion	Indifference