AP Language/8

**Test Format**

**Last Minute Thoughts**

Section I—Multiple Choice (60 minutes)

* 45 % of your grade
* Four-six passages of prose, 10-15 questions each

Section II—Essay (120 minutes plus 15 minute reading time)

* Analysis of a passage
* Synthesis Essays
* Argumentative Essay

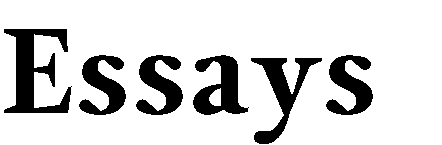
**Multiple Choice Considerations**

* Strategies
* Note the time when you begin
* Do not waste time picking which passage to begin with. Just begin!
  + Read each passage before attempting to answer any questions.
  + Treat each passage and its questions as a self-contained unit. If you have 4 passages, spend 15 minutes on each section—answering thoroughly and thoughtfully within that section.
  + At 15 minutes move on.
  + Consider skimming each passage for 30 seconds before reading them in more detail. This speed reading technique will enhance understanding.
  + Underline or circle or just plain notice and remember words that limit, negate, or universalize the question or answers. Words like all, some, never, not, always and the like are hugely important.
* Selecting Answers
* The test is designed to trick you. Do not make assumptions. In general, this test violates the “first hunch” rule. You’ve got to go through process of elimination first—then use the hunch you have to select among 2-3 options.
* If an answer is 10% wrong, it is wrong. No exceptions.
* When asked to check a specific line, always read at least the two lines preceding and following for context. Always. Seriously. Do it.
* Never leave a question that you have worked on blank.
* If you can narrow it down to four options, guess.
* Seven Minute Passage

Let’s say you just run out of time. Most students struggle to work through all four or five passages. If you just have a few minutes left for a last passage, ***don’t give up***. Do this:



* + - Skim the passage, then go straight to the questions.
    - Answer them in this order of priority:
      * Answer any rhetorical/literary term or grammar question.
      * Answer any question that asks for the meaning of a single word or phrase.
      * Go to any other question that gives you a line reference.
      * Go to any question on tone or attitude

* Note the time when you begin.

**Last Minute Thoughts**

* Strong topic sentences that are arguments.
* Underline or circle or just plain notice and remember words that limit, negate, or universalize the question or answers. Words like all, some, never, not, always and the like are hugely important.
* Write carefully in large, dark, handwriting. Large is important for a number of reasons.
* Make paragraph indentations easy to spot—a huge, common problem.
* Make sure your first two sentences are grammatically correct and contain some powerful, specific words. First impressions matter.
* You can order this section. My advice would be to consider doing the synthesis essay first, because you will have just finished reading it. Alternatively, put the one that terrifies you the most last.
* Use your time wisely: 40 minutes on a bad essay will not score any better than 25 minutes, and those 15 minutes will be useful somewhere else.
* Approach it with confidence after kicking the butt of two other essays. Scores tend to evenly distribute on the test, so it’s not that important which order you go.
* USE RHETORICAL TERMS
* USE CONCRETE DETAIL
* USE KERNELS OF QUOTATIONS (on all three essays questions)
* USE the RHETORICAL DEVICES WE’VE STUDIED IN CLASS. There’s a reason that authors use anaphora and parallelism in writing: because it works on the audience.

**Strategy for the Desperate on the Essay Questions**

* If you are unable to think of an organizational structure for an essay, this essay structure will keep you from absolutely bombing. It also works if you are still working on organization, or have issues with speed. 
  + Topic Sentence: Good clear argument
  + Claim (an argument)
  + Data (evidence/quotation/anecdote)
  + Warrant (connection back to prompt)

*Repeat Three Times:*

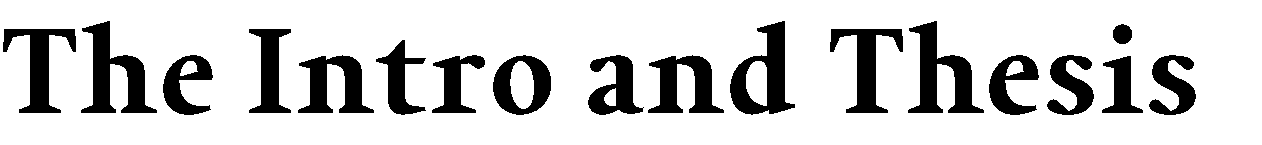
* *Data*
* *Claim*
* *Warrant*

**General Tips**

**Argument Essay Notes**

* It’s especially critical to use the opposing view to establish a counterargument in the course of the essay.
* Make sure that you clearly address the author/quote (if present) from the prompt. Make it clear that you understand/define the position that the speaker is taking.

Your introduction should not a) be a generalized statement about human nature/society, b) just fill the page with no purpose, c) be obviously false, d) offer a weak question or quotation, or e) open with a generalized truism.



Instead, it should be STAMPY:



* 1. **S**hock your audience with a statistic
  2. **T**ell a story or establish a scenario
  3. **A**nalogize with an effective comparison

**An Effective Thesis Statement:**

While Pogreba’s assertion that young Americans have limited knowledge about current events is certainly correct, returning the voting age to 21 would undermine lifelong civic participation and violate the rights of young Americans.

* 1. **M**ake a good question that does not have an easy answer
  2. **P**ersonalize with an effective anecdote

**SIMPLE THREE PART INTRO**



Anecdote



Bridge to Thesis

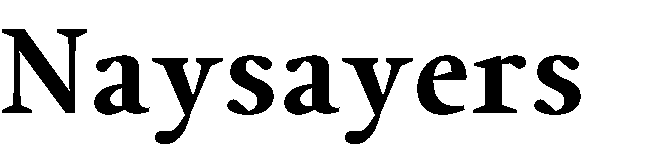


Thesis

Effective introductions lead with powerful adjectives and verbs.



Thesis statement needs to be an argument that raises a controversial point and clearly articulates the reasons you will argue in your piece. It will have a strong tension word.



Your thesis statement should be parallel.

With extra time at the end of the test, review your intro and thesis for grammar and spelling.

### Naysayers are an effective strategy to add depth to paragraphs by engaging with and responding to an alternative point of view in your piece. Remember to always raise a fair objection and answer it fully.



**STRONG TOPIC SENTENCE**

While mo

re votes are cast in countries

that employ compulsory voting

the

integrity of those votes is often

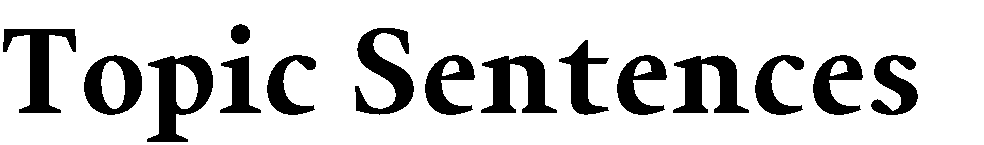
compromised

.

**GENERAL NAYSAYER:** Some may challenge the assertion that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**NAMED NAYSAYER:** Many feminists would probably object that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or Social Darwinists would certainly take issue with the argument that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Strong topic sentences are:



* Clear, sub-arguments that prove the thesis.
* Claims (arguments).

Weak topic sentences are o Facts, quotations or questions.

* Too narrow, limiting the focus of the paragraph.
* Too broad, failing to define the focus of the paragraph.



**Synthesis Essay Notes**

***Follow the Rules for the Argument Essay***

In particular, you want to focus on interesting introductions, effective topic sentences and a powerful, clear, thesis statement that establishes your argument in the first paragraph.

|  |
| --- |
| ***Tips***  *Use names whenever you can. Don’t clump sources together, but include throughout the piece.*  *Create an ISSUE DRIVEN response.*  *Mark the texts as you read:*  *Support, Opposition, Etc.* |

I’d strongly consider a qualified (how much you agree and why/why not) response. Why? Because, as the AP guide on the synthesis essay notes, “qualifying an argument is typical of a complex thinker and writer whose complex treatment of a topic typically yields and argument that is more sophisticated and accurate.”

***Annotate, Annotate, Annotate!***

Use your fifteen minutes wisely, by actively engaging with the sources. I’d suggest:

* annotating any essential arguments you’d like to address.
* highlighting any **quotable phrases/sentences** that will stand out in your piece.

***The Essay Should Not Be a Summary, but an Argument***

You should not construct a summary of the source material, but an argument developed from it. This is a critical distinction. Effective writers weave sources throughout their responses, rather than just moving methodically from one to another. Ultimately, you need to take a position and defend it, just like the argument response.

The College Board says that writers should “transcend merely citing sources to evaluating how the sources support the student’s own argument.” It’s good advice.

**Include your own knowledge and insight from outside the source material**. Impress the readers with your own background knowledge.

***Use the Best Source Material; Evaluate Sources Carefully***

The sources are not of uniform quality for inclusion in your essay. Carefully evaluate information like **publication date** (how might you use an article from 1975 on a “new media” topic, for example?), **bias**, and **target audience**. Some sources are just not very useful at all. Treat the image/visual as another text.

***AVOID THESE ERRORS***



*Distort*

*ion of*

*any evidence from the*

*source*

*material*



*Weakly source*

*d*

*,*

*vaguely located*

*parenthetical citation*



*Using fewer than four sources*



*Accidentally plagiariz*

*ing*

*from the*

*source material.*

***Consider Using One or More of the Sources as***

***Naysayers***

One excellent way to include an effective naysayer or two would be to use some of the quotes on the other side of the issue from your own.

**Example:** Some animal rights activists would object, arguing that animals don’t taste like meat \*Source A+, but…

***Respond to Sources with Which You Disagree***

* Look for logical fallacies/bias/weaknesses in the sources with which you disagree. You can use these positions as support for your claim.
* Comment on these sources. For instance, you might write, “Smith offers a superficial view when he argues…”



**Synthesis Essay Notes**

***Using Sources***

* Avoid the temptation to become too reliant on citation and quotation. They should support your argument not make it.
* It’s important to follow the requirement of the assignment. Typically, it asks for the use of at least three sources. Four-five sources would be a better goal.

***Use Both Direct and Indirect Citation Correctly***

* When you cite, you don’t need to worry about full MLA citation. You could cite a piece as (Source A) or (Pogreba). When you quote directly and the source has a name I would suggest using it.
* Do not sloppily paraphrase vaguely at the end of paragraphs, like you do in weak English papers. Use parenthetical citation specifically where your paraphrase comes from. Paraphrase small sections of text, even portions of sentences.
* When paraphrasing, make sure you use your own language.

***Samples***

* McElroy (Source B) argues that President Clinton was one of the most effective televised speakers of the twentieth century.
* Since nobody forced the United States to make this “Faustian bargain” (Source D), the American people must accept the results.
* Tolstoy (Source E) seemed to agree when he wrote that “all Russian peasants should really consider getting jobs.”

***Ellipsis***

To eliminate extra information to keep the quotation short you can use an ellipsis (. . .) If the ellipsis comes at the end of the sentence, remember to add a fourth period at the end.

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| --- |
| ***Sample of Refutation Strategy ℗***  *Criticism of the continued use of the penny is led by those who claim that the one-cent coin is useless in modern financial transactions.* ***[topic sentence]*** *Source C details these complaints: that the penny is economically unsound, that it is ignored by the public, and that the rest of the world has abandoned such low-denomination currency.* ***[summary of opposition]*** |

***Example:*** *Jones argues that “the First Amendment provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting . . . the right of the people peaceably to assemble” (Source A).*

***Brackets***

If you need to add words for clarity, place them inside brackets.

### **Example:** Jones contends that, to those who “grew up in the 1980s, it \*advertising+ virtually was the environment.”

***Refutation Paragraph Strategy***



Topic Sentence (1): [The other side said] Summary of Opposition (1-2) [include a source, summarize opposition concisely]

Refutation of Opposition (3-5) [CRUSH their argument]





**Rhetorical Analysis Essay Notes**

***Read the Prompt Closely and Carefully***

Make sure to look for the specific requirements of the prompt. Circle or underline them before you read the actual passage. If a prompt demands specific analysis of a particular device or strategy, you must do it. If it suggests a particular device, I recommend writing about that device.

***Write an Argument***

It’s critical to remember that the analysis essays are still arguments. While your primary purpose is to demonstrate understanding of the author’s rhetorical choices, your take is an argument, and your thesis and topic sentences should reflect that approach.

***Summarize-Analyze-Provide Purpose***

You do not want to spend any time summarizing the text of the passage. Each portion you reference or quote should fit in the SAP framework: the summary only exists so that you can analyze its effectiveness and connect it to your thesis. You should never focus on telling what the piece did, but rather why the author chose the language that she did.

***Use the Natural Divisions of the Piece to Create Your Structure***

Have a clear structure. Almost every piece will contain easy places to divide. Create subarguments for each section.

***Use “Nuggets” of Text” for Textual Support***

When you use specific text from the passage (and you should), resist the temptation to quote full sentences. Instead, use brief nuggets of text (properly embedded) inside your analytical sentences.

***Focus on Analysis of Details from the Passage***

|  |
| --- |
| ***Common Divisions:***  *Shift in narrative*  *Shift in tone*  *Shift in point of view*  *Shift in subject* |

Use specific details to show the reader how smart you are, or to give the illusion of your intelligence. :) General, surface essays do not score as well. Details are the proof for your claims, and you can't leave them out.

|  |
| --- |
| ***WILDS Tone:***  *Word Choice*  *Imagery*  *Language*  *Detail*  *Syntax* |

* As good as detail analysis is, don't get carried away on any one particular detail. It's easy to slip into spending a whole paragraph on one detail--but that will not prove that you understand the whole passage. A 2-3 sentence limit on any one particular detail is a good guideline.
* You can combine details to give your analysis more depth. If two examples have similar function, including both, though you only have time to analyze one, will give your analysis more power.

***Writing about Tone is Delightful***

* Remember, tone is the author's point of view towards his/her subject.
* Tone is often one of the easiest things to write about, because it will provide a tool for assessing a paragraph or section of the piece.
* When writing about tone, don't forget the WILDS Model. (Word choice, imagery, language, detail, syntax)f

***Offer an Interesting Conclusion***



Avoid the temptation to just summarize or restate your thesis. More interesting approaches include a) bookending the anecdote from the introduction, b) raising a thoughtful question, c) offering a future implication, or d) contextualizing the issue with a comparison to a current event. .