

COMPARING AP WRITING EXPECTATIONS

	For AP English Courses	For AP History/Social Studies Courses
<p>P U R P O S E</p>	<p><u>AP Language & Composition (AP English III)</u> Purpose is dependent on the specific writing task. Three possible essay types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rhetorical Analysis -- You analyze the strategies and techniques used by another writer. Your purpose is to convincingly explain those strategies and techniques, thus demonstrating that you are a perceptive and insightful reader. ● Argument -- Responding to a prompt that will pose a real or hypothetical question, you make an argument, often on an abstract, philosophical issue. Your purpose is to demonstrate your creative and critical thinking skills and to persuade your audience that your position is valid, merited, and/or desirable. ● Synthesis Argument -- You make an argument based on source material that has been provided to you. Your purpose is to demonstrate your creative and critical thinking skills, your ability to utilize and correctly cite/document source material, and to persuade your audience that your position is valid, merited, and/or desirable. <p><u>AP Literature & Composition (AP English IV)</u> Purpose is dependent up the specific writing task. Three possible essay types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Poetry Analysis -- This essay focuses primarily on figurative language elements, many specific only to the language of poetry (rhyme, rhythm, meter). Your purpose is to compose a response that offers an insightful reading of the poem and analyzes how the language resources (literary/poetic elements) convey the interpretation. ● Prose Analysis -- This essay focuses on fiction writing, as opposed to poetic language. Your task is to compose a response that again offers an insightful reading of the text, but focuses on elements specific to prose (characterization, narrative voice, plot development) as a means of conveying your interpretation. 	<p>In Social Studies classes, writing is intended as an opportunity for students to assert and defend a position on a historical question. Students should be working toward mastering the skill of historical argumentation with each writing assignment. Typically, questions will focus on central issues in relationship to cause and effect relationships, historical continuities and changes, defining features of time periods, placing events or issues in historical context, and comparing and contrasting historical events, periods, developments, or issues. The goal of historical writing it not to recall as many facts as possible, but to use a carefully curated selection of historical evidence to support the argument.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Open-ended (Novel of choice) -- Unlike the other two essays, the text is not provided. Instead, a list of titles of literary merit is provided. Your task is not to summarize the title, but to compose a response that addresses a broader thematic idea and discusses how that idea connects to the meaning of the work as a whole. 	
I n t r o	<p><u>AP Language & Composition (AP English III)</u> There is NO one “magical” formula.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Doesn’t have to be terribly long/detailed. Then again, might take more than one paragraph. Depends on the specific demands of your writing task/purpose. ● In general, start with a strong, engaging opening sentence, provide context sufficient to demonstrate the significance of your topic, provide a claim/thesis statement. <p><u>AP Literature & Composition (AP English IV)</u> There is NO one “magical” formula.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Doesn’t have to be overly complicated and depends upon the specific writing task. ● Generally, a strong, engaging sentence provides an interpretive direction for your essay without regurgitating the prompt. The prompts are guides for interpretation and analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Four or five sentences ● Sets the scene by introducing the broad topic and time period, providing historical context for the argument, then funneling down to the specific issue addressed in the essay ● Ends with a thesis statement.
T h e s i s	<p><u>AP Language & Composition (AP English III)</u> Again, no magical formula.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Needs to suit the specific demands of the prompt you are dealing with <i>and</i> your own personal writing style/voice. ● Might be a closed style thesis (described in the next column); might be an “open” style thesis (you’ll learn what this is). ● DO NOT confine yourself to the standard “five paragraph essay” thesis formula (takes a position, outlines three supporting points which will be discussed in the main body of the essay). Maybe your essay works out to be five paragraphs, maybe it doesn’t. <p><u>AP Literature & Composition (AP English IV)</u> Again...no magic formula</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The prompt will dictate the thesis, but this does not mean a closed thesis is required, or even preferable. Rather, a open 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Closed style thesis. ● A single, concise, declarative sentence. ● Takes a clear, specific position in response to the question. ● Establishes the structure of the essay by introducing two or more clear categories of analysis (Main Points) ● Recognizes a specific opposing position ● Narrow enough in focus to be accomplished in a brief essay ● Avoids generally recognized truths, grandiose statements, generalizations, and clichés

	<p>thesis can help lead to avoiding a confining, formulaic, five-paragraph response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The purpose of any AP English Literature and Composition essay is, ultimately, to gauge critical thinking ability. ● Needs to suit the prompt and use the resources of language appropriate for that task. 	
<p>B o d y P a r a g r a p h s</p>	<p>AP Language & Composition (AP English III) Guess what? No one right way to do this either. Some <i>general</i> guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop your paragraphs thoughtfully. When you use evidence (an example from a text you're analyzing, supporting data for an argumentative point) don't forget to provide insightful and specific <i>commentary</i> on that evidence--clarify why/how it is significant and meaningful. Don't forget to cite when you use source material! ● It is almost always a good idea, somewhere in the essay (no one particular place or way you <i>have</i> to do it), to acknowledge/address/refute opposing counter-arguments to your position. ● Paragraphs should display unity of thought. Everything you say within the paragraph should relate to a central concept/point/idea. Use transitional ideas, sentences, and phrases so that the ideas within your paragraph connect to and build upon one another in a logical/effective way. ● Essay should also display unity of thought. Use transitional ideas, sentences, and phrases so that the paragraphs themselves connect to and build upon one another in a logical/effective way. <p>AP Literature & Composition (AP English IV) No magic here either. Some <i>general</i> guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop your paragraphs thoughtfully. Use textual evidence to support your controlling idea and interpretation, established in your thesis and opening paragraph. ● Paragraphs should be reflective of your style and voice and should be unified in their purpose (dictated by the task). Use transitional ideas and sentences to move from one topic to the next. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Begins with a topic sentence which clearly indicates the category of analysis that will be the focus of the paragraph, and restates the position taken in the thesis statement ● Analyzes specific evidence in support of the thesis ● Explains the historical significance of the evidence ● Clearly and explicitly explains HOW the evidence supports the position taken in the thesis ● If using documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First explain how the main idea of the document ties to the topic of the essay ○ Next, analyze and explain one of the following in relation to the document: Its historical situation, intended audience, point of view, or the author's purpose (HAPP) ○ Finally, in one to three sentences, clearly explain how the document and your analysis support the assertion in the thesis ● Extend the argument by relating the discussion to events, issues, or historical processes which occurred in another location or at another time in history.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Each paragraph should build from one to the next in some logical/organizational manner- dictated by you and to some extent the task. 	
C o n c l u s i o n	<p><u>AP Language & Composition (AP English III)</u> Yep, you guessed it. No formulas. Some general tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pull your essay together in a manner that is satisfying both in terms of ideas and writing style. ● Don't sweat it too much. Neither the intro nor the conclusion are going to make or break you. <p><u>AP Literature & Composition (AP English IV)</u> Yep, you guessed it. No formulas. Some general tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pull your essay together in a manner that is satisfying both in terms of ideas and writing style. ● Don't sweat it too much. Neither the intro nor the conclusion are going to make or break you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Restates thesis ● Summarizes the significant points and evidence of the paper ● Pulls the argument together in a satisfying manner ● Simple and straightforward. (May be omitted on AP exam without penalty)
S t y l e	<p><u>AP Language & Composition (AP English III)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a tone and style appropriate to your audience (who are a bunch of smart people you don't know personally). This doesn't mean you have to be "formal"--just that it's not a good time to use slang, an overly joky or personal tone, etc. ● Within the above parameters, make it your own voice. Don't try to impress by using artificial language and sentence structure you think will make you sound "smart." ● Perfectly acceptable: First person voice, contractions, figurative language, imagery, emotionally connotative word choice (NOT the same thing as being corny or schmaltzy). ● Not so acceptable: cliches, formulaic writing, repeated patterns of "marking errors" (literally, things that "mark" you as an immature writer--things like subject/verb agreement errors, comma splices, lack of paragraphs or punctuation, lack of variety in word choice or sentence structure, etc.). ● Don't use past tense when talking about a text you are analyzing--use "literary present." <p><u>AP Literature and Composition (AP English IV)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Always Third Person ● Always Past Tense ● Avoids flowery language ● Never uses appeals to emotion or rhetorical questions ● Avoids overused transitions such as "in conclusion," or "secondly." ● At some point in the paper, the author should explain the specific counterargument identified in the thesis AND explain why it is of less historical significance than the author's main categories of analysis or general assertion. This is a good use of the conclusion paragraph.

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