



Cracking the AP Prompt

AP = "Attack the Prompt!"

Scoring

- Essays will be scored using a NEW “6-point” rubric.
- CB has narrowed down the scoring to three categories: Thesis (1 point), Evidence (4 points), and Sophistication (1 point)
- It is unclear, at this point, what CB will consider “passing”.
- CB has not provided any old samples that have been scored using this new rubric—yet.

Three Essays: Two Hours

- Poetry essays ask students to discuss how the writer achieves meaning through *poetic devices and terms*.
- In essence, prose essays ask students to discuss how the writer achieves meaning through *literary devices and terms*.
- The free response essay calls upon students to discuss *how a designated literary term or concept functions* within a novel of literary merit.



Essay Questions 1 & 2

Question 1: Poetry

Question 2: Prose

Objective: To build a defensible literary argument using and discussing evidence from the text as support.

- ✓ They will tell you who wrote it, when it was published and something about the context or big ideas of the text.
- ✓ They will ask you to identify what meaning the writer establishes in the text and how the writer develops that meaning (devices/techniques)
- ✓ You will need to figure out the HIDDEN QUESTION—this is what the prompt isn't asking but they still want you write about it

Sample Prompt # 1

In the following poem “Plants” by Olive Senior (published in 2005), the speaker portrays the relationships among plant life and the implied audience. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Senior uses poetic elements and techniques to develop those complex relationships.



Sample Prompt #2

The following excerpt is from an 1852 novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne. In this passage, two characters who have been living on the Blithedale farm—a community designed to promote an ideal of equality achieved through communal rural living—are about to part ways. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Hawthorne uses literary elements and techniques to portray the narrator's complex attitude towards Zenobia.





Sample #3

The following excerpt is from *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (published in 1751) by Tobias Smollett. In this passage, Mr. Pickle encounters Godfrey Gauntlet, the brother of his beloved Emilia. Consider how the two men confront their own uncontrolled emotions and yet attempt to abide by their social norms. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the author uses literary devices and techniques to explore the complex interplay between emotions and social propriety.

The Thesis Statement: What + Verb + Idea

- **What** = what you are exploring or analyzing in your writing
 - Name the work + author
 - Poems and short stories in “quotations”
 - Longer works underlined or *italicized*
 - Be specific
 - Complex relationship?
 - A type of narration?
 - A shift in tone?
 - A motif?
 - A characterization?

In *Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain contrasts the river and shore scenes . . .

The Thesis Statement: What + Verb + Idea

- **Verb** = drives the thesis and connects the **what** with your **idea**
 - May end up being the infinitive form of the verb (to+verb)
 - Must always be in PRESENT TENSE
 - Use a strong verb! (see accompanying handout)

In Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain contrasts the river and shore scenes **to suggest**

In contrasting river and shore scenes in *Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain **suggests**

The Thesis Statement: What + Verb + Idea

- **Idea** = the unique and individual direction of your paper
 - This is your interpretation of the work
 - Make sure to address the hidden question
 - You could quote from the passage or work
 - This may be the “meaning of the work”/theme/universal idea
 - It’s not cliched

In *Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain contrasts the river and shore scenes to suggest that to find the true expression of American democratic ideas, one must leave “civilized” society and go back to nature.

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DO
IT.



Practice

Read the following prompt and determine if the two thesis statements should earn the “thesis point.”

In the following poem by Ralph Waldo Emerson (published in 1867), the speaker reflects on the process of growing older. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Emerson uses poetic elements and techniques to convey the speaker's complex perspective on aging.

In the poem, "Terminus," by Ralph Waldo Emerson, the speaker has a complex perspective on the process of aging.



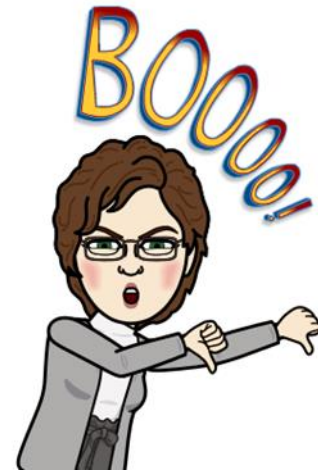
In the following poem by Ralph Waldo Emerson (published in 1867), the speaker reflects on the process of growing older. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Emerson uses poetic elements and techniques to convey the speaker's complex perspective on aging.

Throughout his poem "Terminus" Emerson conveys his perspective that aging is a time to settle down through an extended metaphor, similes, metaphors, diction, imagery and personification. Emerson explores the idea that aging is a calm time at the end of a chaotic life.



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Death comes to us all and it is that fact which Emerson addresses in his Poem "Terminus."



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While many people view aging as a progression toward the pain and loss of death, the speaker in Emerson's poem "Terminus" views aging as "well worth the cruise" as death approaches and the ship of life comes home to port.



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The poem describes aging as a lengthy, and a rather daunting process. However, aging and death should not be feared, the speaker views it as returning home.

