

# AP Language & Composition



"I can give you hyperbole, some spin, a little rhetoric, but, no, no comment."

**Mrs. Fessenden**

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**AP Exam Date:  
Wednesday, May 16**

**Course Objectives:** The purpose of this course is to help students “write effectively and confidently in their college courses across the curriculum and in their professional and personal lives” (College Board, AP English Course Description, 2010, p. 7). The course is organized according to the requirements and guidelines of the current AP English Course Description, and, therefore, students are expected to read critically, think analytically, and communicate clearly both in writing and speech.

**Grading and Classroom Policies:** In this course, we will focus on the craft of rhetoric through reading and writing. During this course, you will study argumentation through creative and non-fiction writing, and will practice forming your own arguments through regular writing. It is your responsibility to be in class, on time and prepared. Not all writing assignments will be graded in this course. It is your responsibility to complete all reading and writing assignments, regardless of their graded value. Your grade in this class will be determined by the following categories of completed work:

<b>20%</b>	<b>Response Journals</b>	To be updated daily in class and graded at the conclusion of the quarter. Assignments include reflections, assertion responses, and other daily tasks.
<b>30%</b>	<b>Writing Assignments</b>	Formal and informal writing assignments will be completed regularly. Assignments will be graded via one of the attached rubrics.
<b>30%</b>	<b>Classwork</b>	Completion of task-based assignments and reading quizzes.
<b>10%</b>	<b>Participation</b>	To be determined by participation in class based activities. Attendance is mandatory for full-credit in participation based assignments.

**L**ate Work Policy: To be successful in this course it is imperative that you keep up with course assignments. Assignments are designed to be completed in a specified order, and are spaced out intentionally. Falling behind on one assignment can lead to difficulty with future units.

For this reason, late work is unacceptable. However, as each assignment is designed to help you gain understanding and practice essential rhetorical skills, you are encouraged to complete assignments and assignments will be accepted until the final quarterly deadline.

**All late work is subject to a 20% grade deduction and must be accompanied by a make-up assignment.**

### **Quarterly Late Work Deadlines:**

**October 6, 2017**

**December 15, 2017**

**March 9, 2018**

**May 25, 2018**

**\*\*NOTE\*\***

These deadlines are firm, regardless of A/B day schedule.

## **Make Up Assignments**

**You must complete a make-up assignment as described below and turn it in with your missing work to receive credit for any late assignments.**

**ALL MAKE UP ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE HAND-WRITTEN!**

**(NO TYPED OR ELECTRONIC ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED)**

### **Rhetorical Précis**

Complete a rhetorical précis, following the précis writing guidelines provided, concerning one of the following mediums:

- Podcast
- Newspaper article (preferably op-ed)
- Ted talk
- Historical document or speech

You MAY use a piece of writing discussed in class as the basis of your précis only if you were not assigned a rhetorical analysis on that assignment.

**I may provide additional make-up work assignments and will provide details regarding those assignments in class.**

**P**lagiarism Policy: Plagiarism is using another person's thoughts and accomplishments without proper acknowledgment or documentation. It is an unconscionable offense and a serious breach of the honor code. In keeping with the policy, students will receive a zero for the plagiarized work.

**W**riting Assignment Guidelines: Planning and revision are integral components to the writing process. For this reason, ALL formal writing assignments must be turned in with evident planning. An outline, a hand-written rough draft, and a typed final copy must be turned in for full credit on all FORMAL writing assignments. In-class / timed writing assignments will be noted as such and will not be subject to this requirement.

# Course Outline:

We will be working to the following thematic outline as we progress through this course. Please note, the reading assignments listed below are subject to change. This merely serves as an outline of what you may encounter as we progress through this course.

Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
An Introduction to the Canons of Rhetoric	A Study in Justice	A History of the Essay as Art Forms.	A Final Look at Argumentation
<p>Selected essays from <i>Satire or Evasion? Black Perspectives on "Huckleberry Finn,"</i> edited by James S. Leonard, Thomas A. Tenney, and Thadious M. Davis</p> <p>"The Libido for the Ugly" by H. L. Mencken (The Art of the Personal Essay)</p> <p>"Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" by Jonathan Edwards</p> <p>"The Qualities of the Prince" by Niccolò Machiavelli (A World of Ideas) Excerpt from</p> <p>"A Definition of Justice" by Aristotle (A World of Ideas)</p> <p>"Everything's an Argument," Chapter 1 in Everything's an Argument</p> <p>"Reading and Writing Arguments," Chapter 2 in Everything's an Argument</p> <p>"Structuring Arguments," Chapter 8 in Everything's an Argument</p> <p>"Proposals," Chapter 12 in Everything's an Argument</p> <p>"Figurative Language and Argument," Chapter 14 in Everything's an Argument</p>	<p>"Second Inaugural Address" by Abraham Lincoln (2002 AP English Language and Composition Exam)</p> <p><i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave,</i> by Frederick Douglass</p> <p>"Reply to A. C. C. Thompson's Letter" by Frederick Douglass</p> <p>"I Am Here to Spread Light on American Slavery" by Frederick Douglass "</p> <p>What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" by Frederick Douglass</p> <p>"Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions" by Elizabeth Cady Stanton (A World of Ideas)</p> <p>"Civil Disobedience" by Henry David Thoreau (A World of Ideas)</p> <p>"The Battle of the Ants" by Henry David Thoreau (The Longwood Reader)</p> <p>"Letter from Birmingham Jail" by Martin Luther King, Jr. (A World of Ideas)</p> <p>"The Position of Poverty" by John Kenneth Galbraith (A World of Ideas)</p> <p>Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez by Richard Rodriguez</p>	<p>Excerpt from Slouching Towards Bethlehem by Joan Didion (The Longwood Reader)</p> <p>"Once More to the Lake" by E. B. White (The Art of the Personal Essay)</p> <p>"The Courage of Turtles" by Edward Hoagland (The Art of the Personal Essay)</p> <p>"In Bed" by Joan Didion (The Art of the Personal Essay)</p> <p>"The Knife" by Richard Selzer (The Art of the Personal Essay)</p> <p>Thirty selected pre-twentieth-century essays from The Oxford Book of Essays</p> <p>"Causal Arguments," Chapter 11 in Everything's an Argument.</p>	<p>"The Four Idols" by Francis Bacon (A World of Ideas)</p> <p>"Nature Fights Back" by Rachel Carson (A World of Ideas)</p> <p>"Nonmoral Nature" by Stephen Jay Gould (A World of Ideas) Pilgrim at Tinker Creek by Annie Dillard</p> <p>"Pernicious Effects Which Arise from the Unnatural Distinctions Established in Society" by Mary Wollstonecraft (A World of Ideas)</p> <p>"Shakespeare's Sister" by Virginia Woolf (A World of Ideas)</p> <p>"Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory" by bell hooks (A World of Ideas)</p> <p>"Visual Arguments," Chapter 15 in Everything's an Argument</p> <p>"Fallacies of Argument," Chapter 19 in Everything's an Argument</p>

**Rubrics:** The following rubrics will be used to guide grading in this course. Please pay attention to the different requirements. You will be notified which rubric will be used for each assignment you are given. All formal writing assignments will be graded with the AP rubrics in line with this course.

**Generic / Default Writing Rubric:** This rubric will be used for all unspecified writing assignments that do not fit into one of the additional categories provided here.

**A:** Answers are clearly structured and focused, have full awareness of the demands of the question, and if appropriate may challenge it. Detailed specific knowledge is used as evidence to support assertions and arguments. Ideas are developed and processed using successful techniques such as comparison and contrast, placing events in context and evaluating different interpretations. There are minimal grammatical issues and revision is evident. Formatting is thorough and consistent. Writing maintains a clear voice and style that is at times unique.

**B:** Answers indicate that the question is understood but not all implications are considered. Knowledge is largely accurate. Critical commentary may be present. Ideas are generally placed in context and understanding of historical processes, such as comparison and contrast are present. There is a clear attempt at a structured approach. There are some grammatical and organizational issues and further revision would benefit the essay, however the essay maintains the writer's unique voice and writing style.

**C:** The demands of the question are generally understood. Processed thoughts and knowledge is present but is not fully or accurately detailed. Knowledge is narrative or descriptive in nature. There may be limited argument that requires further substantiation. Critical commentary may be present. There is an attempt to place events in historical context and show an understanding of historical processes. An attempt at a structured approach, either chronological or thematic has been made. Minimal risks are taken in regards to the writing style and voice. There is some consistency in grammatical errors and a lack of revision is evident.

**D:** There is little understanding of the question. Details are present but are mainly inaccurate and/or of marginal relevance. Context or processes are barely understood and there is minimal focus on the task. The paper requires revision and grammatical errors make the writing at times difficult to understand. There is a severe lack of structure and style development that leaves the essay wanting.

**F:** Expectations not met.

*\*Please note that plus or minus grades may be awarded based on partial compliance with the above criteria*

**Assertion Journal Guidelines:** Assertion journals will be graded as follows.

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A	B	C	D
Writer accurately identifies and explains the claim and comments on significance using plenty of personal or exact examples. Very well thought out and written.	Writer adequately identifies and explains the claim and comments on significance using personal or exact examples. Mostly well thought out and written.	Writer's identification of claim is perhaps a bit unclear or unsubstantiated. Commentary is general and or nonspecific.	Claim is not identified or explained. Commentary is vague or nonexistent. Piece might be incomplete.

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**About the Advanced Placement Program<sup>®</sup> (AP<sup>®</sup>)**

The Advanced Placement Program<sup>®</sup> has enabled millions of students to take college-level courses and earn college credit, advanced placement, or both, while still in high school. AP Exams are given each year in May. Students who earn a qualifying score on an AP Exam are typically eligible to receive college credit and/or placement into advanced courses in college. Every aspect of AP course and exam development is the result of collaboration between AP teachers and college faculty. They work together to develop AP courses and exams, set scoring standards, and score the exams. College faculty review every AP teacher's course syllabus.

**AP English Program**

The AP Program offers two courses in English studies, each designed to provide high school students the opportunity to engage with a typical introductory-level college English curriculum.

The AP English Language and Composition course focuses on the development and revision of evidence-based analytic and argumentative writing and the rhetorical analysis of nonfiction texts.

The AP English Literature and Composition course focuses on reading, analyzing, and writing about imaginative literature (fiction, poetry, drama) from various periods.

There is no prescribed sequence of study, and a school may offer one or both courses.

**AP English Language and Composition Course Overview**

The AP English Language and Composition course aligns to an introductory college-level rhetoric and writing curriculum, which requires students to develop evidence-based analytic and argumentative essays that proceed through several stages or drafts. Students evaluate, synthesize, and cite research to support their arguments. Throughout the course, students develop a personal style by making appropriate grammatical choices. Additionally, students read and analyze the rhetorical elements and their effects in non-fiction texts, including graphic images as forms of text, from many disciplines and historical periods.

**PREREQUISITE**

There are no prerequisite courses for AP English Language and Composition.

Students should be able to read and comprehend college-level texts and apply the conventions of Standard Written English in their writing.

**AP English Language and Composition Course Content**

The AP English Language and Composition course is designed to help students become skilled readers and writers through engagement with the following course requirements:

- Composing in several forms (e.g., narrative, expository, analytical, and argumentative essays) about a variety of subjects
- Writing that proceeds through several stages or drafts, with revision aided by teacher and peers
- Writing informally (e.g., imitation exercises, journal keeping, collaborative writing), which helps students become aware of themselves as writers and the techniques employed by other writers
- Writing expository, analytical, and argumentative compositions based on readings representing a variety of prose styles and genres
- Reading nonfiction (e.g., essays, journalism, science writing, autobiographies, criticism) selected to give students opportunities to identify and explain an author's use of rhetorical strategies and techniques<sup>1</sup>
- Analyzing graphics and visual images both in relation to written texts and as alternative forms of text themselves
- Developing research skills and the ability to evaluate, use, and cite primary and secondary sources
- Conducting research and writing argument papers in which students present an argument of their own that includes the analysis and synthesis of ideas from an array of sources
- Citing sources using a recognized editorial style (e.g., Modern Language Association, The Chicago Manual of Style)
- Revising their work to develop
  - A wide-ranging vocabulary used appropriately and effectively;
  - A variety of sentence structures, including appropriate use of subordination and coordination;
  - Logical organization, enhanced by techniques such as repetition, transitions, and emphasis;
  - A balance of generalization and specific, illustrative detail; and
  - An effective use of rhetoric, including tone, voice, diction, and sentence structure.

1. The College Board does not mandate any particular authors or reading list, but representative authors are cited in the AP English Course Description.

## AP English Language and Composition Exam Structure

**AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION EXAM:**  
**3 HOURS 15 MINUTES**

### Assessment Overview

The AP English Language and Composition Exam employs multiple-choice questions to test students' skills in rhetorical analysis of prose passages. Students are also required to write three essays that demonstrate their skill in rhetorical analysis, argumentation, and synthesis of information from multiple sources to support the student's own argument. Although the skills tested on the exam remain essentially the same from year to year, there may be some variation in format of the free-response (essay) questions.

### Format of Assessment

**Section I:** Multiple Choice: 52–55 Questions | 1 Hour | 45% of Exam Score

- Includes excerpts from several non-fiction texts
- Each excerpt is accompanied by several multiple-choice questions

**Section II:** Free Response: 3 Prompts | 2 Hours, 15 Minutes | 55% of Exam Score

- 15 minutes for reading source materials for the synthesis prompt (in the free-response section)
- 2 hours to write essay responses to the three free-response prompts

### Prompt Types

**Synthesis:** Students read several texts about a topic and create an argument that synthesizes at least three of the sources to support their thesis.

**Rhetorical Analysis:** Students read a non-fiction text and analyze how the writer's language choices contribute to his or her purpose and intended meaning for the text.

**Argument:** Students create an evidence-based argument that responds to a given topic.

## AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION SAMPLE EXAM QUESTIONS

### Sample Multiple-Choice Question

Students are given a passage of writing and asked to respond to a set of prompts and questions based on the passage. Below is one example.

The primary rhetorical function of lines 14–22 is to

- (A) provide support for a thesis supplied in lines 1–2
- (B) provide evidence to contrast with that supplied in the first paragraph
- (C) present a thesis that will be challenged in paragraph three
- (D) introduce a series of generalizations that are supported in the last two paragraphs
- (E) anticipate objections raised by the ideas presented in lines 12–14

### Sample Free-Response Question

The following passage is from *Rights of Man*, a book written by the pamphleteer Thomas Paine in 1791. Born in England, Paine was an intellectual, a revolutionary, and a supporter of American independence from England. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay that examines the extent to which Paine's characterization of America holds true today. Use appropriate evidence to support your argument.

If there is a country in the world, where concord, according to common calculation, would be least expected, it is America. Made up, as it is, of people from different nations, accustomed to different forms and habits of government, speaking different languages, and more different in their modes of worship, it would appear that the union of such a people was impracticable; but by the simple operation of constructing government on the principles of society and the rights of man, every difficulty retires, and all the parts are brought into cordial union. There, the poor are not oppressed, the rich are not privileged.... Their taxes are few, because their government is just; and as there is nothing to render them wretched, there is nothing to engender riots and tumults.

## AP LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION – GRADING RUBRIC – SYNTHESIS ESSAY

Grade	Description	Scale 1	Scale 2	Scale 3	Scale 4
<b>9</b>	Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for essays that are scored an 8 and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their argument and synthesis of cited sources, or impressive in their control of language.	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>8 Successful</b>	<b>High Score (8-9)</b> Essays earning a score of 8 effectively take a position that defends, challenges, or qualifies the claim. They effectively support their position by effectively synthesizing and citing at least three of the sources. The writer’s argument is convincing, and the cited sources effectively support the writer’s position. The prose demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not flawless.	<b>97</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>7</b>	Essays earning a score of 7 fit the description of essays that are scored a 6 but are distinguished by more complete or more purposeful argumentation and synthesis of cited sources, or a more mature prose style.	<b>94</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>6 Satisfactory</b>	<b>Medium-High Score (6-7)</b> Essays earning a score of 6 adequately take a position that defends, challenges, or qualifies the claim. They adequately synthesize and cite at least three of the sources. The writer’s argument is generally convincing and the cited sources generally support the writer’s position, but the argument is less developed or less cogent than the arguments of essays earning higher scores. Though the language may contain lapses in diction or syntax, generally the prose is clear.	<b>91</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Medium Score (5)</b> Essays earning a score of 5 take a position that defends, challenges, or qualifies the claim. They support their position by synthesizing and citing at least three sources, but their arguments and their use of cited sources are somewhat limited, inconsistent, or uneven. The writer’s argument is generally clear, and the sources generally support the writer’s position, but the links between the sources and the argument may be strained. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the writer’s ideas adequately.	<b>88</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>4 Inadequate</b>	<b>Medium-Low Score (3-4)</b> Essays earning a score of 4 inadequately take a position that defends, challenges, or qualifies the claim. They attempt to present an argument and support their position by synthesizing and citing at least two sources but may misunderstand, misrepresent, or oversimplify either their own argument or the cited sources they include. The link between the argument and the cited sources is weak. The prose of 4 essays may suggest immature control of writing.	<b>85</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>3</b>	Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but demonstrate less understanding of the cited sources, less success in developing their own position, or less control of writing.	<b>82</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>2 Little Success</b>	<b>Low Score (1-2)</b> Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate little success in taking a position that defends, challenges, or qualifies the claim. They may merely allude to knowledge gained from reading the sources rather than citing the sources themselves. These essays may misread the sources, fail to present an argument, or substitute a simpler task by merely responding to the question tangentially or by summarizing the sources. The prose of essays scored a 2 often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as a lack of development or organization, grammatical problems, or a lack of control.	<b>79</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>1</b>	Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but are especially simplistic or weak in their control of writing or do not cite even one source.	<b>76</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>0</b>	Essays earning a score of zero (0) are on-topic responses that receive no credit, such as those that merely repeat the prompt.	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## AP LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION – GRADING RUBRIC – RHETORICAL ESSAY

Grade	Description	Scale 1	Scale 2	Scale 3	Scale 4
<b>9</b>	Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for essays that are scored an 8 and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their argument and synthesis of cited sources, or impressive in their control of language.	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>8</b> <b>Successful</b>	<p><b>High Score (8-9)</b> High-scoring essays thoroughly address all the tasks of the essay prompt in well-organized responses. The writing demonstrates stylistic sophistication and control over the elements of effective writing, although it is not necessarily faultless. Overall, high-scoring essays present thoroughly developed, intelligent ideas; sound and logical organization; strong evidence; and articulate diction.</p> <p>Rhetorical analysis essays demonstrate significant understanding of the passage, its intent, and the rhetorical strategies the author employs.</p>	<b>97</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>7</b>	Essays earning a score of 7 fit the description of essays that are scored a 6 but are distinguished by more complete or more purposeful argumentation and synthesis of cited sources, or a more mature prose style.	<b>94</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>6</b> <b>Satisfactory</b>	<p><b>Medium-High Score (6-7)</b> Medium-scoring essays complete the tasks of the essay topic well - they show some insight but usually with less precision and clarity than high-scoring essays. There may be lapses in correct diction or sophisticated language, but the essay is generally well written.</p> <p>Rhetorical analysis essays demonstrate sufficient examination of the author's point and the rhetorical strategies he uses to enhance the central idea.</p>	<b>91</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Medium Score (5)</b> Essays that earn a medium score complete the essay task, but with no special insights; the analysis lacks depth and merely states the obvious. Frequently, the ideas are predictable and the paragraph development weak. Although the writing conveys the writer's ideas, they are presented simplistically and often contain lapses in diction or syntax.</p> <p>Rhetorical analysis essays demonstrate uneven or insufficient understanding of how rhetorical strategies create an author's point. Often, the writer merely lists what he or she observes in the passage instead of analyzing effect.</p>	<b>88</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>4</b> <b>Inadequate</b>	<p><b>Medium-Low Score (3-4)</b> These essays are weaker than the 5 score because the writer overlooks or perhaps misreads important ideas in the passage. The student may summarize the passage's ideas instead of analyzing them. Although the writer's ideas are generally understandable, the control of language is often immature.</p> <p>Rhetorical analysis essays demonstrate little discussion of rhetorical strategies or incorrect identification and/or analysis of those strategies.</p>	<b>85</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>3</b>	Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but demonstrate less understanding of the cited sources, less success in developing their own position, or less control of writing.	<b>82</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>2</b> <b>Little Success</b>	<p><b>Low Score (1-2)</b> These essays demonstrate minimal understanding of the topic or the passage. Perhaps unfinished, these essays offer no analysis of the passage and little or no evidence for the student's ideas. Incorrect assertions may be made about the passage. Stylistically, these essays may show consistent grammatical problems, and sentence structure is usually simple and unimaginative.</p> <p>Rhetorical analysis essays demonstrate little ability to identify or analyze rhetorical strategies. Sometimes these essays misread the prompt and replace it with easier tasks, such as paraphrasing the passage or listing some strategies the author uses.</p>	<b>79</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>1</b>	Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but are especially simplistic or weak in their control of writing or do not cite even one source.	<b>76</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>0</b>	Essays earning a score of zero (0) are on-topic responses that receive no credit, such as those that merely repeat the prompt.	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>



**AP LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION – GRADING RUBRIC – ARGUMENT ESSAY**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Scale 1</b>	<b>Scale 2</b>	<b>Scale 3</b>	<b>Scale 4</b>
<b>9</b>	Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for essays that are scored an 8 and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their argument and synthesis of cited sources, or impressive in their control of language.	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>8</b> <b>Successful</b>	<p><b>High Score (8-9)</b> High-scoring essays thoroughly address all the tasks of the essay prompt in well-organized responses. The writing demonstrates stylistic sophistication and control over the elements of effective writing, although it is not necessarily faultless. Overall, high-scoring essays present thoroughly developed, intelligent ideas; sound and logical organization; strong evidence; and articulate diction.</p> <p>Argument essays demonstrate the ability to construct a compelling argument, observing the author's underlying assumptions, (addressing multiple authors in the synthesis essay) and discussing many sides of the issues with appropriate evidence.</p>	<b>97</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>7</b>	Essays earning a score of 7 fit the description of essays that are scored a 6 but are distinguished by more complete or more purposeful argumentation and synthesis of cited sources, or a more mature prose style.	<b>94</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>6</b> <b>Satisfactory</b>	<p><b>Medium-High Score (6-7)</b> Medium-scoring essays complete the tasks of the essay topic well - they show some insight but usually with less precision and clarity than high-scoring essays. There may be lapses in correct diction or sophisticated language, but the essay is generally well written.</p> <p>Argument essays demonstrate the ability to construct an adequate argument, understand the author's point, and discuss its implications with suitable evidence. The synthesis argument will address at least three of the sources.</p>	<b>91</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Medium Score (5)</b> Essays that earn a medium score complete the essay task, but with no special insights; the analysis lacks depth and merely states the obvious. Frequently, the ideas are predictable and the paragraph development weak. Although the writing conveys the writer's ideas, they are presented simplistically and often contain lapses in diction or syntax.</p> <p>Argument essays demonstrate the ability to present an argument, but they frequently provide limited and inadequate discussion, explanation, or evidence for the writer's ideas. The writer may not address enough of the sources in the synthesis essay. Oversimplification of the issue(s) minimizes the essay's effectiveness.</p>	<b>88</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>4</b> <b>Inadequate</b>	<p><b>Medium-Low Score (3-4)</b> These essays are weaker than the 5 score because the writer overlooks or perhaps misreads important ideas in the passage. The student may summarize the passage's ideas instead of analyzing them. Although the writer's ideas are generally understandable, the control of language is often immature.</p> <p>Argument essays demonstrate little ability to construct an argument. They may not clearly identify the author's point, may not present multiple authors' points of view in the synthesis essay, and may offer little evidence for the student's position.</p>	<b>85</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>3</b>	Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but demonstrate less understanding of the cited sources, less success in developing their own position, or less control of writing.	<b>82</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>2</b> <b>Little Success</b>	<p><b>Low Score (1-2)</b> These essays demonstrate minimal understanding of the topic or the passage. Perhaps unfinished, these essays offer no analysis of the passage and little or no evidence for the student's ideas. Incorrect assertions may be made about the passage. Stylistically, these essays may show consistent grammatical problems, and sentence structure is usually simple and unimaginative.</p> <p>Argument essays demonstrate little ability to understand the author's point (or multiple authors in the synthesis essay) and then construct an argument that analyzes it. Minimal or nonexistent evidence hurts the essay's effectiveness. Some students may substitute an easier task by presenting tangential or irrelevant ideas, evidence, or explanation.</p>	<b>79</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>1</b>	Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but are especially simplistic or weak in their control of writing or do not cite even one source.	<b>76</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>0</b>	Essays earning a score of zero (0) are on-topic responses that receive no credit, such as those that merely repeat the prompt.	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

# Rhetorical Précis Writing

A rhetorical précis analyzes both the content (the *what*) and the delivery (the *how*) of a unit of spoken or written discourse. It is a highly structured four-sentence paragraph blending summary and analysis. Each of the four sentences requires specific information; students are expected to use brief quotations (to convey a sense of the author's style and tone) and to include a terminal bibliographic reference. Practicing this sort of writing fosters precision in both reading and writing, forcing a writer to employ a variety of sentence structures and to develop a discerning eye for connotative shades of meaning.

## Take a look at the overall format

1. Name of author, [optional: a phrase describing author], genre and title of work date in parentheses (additional publishing information in parentheses or note); a rhetorically accurate verb (such as "assert," "argue," "suggest," "imply," "claim," etc.); and a THAT clause containing the major assertion (thesis statement) of the work.
2. An explanation of how the author develops and/or supports the thesis, usually in chronological order.
3. A statement of the author's apparent purpose followed by an "in order to" phrase.
4. A description of the intended audience and/or the relationship the author establishes with the audience.

## Now take a closer look:

**1. THE FIRST SENTENCE identifies** the essay's *author and title*, **provides** the article's *date* in parenthesis, **uses** some form of the verb *says* (*claims, asserts, suggests, argues*—) followed by *that*, and the *essay's thesis* (paraphrased or quoted).

**EXAMPLE:** In "The Ugly Truth about Beauty" (1998), Dave Barry argues **that** "...women generally do not think of their looks in the same way that men do" (4).

**EXAMPLE:** In "The Ugly Truth about Beauty" (1998), Dave Barry satirizes the unnecessary ways **that** women obsess about their physical appearance.

**2. THE SECOND SENTENCE conveys** the *author's support* for the thesis (how the author develops the essay); the trick is to convey a good sense of the breadth of the author's support/examples, usually in chronological order.

**EXAMPLE:** Barry illuminates this discrepancy by juxtaposing men's perceptions of their looks ("average-looking") with women's ("not good enough"), by contrasting female role models (Barbie, Cindy Crawford) with male role models (He-Man, Buzz-

Off), and by comparing men's interests (the Super Bowl, lawn care) with women's (manicures).

**3. THE THIRD SENTENCE analyzes** the *author's purpose* using an *in order to* statement:

**EXAMPLE:** He exaggerates and stereotypes these differences **in order to** prevent women from so eagerly accepting society's expectation of them; to this end, Barry claims that men who want women to "look like Cindy Crawford" are "idiots"(10), implying that women who adhere to the Crawford standard are fools as well.

**4. THE FOURTH SENTENCE describes** the essay's *target audience* and **characterizes** the author's relationship with that audience—or the essay's *tone*:

**EXAMPLE:** Barry ostensibly addresses men in this essay because he opens and closes the essay directly addressing men (as in "If you're a man...") and offering to give them advice in a mockingly conspiratorial fashion; however, by using humor to poke fun at both men and women's perceptions of themselves, Barry makes his essay palatable to women as well, hoping to convince them to stop obsessively "thinking they need to look like Barbie" (8).

### **Put it all together and it looks darn smart:**

In "The Ugly Truth about Beauty" (1998), Dave Barry argues **that** ". . . women generally do not think of their looks in the same way that men do"(4). Barry illuminates this discrepancy by juxtaposing men's perceptions of their looks ("average-looking") with women's ("not good enough"), by contrasting female role models (Barbie, Cindy Crawford) with male role models (He-Man, Buzz-Off), and by comparing men's interests (the Super Bowl, lawn care) with women's (manicures). He exaggerates and stereotypes these differences **in order to** prevent women from so eagerly accepting society's expectation of them; in fact, Barry claims that men who want women to "look like Cindy Crawford" are "idiots" (10). Barry ostensibly addresses men in this essay because he opens and closes the essay directly addressing men (as in "If you're a man...") and offering to give them advice in a mockingly conspiratorial fashion; however, by using humor to poke fun at both men and women's perceptions of themselves, Barry makes his essay palatable to both genders and hopes to convince women to stop obsessively "thinking they need to look like Barbie" (8).

Barry, Dave. "The Ugly Truth about Beauty." *Mirror on America: Short Essays and Images from Popular Culture*. 2nd ed. Eds. Joan T. Mims and Elizabeth M. Nollen. NY: Bedford, 2003. 109-12

### **Verb Bank**

Here is a list of verbs you might find helpful. It is by no means a required or exhaustive list. Remember that you must always strive to employ the most connotatively precise words you can.

*adjures advances advises asks asserts begs beseeches cajoles cheers chimes commands complains confides conveys counsels crows declares decrees decries demands describes dictates directs discloses divulges elucidates employs encourages entreats espouses exclaims exhorts explains gripes groans grouses grumbles hails hints illustrates implies implores inquires insinuates instructs intimates invokes justifies laments mandates mocks muses orders pleads ponders pontificates proclaims pronounces proposes queries rationalizes recommends recounts relates reports requests reveals sighs sings snarls sneers states submits suggests summons wails whimpers whines wields wonders*

Adapted with gratitude from Tracy Duckart's Instructional Website at Humboldt State University