

ADVANCED PLACEMENT ENGLISH LANGUAGE

TEST SUCCESS



PREPARING — NO “NIGHT-BEFORE STUDYING”; INSTEAD, INTENSIVE WORK DURING THE UNIT

- ✓ Tests assess your critical reading skills, rhetorical analysis skills, and rhetoric fundamentals knowledge.
 - ⌚ Familiarize yourself with that unit’s syllabus page.
 - ✍ For every unit, thoroughly read, annotate, and tri-ircle each Reading Selections to Analyze Pre-20th Century and 20th/21st Century text. The test will contain questions for each of these selections. Once you learn how to tri-ircle images in Unit 2, you must also tri-ircle these. You will have test questions for images in all units.
 - ✍ The test will assess your knowledge of the items listed under Reading Assignments from Which to Obtain Instruction, Writing Skills Development, the Learning Targets, and the Rhetorical Focus. You won’t have recall questions about notes; you will apply information from the notes to the unit’s selections and the new passage(s).
 - ⌚ Specifics for the “easy” questions (matching or true/false) for each test:
 - ✍ **Test 1 on Unit 1:** quality writing notes, *A Light History of the English Language*, and *Elements of Style* Foreword and Introduction.
 - ✍ **Test 2 on Unit 2:** Avoiding Fallacies Part 1 and using words precisely and correctly all (includes *Elements of Style* reading from this unit)
 - ✍ **Test 3 on Unit 3:** Avoiding Fallacies Part 2 and using words precisely and correctly (includes correct pronoun usage and pronoun—antecedent agreement and all *Elements of Style* reading from this unit)
 - ✍ **Test 4 on Unit 4:** All Precise Style from *Elements of Style* Chapter 4 and EoS Chapter 5. You will also have rhetorical analysis questions about “Chapter 5: An Approach to Style.” Note: the test will include questions applying “Footnotes and Endnotes: The Rhetoric of Documentation” to the new reading passage.
- ✓ When reading each selection under **Reading Selections to Analyze...**
 - ⌚ **The first time** you read the selection, annotate it.
 - ⌚ **That same day**, schedule at least two more readings in your planner. See discussion dates on class website. You must have read it twice by discussion. Read it a third time as the test date approaches.
 - ⌚ **During second reading**, complete an encircled rhetorical triangle (“tri-ircle”). You must have a tri-ircle to participate in class discussion.
 - ⌚ **During third reading**, apply both the new skills from that unit and previously learned rhetorical skills.
 - ✍ Apply that unit’s notes to each of the selections. Note where you see the author exemplifying the skills about which you learned.
 - ✍ Analyze the strategies the author employs to achieve his/her intention.
 - ✍ Apply the class standards (syllabus page 4) to each selection.
 - ✍ Apply the unit’s learning targets to each selection.

REVIEWING FOR A TEST —

NOTICE THIS DOESN'T STATE, "STUDYING FOR A TEST"

- ✓ Make sure you can answer these rhetorical analysis and application questions:
 - ⌚ How does the selection fulfill the requirements for the skills and information in your notes?
 - ⌚ How do the writers use the strategies and techniques on which you took notes?
 - ⌚ Where in the selections do you see examples of specifics from your notes?
- ✓ All tests will have learning-target-related, reading-selections synthesis, and theme-related questions. Practicing these skills prior to the test's timed atmosphere helps you minimize stress and errors.
 - ⌚ Explain how to do each learning target.
 - ⌚ Synthesize all short selections from the unit, relating them to the unit theme and the course theme: The power of the pen [and] the human condition.
- ✓ Review each selection under **Reading Selections to Analyze**.
 - ⌚ Quiz yourself: can you recreate each selection's tri-ircle?
 - ✍ Is your second tri-ircle even better than the first one?
 - ✍ If different, are the differences significant? Did you misunderstand something earlier, or did you forget something this time? Are both correct, just different?
 - ⌚ Compare your tri-ircle with someone else's.
 - ✍ How do they differ?
 - ✍ Decide if those differences are for objective information (such as speaker facts and context) or subjective (such as appeals to the audience and tone).
 - If objective, determine which is the correct answer.
 - If subjective, determine if one is a fuller description or a different interpretation. Either way, you now have more information from which to draw for the test!
- ✓ Check off the boxes on your syllabus.
 - ⌚ For Reading Selections to Analyze, see above. Once you feel confident about each selection, check its box.
 - ⌚ For Reading Assignments from Which to Obtain Instruction, summarize what each assignment instructed. Re-read notes/annotations. Go to page one under the first bullet where it states, "Specifics for the 'easy' questions." Review as it specifies for these readings. Once you feel confident about each reading, check its box.
 - ⌚ For Writing Skills Development, review your notes and see "Specifics for the 'easy' questions." Review as it specifies for these readings. Once you feel confident about each skill, check its box.

TAKING AN AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEST — AND SOME OF THIS INFORMATION WORKS FOR MOST COLLEGE TESTS.

- ✓ Pace yourself.
 - ⌚ Test 1: one hour = one minute per question (50 questions, so no more than 50 minutes) and ten minutes to read the passage(s). Tests 2–4: you'll have two passages, so allow 15 minutes for reading and 30 seconds for each “easy” question.
 - ⌚ Some questions won't take a whole minute. Some will take more than a minute.
 - ⌚ If one question is taking too much time, skip it and come back to it if you have time.
 - ✍ If you want to track which questions to return to, note it on the test or on your Scantron (using ink only).
 - ✍ You can write on your Scantron in ink without it affecting its scoring process. DO NOT write notes on your Scantron with pencil!
- ✓ Recognize that all questions weigh the same.
 - ⌚ So, again, don't let one question bog you down. Move on for now.
 - ⌚ Move through the test rapidly. Find the questions you can answer quickly and do those first.
- ✓ Realize that you do not need to do the test in numerical order. Own the test!
 - ⌚ The first page requires lower order thinking skills and should take the least amount of time, so do it and move on. Or save it for last when you have exhausted your brain and need less complex questions to tackle.
 - ⌚ Find the questions related to the reading selections you know thoroughly and do those next.
 - ⌚ Look for short questions with short answer options.
 - ⌚ Don't run out of time for the reading passages. These questions are the most similar to the actual AP exam, so you need practice reading something new and applying critical thinking to it.
 - ✍ In fact, you will be serving your own interests best if you do these before the long questions.
 - ✍ How you do on these will help you gauge how you will do on the AP exam.
 - ✍ **You may want to start with this section to combat test fatigue.**
 - ⌚ If completing on time worries you or if time is running out, look for the shortest questions and answer choices and prioritize these.
- ✓ And by all things good and rhetorical: Annotate the test questions and annotate as you read the new passages — not just when you tackle the questions and are examining the potential answers.
 - ⌚ Cross off answers you *know* are wrong.
 - ⌚ If you don't annotate, you will waste time re-reading sections or the entire passage.
 - ⌚ When you aren't annotating, you aren't reading critically. Thus, your chance of answering questions correctly decreases.
 - ⌚ Write; don't highlight (you can't highlight on AP exam anyway!). Write notes to yourself, circle words, underline others, square some. Put questions in your own words or write a command to yourself telling you what to do for that question.
 - ⌚ Do NOT try answering passage questions by simply looking at the questions and trying to “find” answers. These tests require critical reading and critical thinking, not just reading comprehension or recall.
- ✓ Use all the available time. Don't try to finish fast.
 - ⌚ If you still have time, check that you bubbled the correct answers.

- ✓ Pay attention to those little hints that test-makers know:
 - ⌚ The correct answer is often the longest (but since I know this, I often make distractors long, so don't bank on this as an absolute).
 - ⌚ Test makers do not pay attention to how many a's, b's, c's, etc. they have used as the correct answer, so don't try to discern any pattern, feel alarm if you haven't had any e's lately, or panic if you have several c's in a row.
 - ⌚ We love to create one ridiculous distracter.
 - ✍ Make sure quotations and paraphrases actually come from the named selection.
 - ✍ Beware of gobble-gook. These are usually just a string of words using that unit's terminology and other impressive diction but which make no sense.
 - ✍ Discard choices that use terminology you haven't learned yet.
 - ⌚ Making tests is hard. We make mistakes. So if something looks odd, ask.

- ✓ Note questions and answer choices with absolutes, words that express completeness with no exceptions. For example, rarely does something *always* or *never* occur. These words may flag a falsity, but they can also signal correctness.
 - ⌚ Prefixes that signal absolutes (understanding their meanings will help in other contexts as well!):

• an: not, without	• dis: not, opposite	• non: not	• super: above, beyond
• anti: against	• ever: always	• omni: all	• un: not, opposite of
• de: opposite	• il, im, in, ir: not	• over: over, too much	• under: under, little
	• mis: wrongly	• pre: before	• whole: completely, all
 - ⌚ Suffixes also indicate absolutes.

• able, ible: can	• est: the most	• ful: full of	• worthy: deserving of, fit for
	• free: free of/ from	• less: without	

⌚ Some absolutes include the following:

• absent	devastated	flawless	innocent	off	revocable	unequivocal
• absolute	devoid	foreign	insincere	on	right	unimportant
• accurate	different	foremost	insufficient	opaque	rudimentary	unique
• active	dire	frequent	intact	operational	ruined	universal
• adequate	dispensable	full	intelligible	opposite	ruthless	unknown
• always	effective	functional	intentional	overall	satisfactory	unlimited
• apparent	empty	fundamental	invalid	overjoyed	silent	unnecessary
• authorized	enough	gone	invulnerable	overwhelmed	sincere	unprecedented
• avoidable	entire	grave	irrefutable	paramount	single/singular	unqualified
• basic	equal	greatest	irregular	partial	staunch	unquestionable
• best	equivalent	guilty	irrevocable	perfect	straight	unrequited
• blank	essential	guiltless	known	perpetual	straightforward	(All the "un's")
• blameless	established	harmless	lacking	popular	successful	valid
• boundless	eternal	hopeful	last	possible	sufficient	valuable
• broken	everyday	hopeless	literally	powerless	suitable	valueless
• central	everything	ideal	main	precise	superfluous	vital
• certain	evident	identical	major	predominant	superior	vulnerable
• chief	exact	immediate	matchless	preeminent,	superlative	whole
• cognizant	expendable	imminent	maximal	premeditated	supreme	widespread
• collective	extensive	impossible	meaningful	present	sure	willful
• common	faithful	inaccurate	meaningless	preventable	temporary	worst
• comparable	faithless	inactive	merciless	primary	thorough	wrong
• complete	false	inadequate	minimal	primitive	topmost	
• conclusive	fatal	incomparable	minor	principal	total	
• confirmed	faulty	incomplete	missing	private	true	
• correct	figuratively	inconsistent	multiple	proximate	ultimate	
• critical	final	incorrect	mutual	public	unanimous	
• crucial	finest	indispensable	necessary	pure	unavoidable	
• defeated	finite	individual	needless	rare	unclear	
• defective	first	inevitable	never	redundant	unconditional	
• deficient	fixed	inferior	obscure	replete	undecided	
• definite	flat	infinite	obvious	requited	unequal	