



# TEST SUCCESS

## PREPARING — YOU WILL HAVE TO WORK DIFFERENTLY THAN YOU HAVE IN THE PAST. AND IT TAKES TIME.

- ✓ When you take **notes** in class or from a presentation movie, or when reading anything listed under **Reading Assignments from which to Obtain Instruction...**
  - ⊃ Soon, read your notes and...
    - ✎ Add more detail.
    - ✎ Mark information for which you have questions.
    - ✎ Highlight key words and phrases.
  - ⊃ If you have questions, remember to see Mrs. Lawson in class (if time) or after school.
  - ⊃ Periodically re-read to your notes.
  - ⊃ You must apply your notes to the selections that you read and analyze for that unit. See Reading Selections to Analyze below.
  
- ✓ When you read *The Elements of Style*...
  - ⊃ As you read, highlight key sentences, phrases, words, and examples.
  - ⊃ Write notes to the side.
  - ⊃ If you have questions about what you read, remember to see Mrs. Lawson in class or after school.
  - ⊃ Periodically re-read to your highlights and notes.
  
- ✓ In class when we first discuss the **rhetorical focus for a unit** ...
  - ⊃ List all devices on a sticky and put the sticky on that unit's theme sheet box.
  
- ✓ 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 VID. You must have read it twice by discussion.
  - ⊃ During **second reading**, complete an encircled rhetorical triangle ("tri-ircle"). You must have a tri-ircle to participate in class discussion.
    - ✎ If stuck on any part, see Mrs. Lawson the next day in class or after school – with your tri-ircle, of course.
    - ✎ And, you have just created a marvelous reference tool.
    - ✎ ... And practiced the essence of the course: rhetoric.
    - ✎ ... And used your critical thinking and critical reading skills! Marvelous, again!
  - ⊃ During **third reading**, apply both the new skills from that unit and previously learned rhetorical skills.
    - ✎ Find examples of each of the rhetorical devices and strategies for that unit. As you look for devices, move your sticky note list from selection to selection. Realize that each selection may not have all the devices. If you can't find all of them by unit's end, check with coursemates.
    - ✎ Find as many examples of each device as you can. Using more stickies, note where you find each device, its effectiveness, and possible reasons the author chose to use that device.
    - ✎ Note other devices (from previous units) as well. Rhetoric is cumulative.
    - ✎ Apply that unit's notes to each of the selections. Note where you see the author exemplifying the skills about which you learned. See next page for more about this.



## **REVIEWING FOR A TEST — NOTICE THIS DOESN'T STATE, "STUDYING FOR A TEST"**

- ✓ Since you have been reading over your **notes** and **EoS highlights**, you should now *know* the material rather than need to *study* it or (heaven forbid!) to cram it into your memory banks. So...
  - ⊃ **Apply** the information from your **notes** to the **reading selections**. (Oh, gosh, that's synthesis!)
    - ✎ 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?
    - ✎ In the selections find examples of specifics from your notes.
    - ✎ How is each selection an example of the type of writing you learned about in that unit?
    - ✎ Using your notes and the reading selections, answer the essential questions.
  
- ✓ Complete the AP Language **Reading Organizer**. These are always available at the back of the vertical file on the pick-up table. You can also create your own version. No, this isn't for a grade, but remember, most of what you do for college builds towards one major grade. You won't earn grades for your work preparing for a test.
  - ⊃ The first few test tests have some recall questions. In AP Language, as you progress away from high school learning towards college learning, the tests will only have interpretation, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation questions. Completing the Reading Organizer prepares you for these critical thinking questions.
  - ⊃ 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.
  
- ✓ 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? (That's okay, you know.)
  - ⊃ 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!
  
- ✓ Review each sticky note you created for each selection's **rhetorical devices/strategies**.
  - ⊃ Be brave! Find a selection that you haven't read. Read it, only looking for devices and strategies.
  - ⊃ Then analyze just the "arrow" level from the tri-ircle (tone, diction, syntax, voice).
  - ⊃ Finally, describe the author's style.
  - ⊃ Not only will you be checking your understanding of the devices, you will be practicing a skill you will need to perform on the test.

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

- ✓ Pace yourself.
  - ⊃ One hour = one minute per question (50 questions, so no more than 50 minutes) and ten minutes to read the passage(s).
  - ⊃ 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, write down the question number on your reading passage 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 each question is weighted equally.
  - ⊃ 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!
  - ⊃ Usually the first page requires lower order thinking skills and should take the least amount of time, so do it and move on.
  - ⊃ Find the questions related to the reading selections you know the best 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 to 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.
    - ✎ Not only will it help with time management, but you will also demonstrate those critical reading and thinking skills.
    - ✎ 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.
  
- ✓ And by all things good and rhetorical: Annotate as you read the new passages — not just when you tackle the questions and are examining the potential answers.
  - ⊃ And if you are still not a believer in the power of annotation, try it on the next test. Trust me.
  - ⊃ If you don't do well on a test, read this: Tough love alert: Has NOT annotating worked well for you? Nope, it hasn't, so admit it and annotate!
  
- ✓ 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 distracters 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 or feel alarm if you haven't had any e's lately.
  - ⊃ We love to create one really ridiculous distracter.
    - ✎ Make sure quotations and paraphrases actually come from the named selection.
    - ✎ Beware of gobbly-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 really hard. We make mistakes. So if something looks odd, ask.