

AP English Exam Breakdowns

	Lang & Comp (11th)	Lit & Comp (12th)
Part I:	All prose (non-fiction)	Prose (fiction) and poetry
<u>Multiple Choice</u>		
~ 55 questions	17 th → 21 st century	14 th → 21 st century
4-5 passages	*All passages	(Renaissance)
60 minutes	must be originally	
	written in English.	
<u>45% of total score</u>		

Part II:	15 minute reading time	(none)
<u>Free Response</u>	1. Synthesis Essay	1. Poem Analysis
	2. Argument Essay	2. Prose Analysis (fiction)
2 hours	3. Analysis Essay	3. Open-Ended Essay
<i>writing time</i>	(Non-fiction prose)	(Theme)

55% of total score
3 questions are of equal weight;
on a 9 point scale.

NOTE: All periods will be represented on the entirety of the exam. I.e., what time periods that are lacking in Part I will be made up in Part II, and vice versa.

AP Grade	Qualification
5	Extremely well-qualified
4	Well-qualified
3	Qualified
2	Possibly qualified
1	No recommendation

Test Taking TIPS!!

Multiple Choice:

1. **TRY TO FINISH!!** Do NOT spend too much time on a question...they are not in order of difficulty, so you need to finish. What if the easiest questions were last?
2. If you don't know the answer, guess. Wrong answers do not count against you. Bubble in your best guess, then mark in your booklet. If you have time at the end, go back.
3. Review your terms...sometimes just knowing a term makes the question easy.
4. Time Saver: skip the questions that ask is it I, I and II, I and III.... etc. These sap the most time and are the most frequently missed questions. Go back for these questions after answering all the others.
5. Expect one or two of the questions on EACH SECTION to use "all of the following EXCEPT". Look for it.... these are frequently missed because students read the question incorrectly. **READ ALL ANSWER CHOICES BEFORE MAKING A SELECTION!!**

Essays:

1. ANNOTATE FIRST...then answer. THINK! Don't just start writing. Read the poem or the prose passage at least TWICE before starting.
2. START WITH AN ANSWER. Be as complete and specific as possible. Don't name devices or techniques in your intro...this is for the answer...get into the details in your essay.
3. Do not repeat the prompt.
4. Support and analyze rather than summarize and generalize.
5. Connect everything back to MEANING. For example, if you explain how the poet uses alliteration in a particular line...WHY?? What did the alliteration do for the effect and meaning the poet is trying to make?
6. Avoid giving your essay a title...waste of valuable time. Also, avoid trying to show 'personality' and being witty. Just answer the question.
7. Avoid judgments...you are not writing a review...your job is ANALYSIS.
8. QUOTATIONS: Use them...but keep them as short as possible. One word will often suffice to make your point.... it isn't necessary to quote entire lines.
9. Avoid vague language (like identifying a tone as being "positive")
10. Length DOES MATTER. If you have a really short essay...odds are you have not used adequate support or truly developed your answer. EXPLAIN, EXPLAIN, EXPLAIN, SUPPORT, SUPPORT, SUPPORT.
11. **Syntax**: Word order, sentence style and length, punctuation, stanzas (organization) and length, rhyme scheme.
12. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO GO IN ORDER. Strategy. Some suggest doing the hardest essay first...to get it over with and perhaps you will perform better before your brain is too scrambled by writing! ☺
13. Write in PEN for the essays...it's easier to read.

Review Major Works:

1. DO NOT WRITE ON SOMETHING YOU DIDN'T READ. It never turns out well.
2. Review 3-5 works...depending on your strength as a writer and reader. Review three heavily. (Look up names/places/themes/etc.)
3. Review your old tests/essays to help recall your thoughts about the work.
4. Know and USE the author's last name. You look silly if you start an essay with: *The Scarlet Letter* by William Shakespeare... aaaaarrggghhh.
5. Be able to use SPECIFIC examples/details from the text...do not summarize.

AP English Lit multiple-choice question types and stems

Note: Phrases like “which of the following” may be replaced by “all of the following EXCEPT.” Expect one or two questions (out of 10-15) on each passage to use “all of the following EXCEPT.”

“Which of the following” may also precede three or more statements, identified by capital Roman numerals, to which the multiple choices refer; e.g. “(A) I only / (B) II only / (C) III only / (D) I and II only / (E) I and III only.” Expect between one and five questions of this type to be scattered across the entire test (50-59 questions).

Main idea, understanding, paraphrase, theme (25-30%)

- ◆ The second quotation/passage/speech/etc. repeats the argument of the first that
- ◆ Which of the following does [insert character, author] explicitly endorse?
- ◆ In the passage, [insert character, author] ridicules which of the following:
- ◆ The central opposition in the poem/passage is between
- ◆ Which of the following is a subject treated in the poem/passage?
- ◆ Which of the following best paraphrases lines [insert numbers, perhaps passage as well]?
- ◆ Which of the following contrasts are integral to the poem/passage?
- ◆ The title suggests which of the following?
- ◆ Lines [insert line numbers] chiefly serve to show which of the following?
- ◆ In lines [insert line numbers], [insert quotation] is best interpreted to mean that
- ◆ By comparing [insert two things compared], the narrator invites a further comparison between
- ◆ The excerpt is chiefly concerned with a

Word/phrase in context (15-25%)

- ◆ Which of the following is the primary meaning of the word [insert word] as it is used in this passage?
- ◆ From the context, the reader can infer that [insert word or phrase] is
- ◆ In line [insert number], [insert word or phrase] [*most probably*] refers to
- ◆ In line [insert number], [insert word or phrase] is best understood to mean
- ◆ In the simile in line [insert number], [insert word] is used to stand for

Attitude, tone (15-20%)

- ◆ The character’s view of [insert something] might be best described as
- ◆ The speaker views [insert what he/she views] as
- ◆ For the speaker/author/narrator, [insert two things] have which of the following in common
- ◆ One effect of [insert word or phrase, with line number] is to emphasize the speaker’s feeling of
- ◆ The sentiments expressed in the poem are closest to those expressed in which of the following quotations from other poets?
- ◆ Which of the following adjectives best describes [insert character]’s speech?
- ◆ Line(s) [insert line number(s)] suggest(s) which of the following?
- ◆ Line(s) [insert number(s)] most strongly convey(s) the speaker’s
- ◆ What does the speaker convey in lines [insert numbers]?
- ◆ [Insert detail from the passage] allows the speaker to experience which of the following?

- ◆ The dominant element of [insert event in the text] is
- ◆ Which of the following best describes [insert character]’s speech?

Rhetorical function, purpose, ideal reader response (10-15%)

- ◆ The words/sentence/lines are surprising [or replace with other response] because
- ◆ The primary rhetorical function of the sentence [insert sentence, line numbers] is to
- ◆ The comedy of the passage drives chiefly from
- ◆ Throughout the passage, [insert character] is addressing
- ◆ [Insert character]’s comment [insert comment and line numbers] does which of the following?
- ◆ The poem/passage is best described as
- ◆ [Insert character] says [insert something he/she says, with line numbers] most probably as
- ◆ The chief effect of the imagery and figures of speech in lines [insert line numbers] is to

Identifying elements, techniques (5-10%)

- ◆ In line(s) [insert number(s)], the speaker makes use of which of the following
- ◆ The most/least conventional, least/most idiosyncratic aspect of the poem is its
- ◆ Lines [insert numbers] are based on which of the following?
- ◆ Which of the following is used most extensively in the passage?
- ◆ Line(s) [insert number(s)] present(s) an example of

Inference (5-10%)

- ◆ The character probably says [insert quotation] in line(s) [insert number(s)] because
- ◆ From the passage, we can infer [insert words, if needed] which of the following?
- ◆ The images in lines [insert line numbers] suggest that
- ◆ At the end of the excerpt, [insert character] probably believes that

Categorization, organization of detail (2-5%)

- ◆ The speaker perceives [insert what the speaker perceives] chiefly in terms of
- ◆ The imagery of the poem is characterized by

Grammatical function (2-5%)

- ◆ Grammatically, the word [insert word] functions as

Analysis of 1999 AP English Lit multiple-choice section

	Genre	Author	Year	Questions
Passage 1	Prose	Wilde	1889	13
Passage 2	Poetry	Dickinson	1862	12
Passage 3	Dramatic Verse	Jonson	1606	9
Passage 4	Poetry	Komunyakaa	1988	9
Passage 5	Prose	Wilkins Freeman	1891	12

AP English Literature Open Question review

Title:			
Author:			
Setting:			
Main characters (names, appearance, speech pattern, personality traits, motifs, tragic flaw, motivation):			
Minor characters (names, short description):			
Conflict(s):			
Big ideas:			
Symbols:			
Images:			
Important quotations:			

How many books on the AP Lit exam list have you read? The list is available at <http://homepage.mac.com/mseffie/AP/APtitles.html>

AP Literature Open-ended Prompts (1970-2011)

1970. Choose a character from a novel or play of recognized literary merit and write an essay in which you (a) briefly describe the standards of the fictional society in which the character exists and (b) show how the character is affected by and responds to those standards. In your essay do not merely summarize the plot.

1971. The significance of a title such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is so easy to discover. However, in other works (for example, *Measure for Measure*) the full significance of the title becomes apparent to the reader only gradually. Choose two works and show how the significance of their respective titles is developed through the authors' use of devices such as contrast, repetition, allusion, and point of view.

1972. In retrospect, the reader often discovers that the first chapter of a novel or the opening scene of a drama introduces some of the major themes of the work. Write an essay about the opening scene of a drama or the first chapter of a novel in which you explain how it functions in this way.

1973. An effective literary work does not merely stop or cease; it concludes. In the view of some critics, a work that does not provide the pleasure of significant closure has terminated with an artistic fault. A satisfactory ending is not, however, always conclusive in every sense; significant closure may require the reader to abide with or adjust to ambiguity and uncertainty. In an essay, discuss the ending of a novel or play of acknowledged literary merit. Explain precisely how and why the ending appropriately or inappropriately concludes the work. Do not merely summarize the plot.

1974. Choose a work of literature written before 1900. Write an essay in which you present arguments for and against the work's relevance for a person in 1974. Your own position should emerge in the course of your essay. You may refer to works of literature written after 1900 for the purpose of contrast or comparison.

1975. Although literary critics have tended to praise the unique in literary characterizations, many authors have employed the stereotyped character successfully. Select one work of acknowledged literary merit and in a well-written essay, show how the conventional or stereotyped character or characters function to achieve the author's purpose.

1975, #2. Unlike the novelist, the writer of a play does not use his own voice and only rarely uses a narrator's voice to guide the audience's responses to character and action. Select a play you have read and write an essay in which you explain the techniques the playwright uses to guide his audience's responses to the central characters and the action. You might consider the effect on the audience of things like setting, the use of comparable and contrasting characters, and the characters' responses to each other. Support your argument with specific references to the play. Do not give a plot summary.

1976. The conflict created when the will of an individual opposes the will of the majority is the recurring theme of many novels, plays, and essays. Select the work of an essayist who is in opposition to his or her society; or from a work of recognized literary merit, select a fictional character who is in opposition to his or her society. In a critical essay, analyze the conflict and discuss the moral and ethical implications for both the individual and the society. Do not summarize the plot or action of the work you choose.

1977. A character's attempt to recapture the past is important in many plays, novels, and poems. Choose a literary work in which a character views the past with such feelings as reverence, bitterness, or longing. Show with clear evidence from the work how the character's view of the past is used to develop a theme in the work. You may base your essay on a work by one of the following authors, or you may choose a work of another author of comparable literary excellence.

1977, #2. In some novels and plays certain parallel or recurring events prove to be significant. In an essay, describe the major similarities and differences in a sequence of parallel or recurring events in a novel or play and discuss the significance of such events. Do not merely summarize the plot.

1978. Choose an implausible or strikingly unrealistic incident or character in a work of fiction or drama of recognized literary merit. Write an essay that explains how the incident or character is related to the more realistic or plausible elements in the rest of the work. Avoid plot summary.

1979. Choose a complex and important character in a novel or a play of recognized literary merit who might on the basis of the character's actions alone be considered evil or immoral. In a well-organized essay, explain both how and why the full presentation of the character in the work makes us react more sympathetically than we otherwise might. Avoid plot summary.

1980. A recurring theme in literature is the classic war between a passion and responsibility. For instance, a personal cause, a love, a desire for revenge, a determination to redress a wrong, or some other emotion or drive may conflict with moral duty. Choose a literary work in which a character confronts the demands of a private passion that conflicts with his or her responsibilities. In a well-written essay show clearly the nature of the conflict, its effects upon the character, and its significance to the work.

1981. The meaning of some literary works is often enhanced by sustained allusion to myths, the Bible, or other works of literature. Select a literary work that makes use of such a sustained reference. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain the allusion that predominates in the work and analyze how it enhances the work's meaning.

1982. In great literature, no scene of violence exists for its own sake. Choose a work of literary merit that confronts the reader or audience with a scene or scenes of violence. In a well-organized essay, explain how the scene or scenes contribute to the meaning of the complete work. Avoid plot summary.

1982 Bulletin #1. "The struggle to achieve dominance over others frequently appears in fiction." Choose a novel in which such a struggle for dominance occurs, and write an essay showing for what purposes the author uses the struggle. Do not merely retell the story.

1982 Bulletin #2. "In many plays a character has a misconception of himself or his world. Destroying or perpetuating this illusion contributes to a central theme of the play." Choose a play with a major character to whom this statement applies, and write an essay in which you consider the following:

- (1) What the character's illusion is and how it differs from reality as presented in the play.
- (2) How the destruction or perpetuation of the illusion develops a theme of the play.

Do not merely retell the story.

1983. From a novel or play of literary merit, select an important character who is a villain. Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze the nature of the character's villainy and show how it enhances meaning in the work. Do not merely summarize the plot.

1984. Select a line or so of poetry, or a moment or scene in a novel, epic poem, or play that you find especially memorable. Write an essay in which you identify the line or the passage, explain its relationship to the work in which it is found, and analyze the reasons for its effectiveness.

1985. A critic has said that one important measure of a superior work of literature is its ability to produce in the reader a healthy confusion of pleasure and disquietude. Select a literary work that produces this "healthy confusion." Write an essay in which you explain the sources of the "pleasure and disquietude" experienced by the readers of the work.

1986. Some works of literature use the element of time in a distinct way. The chronological sequence of events may be altered, or time may be suspended or accelerated. Choose a novel, an epic, or a play of recognized literary merit and show how the author's manipulation of time contributes to the effectiveness of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

1987. Some novels and plays seem to advocate changes in social or political attitudes or in traditions. Choose such a novel or play and note briefly the particular attitudes or traditions that the author apparently wishes to modify. Then analyze the techniques the author uses to influence the reader's or audience's views. Avoid plot summary.

1988. Choose a distinguished novel or play in which some of the most significant events are mental or psychological; for example, awakenings, discoveries, changes in consciousness. In a well-organized essay, describe how the author manages to give these internal events the sense of excitement, suspense, and climax usually associated with external action. Do not merely summarize the plot.

1989. In questioning the value of literary realism, Flannery O'Connor has written, "I am interested in making a good case for distortion because I am coming to believe that it is the only way to make people see." Write an essay in which you "make a good case for distortion," as distinct from literary realism. Analyze how important elements of the work you choose are "distorted" and explain how these distortions contribute to the effectiveness of the work. Avoid plot summary.

1990. Choose a novel or play that depicts a conflict between a parent (or a parental figure) and a son or daughter. Write an essay in which you analyze the sources of the conflict and explain how the conflict contributes to the meaning of the work. Avoid plot summary.

1991. Many plays and novels use contrasting places (for example, two countries, two cities or towns, two houses, or the land and the sea) to represent opposed forces or ideas that are central to the meaning of the work. Choose a novel or play that contrasts two such places. Write an essay explaining how the places differ, what each place represents, and how their contrast contributes to the meaning of the work.

1992. In a novel or play, a confidant (male) or a confidante (female) is a character, often a friend or relative of the hero or heroine, whose role is to be present when the hero or heroine needs a sympathetic listener to confide in. Frequently the result is, as Henry James remarked, that the confidant or confidante can be as much “the reader’s friend as the protagonist’s.” However, the author sometimes uses this character for other purposes as well. Choose a confidant or confidante from a novel or play of recognized literary merit and write an essay in which you discuss the various ways this character functions in the work. You may write your essay on one of the following novels or plays or on another of comparable quality. Do not write on a poem or short story.

1993. “The true test of comedy is that it shall awaken thoughtful laughter.” Choose a novel, play, or long poem in which a scene or character awakens “thoughtful laughter” in the reader. Write an essay in which you show why this laughter is “thoughtful” and how it contributes to the meaning of the work.

1994. In some works of literature, a character who appears briefly, or does not appear at all, is a significant presence. Choose a novel or play of literary merit and write an essay in which you show how such a character functions in the work. You may wish to discuss how the character affects action, theme, or the development of other characters. Avoid plot summary.

1995. Writers often highlight the values of a culture or a society by using characters who are alienated from that culture or society because of gender, race, class, or creed. Choose a novel or a play in which such a character plays a significant role and show how that character’s alienation reveals the surrounding society’s assumptions or moral values.

1996. The British novelist Fay Weldon offers this observation about happy endings. “The writers, I do believe, who get the best and most lasting response from their readers are the writers who offer a happy ending through moral development. By a happy ending, I do not mean mere fortunate events—a marriage or a last minute rescue from death—but some kind of spiritual reassessment or moral reconciliation, even with the self, even at death.” Choose a novel or play that has the kind of ending Weldon describes. In a well-written essay, identify the “spiritual reassessment or moral reconciliation” evident in the ending and explain its significance in the work as a whole.

1997. Novels and plays often include scenes of weddings, funerals, parties, and other social occasions. Such scenes may reveal the values of the characters and the society in which they live. Select a novel or play that includes such a scene and, in a focused essay, discuss the contribution the scene makes to the meaning of the work as a whole. You may choose a work from the list below or another novel or play of literary merit.

1998. In his essay “Walking,” Henry David Thoreau offers the following assessment of literature:

In literature it is only the wild that attracts us. Dullness is but another name for tameness. It is the uncivilized free and wild thinking in *Hamlet* and *The Iliad*, in all scriptures and mythologies, not learned in schools, that delights us.

From the works that you have studied in school, choose a novel, play, or epic poem that you may initially have thought was conventional and tame but that you now value for its “uncivilized free and wild thinking.” Write an essay in which you explain what constitutes its “uncivilized free and wild thinking” and how that thinking is central to the value of the work as a whole. Support your ideas with specific references to the work you choose.

1999. The eighteenth-century British novelist Laurence Sterne wrote, “No body, but he who has felt it, can conceive what a plaguing thing it is to have a man’s mind torn asunder by two projects of equal strength, both obstinately pulling in a contrary direction at the same time.”

From a novel or play choose a character (not necessarily the protagonist) whose mind is pulled in conflicting directions by two compelling desires, ambitions, obligations, or influences. Then, in a well-organized essay, identify each of the two conflicting forces and explain how this conflict with one character illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. You may use one of the novels or plays listed below or another novel or work of similar literary quality.

2000. Many works of literature not readily identified with the mystery or detective story genre nonetheless involve the investigation of a mystery. In these works, the solution to the mystery may be less important than the knowledge gained in the process of its investigation. Choose a novel or play in which one or more of the characters confront a mystery. Then write an essay in which you identify the mystery and explain how the investigation illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

2001. One definition of madness is “mental delusion or the eccentric behavior arising from it.” But Emily Dickinson wrote

Much madness is divinest Sense—
To a discerning Eye—

Novelists and playwrights have often seen madness with a “discerning Eye.” Select a novel or play in which a character’s apparent madness or irrational behavior plays an important role. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain what this delusion or eccentric behavior consists of and how it might be judged reasonable. Explain the significance of the “madness” to the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

2002. Morally ambiguous characters – characters whose behavior discourages readers from identifying them as purely evil or purely good – are at the heart of many works of literature. Choose a novel or play in which a morally ambiguous character plays a pivotal role. Then write an essay in which you explain how the character can be viewed as morally ambiguous and why his or her moral ambiguity is significant to the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

2002, Form B. Often in literature, a character’s success in achieving goals depends on keeping a secret and divulging it only at the right moment, if at all. Choose a novel or play of literary merit that requires a character to keep a secret. In a well-organized essay, briefly explain the necessity for secrecy and how the character’s choice to reveal or keep the secret affects the plot and contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole. You may select a work from the list below, or you may choose another work of recognized literary merit suitable to the topic. Do NOT write about a short story, poem, or film.

2003. According to critic Northrop Frye, “Tragic heroes are so much the highest points in their human landscape that they seem the inevitable conductors of the power about them, great trees more likely to be struck by lightning than a clump of grass. Conductors may of course be instruments as well as victims of the divisive lightning.” Select a novel or play in which a tragic figure functions as an instrument of the suffering of others. Then write an essay in which you explain how the suffering brought upon others by that figure contributes to the tragic vision of the work as a whole.

2003, Form B. Novels and plays often depict characters caught between colliding cultures -- national, regional, ethnic, religious, institutional. Such collisions can call a character’s sense of identity into question. Select a novel or play in which a character responds to such a cultural collision. Then write a well-organized essay in which you describe the character’s response and explain its relevance to the work as a whole.

2004. Critic Roland Barthes has said, “Literature is the question minus the answer.” Choose a novel, or play, and, considering Barthes’ observation, write an essay in which you analyze a central question the work raises and the extent to which it offers answers. Explain how the author’s treatment of this question affects your understanding of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

2004, Form B. The most important themes in literature are sometimes developed in scenes in which a death or deaths take place. Choose a novel or play and write a well-organized essay in which you show how a specific death scene helps to illuminate the meaning of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

2005. In Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening* (1899), protagonist Edna Pontellier is said to possess “That outward existence which conforms, the inward life that questions.” In a novel or play that you have studied, identify a character who outwardly conforms while questioning inwardly. Then write an essay in which you analyze how this tension between outward conformity and inward questioning contributes to the meaning of the work. Avoid mere plot summary.

2005, Form B. One of the strongest human drives seems to be a desire for power. Write an essay in which you discuss how a character in a novel or a drama struggles to free himself or herself from the power of others or seeks to gain power over others. Be sure to demonstrate in your essay how the author uses this power struggle to enhance the meaning of the work.

2006. Many writers use a country setting to establish values within a work of literature. For example, the country may be a place of virtue and peace or one of primitivism and ignorance. Choose a novel or play in which such a setting plays a significant role. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the country setting functions in the work as a whole.

2006, Form B. In many works of literature, a physical journey – the literal movement from one place to another – plays a central role. Choose a novel, play, or epic poem in which a physical journey is an important element and discuss how the journey adds to the meaning of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

2007. In many works of literature, past events can affect, positively or negatively, the present activities, attitudes, or values of a character. Choose a novel or play in which a character must contend with some aspect of the past, either personal or societal. Then write an essay in which you show how the character’s relationship to the past contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

2007, Form B. Works of literature often depict acts of betrayal. Friends and even family may betray a protagonist; main characters may likewise be guilty of treachery or may betray their own values. Select a novel or play that includes such acts of betrayal. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze the nature of the betrayal and show how it contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

2008. In a literary work, a minor character, often known as a foil, possesses traits that emphasize, by contrast or comparison, the distinctive characteristics and qualities of the main character. For example, the ideas or behavior of a minor character might be used to highlight the weaknesses or strengths of the main character. Choose a novel or play in which a minor character serves as a foil for the main character. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the relation between the minor character and the major character illuminates the meaning of the work.

2008, Form B. In some works of literature, childhood and adolescence are portrayed as times graced by innocence and a sense of wonder; in other works, they are depicted as times of tribulation and terror. Focusing on a single novel or play, explain how its representation of childhood or adolescence shapes the meaning of the work as a whole.

2009. A symbol is an object, action, or event that represents something or that creates a range of associations beyond itself. In literary works a symbol can express an idea, clarify meaning, or enlarge literal meaning. Select a novel or play and, focusing on one symbol, write an essay analyzing how that symbol functions in the work and what it reveals about the characters or themes of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

2009, Form B. Many works of literature deal with political or social issues. Choose a novel or play that focuses on a political or social issue. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the author uses literary elements to explore this issue and explain how the issue contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

2010. Palestinian American literary theorist and cultural critic Edward Said has written that “Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted.” Yet Said has also said that exile can become “a potent, even enriching” experience. Select a novel, play, or epic in which a character experiences such a rift and becomes cut off from “home,” whether that home is the character’s birthplace, family, homeland, or other special place. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the character’s experience with exile is both alienating and enriching, and how this experience illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

2010, Form B. “You can leave home all you want, but home will never leave you.” —Sonsyrea Tate

Sonsyrea Tate’s statement suggests that “home” may be conceived of as a dwelling, a place, or a state of mind. It may have positive or negative associations, but in either case, it may have a considerable influence on an individual. Choose a novel or play in which a central character leaves home yet finds that home remains significant. Write a well-developed essay in which you analyze the importance of “home” to this character and the reasons for its continuing influence. Explain how the character’s idea of home illuminates the larger meaning of the work. Do not merely summarize the plot.

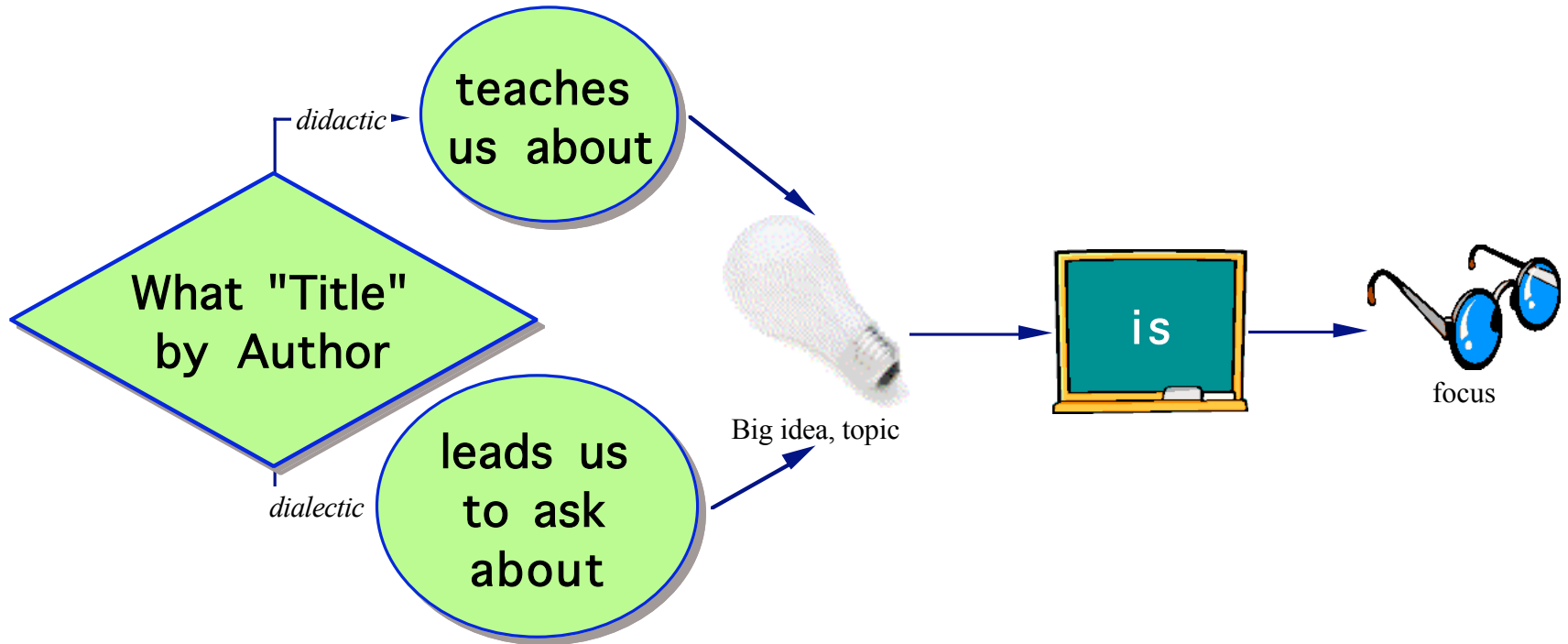
2011. In a novel by William Styron, a father tells his son that life “is a search for justice.”

Choose a character from a novel or play who responds in some significant way to justice or injustice. Then write a well-developed essay in which you analyze the character’s understanding of justice, the degree to which the character’s search for justice is successful, and the significance of this search for the work as a whole.

2011, Form B. In *The Writing of Fiction* (1925), novelist Edith Wharton states the following:

At every stage in the progress of his tale the novelist must rely on what may be called the illuminating incident to reveal and emphasize the inner meaning of each situation. Illuminating incidents are the magic casements of fiction, its vistas on infinity.

Choose a novel or play that you have studied and write a well-organized essay in which you describe an “illuminating” episode or moment and explain how it functions as a “casement,” a window that opens onto the meaning of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.



evidence from the story

evidence from the story

evidence from the story

evidence from the story: motif, symbol, irony

evidence from the story: motif, symbol, irony

evidence from the story: motif, symbol, irony

The 103 Great Ideas

ANGEL	ANIMAL	ARISTOCRACY
ART	ASTRONOMY AND COSMOLOGY	BEAUTY
BEING	CAUSE	CHANCE
CHANGE	CITIZEN	CONSTITUTION
COURAGE	CUSTOM AND CONVENTION	DEFINITION
DEMOCRACY	DESIRE	DIALECTIC
DUTY	EDUCATION	ELEMENT
EMOTION	EQUALITY	ETERNITY
EVOLUTION	EXPERIENCE	FAMILY
FATE	FORM	GOD
GOOD AND EVIL	GOVERNMENT	HABIT
HAPPINESS	HISTORY	HONOR
HYPOTHESIS	IDEA	IMMORTALITY
INDUCTION	INFINITY	JUDGMENT
JUSTICE	KNOWLEDGE	LABOR
LANGUAGE	LAW	LIBERTY
LIFE AND DEATH	LOGIC	LOVE
MAN	MATHEMATICS	MATTER
MECHANICS	MEDICINE	MEMORY AND IMAGINATION
METAPHYSICS	MIND	MONARCHY
NATURE	NECESSITY AND CONTINGENCY	OLIGARCHY
ONE AND MANY	OPINION	OPPOSITION
PHILOSOPHY	PHYSICS	PLEASURE AND PAIN
POETRY	PRINCIPLE	PROGRESS
PROPHECY	PRUDENCE	PUNISHMENT
QUALITY	QUANTITY	REASONING
RELATION	RELIGION	REVOLUTION
RHETORIC	SAME AND OTHER	SCIENCE
SENSE	SIGN AND SYMBOL	SIN
SLAVERY	SOUL	SPACE
STATE	TEMPERANCE	THEOLOGY
TIME	TRUTH	TYRANNY AND DESPOTISM
UNIVERSAL AND PARTICULAR	VIRTUE AND VICE	WAR AND PEACE
WEALTH	WILL	WISDOM

	Romanticism	Realism	Modernism	Postmodernism
Big names	Rousseau Wordsworth Coleridge Byron Shelley Keats Austen Whitman Hawthorne	Dickens Twain Tennyson Browning Eliot, G. Crane, S. Zola Ibsen James	Eliot, T. S. Joyce Woolf Hemingway Stein Faulkner Pound Fitzgerald Picasso	Beckett Camus Pinter Rushdie Garcia Marquez Pynchon Vonnegut Morrison Walcott
Big ideas	Nature Passion Self Spirit	Society Progress Science Secular	Decay Disillusionment Alienation Surreal	Chaos Hybridity Existentialism Meaninglessness Interpretation “Cool”
Big styles	Expressive Emotional Nostalgic	Descriptive Objective Moral	Experimental Interior Fragmented	Nonlinear Self-conscious Absurd
Big bang	1789: French Revolution 1812: U. S. War of 1812	1832: Reform Act (Britain) 1851: Crystal Palace Exhibition 1861-65: U. S. Civil War	1914-1918: World War I	1945: Holocaust, atomic bomb

Why do we read?

Stages in the Development of a Lifelong Reader

Unconscious delight.	Plot. Cause-effect chain of events that comprise (part of) the story. <i>What are the effects of our choices?</i> Ages 3-8.
Living vicariously.	Character. Person, persona, identity, entity in a story or poem. <i>How do we deal with people different from ourselves? How do we feel we're not alone? How do we learn how to feel and empathize?</i> Ages 6-11.
Seeing oneself.	Conflict. An opposition between forces that builds tension. <i>How can we effectively resolve conflicts?</i> Ages 10-16.
Philosophical speculations.	Theme. The message or essential question of a work. <i>What principles can we develop to guide our lives?</i> Ages 14-19.
Aesthetic delight.	Style. The choices of language a writer makes to tell the story. <i>What is the potential of language to express our ideas?</i> Ages 16 and up.

G. Robert Carlsen, *Books and the Teenage Reader*, cited in Sarah Herz and Donald Gallo, *From Hinton to Hamlet: Building Bridges between Young Adult Literature and the Classics*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1996. Print. 16-17.

How can we answer our questions (e.g., about love, death) in a way that is safer than trial-and-error or experience?