

About the AP English Language and Composition Course

The AP English Language and Composition course focuses on the development and revision of evidence-based analytic and argumentative writing, the rhetorical analysis of nonfiction texts, and the decisions writers make as they compose and revise. Students evaluate, synthesize, and cite research to support their arguments. Additionally, they read and analyze rhetorical elements and their effects in nonfiction texts—including images as forms of text—from a range of disciplines and historical periods.

College Course Equivalent

The AP English Language and Composition course aligns to an introductory college-level rhetoric and writing curriculum.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisite courses for AP English Language and Composition. Students should be able to read and comprehend college-level texts and write grammatically correct, complete sentences.

Introduction

An AP English Language and Composition course cultivates the reading and writing skills that students need for college success and for intellectually responsible civic engagement. The course guides students in becoming curious, critical, and responsive readers of diverse texts and becoming flexible, reflective writers of texts addressed to diverse audiences for diverse purposes. The reading and writing students do in the course should deepen and expand their understanding of how written language functions rhetorically: to communicate writers' intentions and elicit readers' responses in particular situations.

To support these objectives, this *AP English Language and Composition Course and Exam Description* delineates the knowledge and skills colleges and universities typically expect students to demonstrate in order to receive credit for an introductory college composition course.

This publication is not a curriculum. Teachers create their own curricula by selecting and sequencing the texts and tasks that will enable students to develop the knowledge and skills outlined in this document. In some cases, teachers also need to meet certain state or local requirements within the AP curriculum they develop for their school. The objective of this publication is to provide teachers with clarity regarding the content and skills students should learn in order to qualify for college credit and placement. The AP Program recognizes that the real craft is in the skill with which teachers develop and deliver instruction.

Students develop the skills of rhetorical analysis and composition as they repeatedly practice analyzing others' arguments, then compose their own arguments. As a model for teachers, the course content and skills are presented in nine units. The objective of this unit structure is to respect new AP teachers' time by suggesting one possible sequence they can adapt rather than having to build from scratch.

An additional benefit is that these units enable the AP Program to provide interested teachers with free formative assessments—the Personal Progress Checks—that they can assign their students at the end of each unit to gauge progress toward success on the AP Exam. However, experienced AP teachers who are satisfied with their current course organization and results should feel no pressure to adopt these units, which comprise an optional, not mandatory, sequence for this course.

Because these nine units only delineate the skills students should be developing across the AP English Language and Composition course but do not specify the content or themes students will study, teachers can assign a theme or title to each of the nine units (e.g., Humanity and Nature, Industry and Technology, Family and Community) or can dedicate multiple units to the same theme (e.g., Family and Community I, II, and III). This enables teachers to avail themselves of the scaffolded skill progressions detailed in each unit to help focus their students' learning and practice and then assign students the relevant Personal Progress Checks.



AP English Language and Composition Skills

BIG IDEAS		RHS Rhetorical Situation		CLE Claims and Evidence		REO Reasoning and Organization		STL Style		Skill Category 7		Skill Category 8	
ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS													
Individuals write within a particular situation and make strategic writing choices based on that situation.	Skill Category 1	Skill Category 2	Skill Category 3	Skill Category 4	Skill Category 5	Skill Category 6	Skill Category 7	Skill Category 8					
Rhetorical Situation – Reading Explain how writers' choices reflect the components of the rhetorical situation.	Rhetorical Situation – Writing Make strategic choices in a text to address a rhetorical situation.	Claims and Evidence – Reading Identify and describe the claims and evidence of an argument.	Claims and Evidence – Writing Analyze and select evidence to develop and refine a claim.	Reasoning and Organization – Reading Describe the reasoning, organization, and development of an argument.	Reasoning and Organization – Writing Use organization and commentary to illuminate the line of reasoning in an argument.	Style – Reading Select words and use elements of composition to advance an argument.	Style – Writing Select words and use elements of composition to advance an argument.						
SKILLS	1.A Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message. Units 1, 4, 7	2.A Write introductions and conclusions appropriate to the purpose and context of the rhetorical situation. Units 4, 7	3.A Identify and evidence within an argument. Units 1, 2, 3, 6	4.A Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim. Units 1, 2, 3, 6	5.A Describe the line of reasoning and explain whether it supports an argument's overarching thesis. Unit 3, 5	6.A Develop a line of reasoning and commentary that explains it throughout an argument. Units 3, 5	7.A Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style in an argument. Units 5, 6, 8	8.A Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument. Units 5, 6, 8					
	1.B Explain how an argument demonstrates understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs. Units 2, 8	2.B Demonstrate an understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs. Units 2, 8	3.B Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument's structure. Units 2, 4, 6	4.B Write a thesis statement that requires proof or defense and that may preview the structure of the argument. Unit 2, 4, 6	5.B Explain how the organization of a text creates unity and coherence and reflects a line of reasoning. Unit 5	6.B Use transitional elements to guide the reader through the line of reasoning of an argument. Unit 5	7.B Explain how writers create, combine, and place independent and dependent clauses to show relationships between and among ideas. Units 7, 8	8.B Write sentences that clearly convey ideas and arguments. Units 7, 8					
	3.C Explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives. Units 7, 9	4.C Qualify a claim using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternative perspectives. Units 7, 9	5.C Recognize and explain the use of methods of development to accomplish a purpose. Units 3, 4	6.C Use appropriate methods of development to advance an argument. Units 3, 4	7.C Explain how grammar and mechanics contribute to the clarity and effectiveness of an argument. Unit 7	8.C Use established conventions of grammar and mechanics to communicate clearly and effectively. Unit 7							