

**INCLUDES**

- ✓ Course framework
- ✓ Instructional section
- ✓ Sample exam questions

# AP<sup>®</sup> English Language and Composition

## COURSE AND EXAM DESCRIPTION

Effective  
Fall 2020

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Effective  
**Fall 2020**

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Designers: Sonny Mui and Bill Tully

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# Introduction

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*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.

# Course Framework Components

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## Overview

This course framework provides a description of what students should know and be able to do to qualify for college credit or placement.

### The course framework includes the following components:

#### 1 BIG IDEAS AND ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

The big ideas are cross-cutting concepts that build conceptual understanding and spiral throughout the units of the course. The enduring understandings are the long-term takeaways related to the big ideas.

#### 2 COURSE SKILLS

The course skills, and their related essential knowledge statements, are the content of this course. They describe what students should know and be able to do by the end of the course.

# 1

## AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

# Big Ideas and Enduring Understandings

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The big ideas serve as the foundation of the AP English Language and Composition course and enable students to create meaningful connections among course concepts. They are threads that run throughout the course, and revisiting them and applying them in a variety of contexts helps students to develop deeper conceptual understanding. Below are the big ideas of the course, along with the enduring understanding associated with each one:

### **RHETORICAL SITUATION (RHS)**

**Enduring Understanding RHS-1:** Individuals write within a particular situation and make strategic writing choices based on that situation.

### **CLAIMS AND EVIDENCE (CLE)**

**Enduring Understanding CLE-1:** Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments.

### **REASONING AND ORGANIZATION (REO)**

**Enduring Understanding REO-1:** Writers guide understanding of a text's lines of reasoning and claims through that text's organization and integration of evidence.

### **STYLE (STL)**

**Enduring Understanding STL-1:** The rhetorical situation informs the strategic stylistic choices that writers make.

## UNITS


The course skills are organized within nine units that scaffold student development of the analysis and composition skills required for college credit. For each unit, the teacher selects a theme or topic and then chooses texts, typically short nonfiction pieces, that enable students to practice and develop the reading and writing skills for that unit.

Each unit culminates in a Personal Progress Check made up of 1) a free-response question and scoring rubric for the teacher to administer in class or online and 2) online multiple-choice questions that provide each student with personalized feedback and the teacher with a class summary of skills for which students are on track for college credit and skills for which focus and practice are needed.

Pacing recommendations shown within the Course at a Glance and the unit guides provide suggestions for how to teach the required course content and administer the Personal Progress Checks. The suggested class periods are based on a schedule in which the class meets five days a week for 45 minutes each day. While these recommendations have been made to aid planning, teachers should of course adjust the pacing based on the needs of their students, alternate schedules (e.g., block scheduling), or their school's academic calendar.

# Spiraling the Big Ideas

The following table shows how the big ideas spiral across units.

	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6	Unit 7	Unit 8	Unit 9
<b>Big Ideas</b> 									
<b>Rhetorical Situation</b> <b>RHS</b>	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	
<b>Claims and Evidence</b> <b>CLE</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
<b>Reasoning and Organization</b> <b>REO</b>			✓	✓	✓				
<b>Style</b> <b>STL</b>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



## 2

## AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

# Course Skills

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Throughout the course, students will follow the pattern of reading others' arguments and then writing their own. Students will analyze what makes others' arguments convincing or confusing, engaging or dull, persuasive or powerless. They will then turn to the act of composition themselves, seeking to emulate effective argumentation they have encountered in their reading and analysis.

This pattern should be repeated in every unit of the course, ensuring students are moving back and forth between analysis of the arguments they read and composition of their own arguments.

Accordingly, the AP English Language and Composition skills consist of paired reading and writing skills. These skills will be the basis for the AP Exam questions. The unit guides in this publication provide additional detail about these skills through essential knowledge statements.

Other than some focused instruction on punctuation in Unit 7, the teaching of English grammar and mechanics is not the focus of this course. Students should be able to write complete sentences before beginning the class, and through frequent reading and analysis of the arguments of others and emulating such models in their own writing, students' proficiency in written English will increase during the course. When students write essays within the AP Exam, small grammatical errors typical of unrevised writing in a timed environment will not negatively impact the score. Performance is only hurt by grammatical errors that are so prevalent and significant as to interfere with communication.

More information about teaching these skills can be found in the Instructional Approaches section.



# AP English Language and Composition Skills

## BIG IDEAS

### RHS Rhetorical Situation

#### ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Individuals write within a particular situation and make strategic writing choices based on that situation.

### CLE Claims and Evidence

Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments.

### REO Reasoning and Organization

Writers guide understanding of a text's lines of reasoning and claims through that text's organization and integration of evidence.

### STL Style

The rhetorical situation informs the strategic stylistic choices that writers make.

### Skill Category 1

#### Rhetorical Situation – Reading

Explain how writers' choices reflect the components of the rhetorical situation.

#### SKILLS

**1.A** Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message.  
Units 1, 4, 7

**1.B** Explain how an argument demonstrates understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs.  
Units 2, 8

### Skill Category 2

#### Rhetorical Situation – Writing

Make strategic choices in a text to address a rhetorical situation.

**2.A** Write introductions and conclusions appropriate to the purpose and context of the rhetorical situation.  
Units 4, 7

**2.B** Demonstrate an understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs.  
Units 2, 8

### Skill Category 3

#### Claims and Evidence – Reading

Identify and describe the claims and evidence of an argument.

**3.A** Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument.  
Units 1, 2, 3, 6

**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

**3.C** Explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives.  
Units 7, 9

### Skill Category 4

#### Claims and Evidence – Writing

Analyze and select evidence to develop and refine a claim.

**4.A** Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim.  
Units 1, 2, 3, 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

**4.C** Qualify a claim using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternative perspectives.  
Units 7, 9

### Skill Category 5

#### Reasoning and Organization – Reading

Describe the reasoning, organization, and development of an argument.

**5.A** Describe the line of reasoning and explain whether it supports an argument's overarching thesis.  
Unit 3, 5

**5.B** Explain how the organization of a text creates unity and coherence and reflects a line of reasoning.  
Unit 5

**5.C** Recognize and explain the use of methods of development to accomplish a purpose.  
Units 3, 4

### Skill Category 6

#### Reasoning and Organization – Writing

Use organization and commentary to illuminate the line of reasoning in an argument.

**6.A** Develop a line of reasoning and commentary that explains it throughout an argument.  
Units 3, 5

**6.B** Use transitional elements to guide the reader through the line of reasoning of an argument.  
Unit 5

**6.C** Use appropriate methods of development to advance an argument.  
Units 3, 4

### Skill Category 7

#### Style – Reading

Explain how writers' stylistic choices contribute to the purpose of an argument.

**7.A** Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text.  
Units 5, 6, 8

**7.B** Explain how writers create, combine, and place independent and dependent clauses to show relationships between and among ideas.  
Units 7, 8

**7.C** Explain how grammar and mechanics contribute to the clarity and effectiveness of an argument.  
Unit 7

### Skill Category 8

#### Style – Writing

Select words and use elements of composition to advance an argument.

**8.A** Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument.  
Units 5, 6, 8

**8.B** Write sentences that clearly convey ideas and arguments.  
Units 7, 8

**8.C** Use established conventions of grammar and mechanics to communicate clearly and effectively.  
Unit 7

# Course at a Glance

## Plan

The Course at a Glance provides a useful visual organization of the AP English Language and Composition curricular components, including:

- Sequence of units, along with suggested pacing. Please note that pacing is based on 45-minute class periods, meeting five days each week, for a full academic year.
- Progression of skills within each unit.
- Spiraling of the big ideas and skills across units.

## Teach

### BIG IDEAS/SKILL CATEGORIES

*Big ideas and their skills spiral across units.*

<b>RHS</b> Rhetorical Situation	<b>REO</b> Reasoning and Organization
<b>CLE</b> Claims and Evidence	<b>STL</b> Style

## Assess

Assign the Personal Progress Checks—either as homework or in class—for each unit. Each Personal Progress Check contains formative multiple-choice and free-response questions. The feedback from the Personal Progress Checks shows students the areas where they need to focus.

### Unit 1: \_\_\_\_\_

~15 Class Periods

- RHS** 1.A Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message.
- CLE** 3.A Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument.
- CLE** 4.A Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim.

### Unit 2: \_\_\_\_\_

~15 Class Periods

- RHS** 1.B Explain how an argument demonstrates understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs.
- RHS** 2.B Demonstrate an understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs.
- CLE** 3.A Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument.
- CLE** 4.A Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim.
- CLE** 3.B Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument's structure.
- CLE** 4.B Write a thesis statement that requires proof or defense and that may preview the structure of the argument.

### Personal Progress Check 1

**ONLINE ONLY**

**Multiple-choice:** ~10 questions

**ONLINE OR PAPER**

**Free-response:** 1 question

### Personal Progress Check 2

**ONLINE ONLY**

**Multiple-choice:** ~20 questions

**ONLINE OR PAPER**

**Free-response:** 1 question

## Unit 3: \_\_\_\_\_

~15 Class Periods

- CLE** 3.A Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument.
- CLE** 4.A Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim.
- REO** 5.A Describe the line of reasoning and explain whether it supports an argument's overarching thesis.
- REO** 6.A Develop a line of reasoning and commentary that explains it throughout an argument.
- REO** 5.C Recognize and explain the use of methods of development to accomplish a purpose.
- REO** 6.C Use appropriate methods of development to advance an argument.

## Unit 4: \_\_\_\_\_

~15 Class Periods

- RHS** 1.A Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message.
- RHS** 2.A Write introductions and conclusions appropriate to the purpose and context of the rhetorical situation.
- CLE** 3.B Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument's structure.
- CLE** 4.B Write a thesis statement that requires proof or defense and that may preview the structure of the argument.
- REO** 5.C Recognize and explain the use of methods of development to accomplish a purpose.
- REO** 6.C Use appropriate methods of development to advance an argument.

## Unit 5: \_\_\_\_\_

~15 Class Periods

- REO** 5.A Describe the line of reasoning and explain whether it supports an argument's overarching thesis.
- REO** 6.A Develop a line of reasoning and commentary that explains it throughout an argument.
- REO** 5.B Explain how the organization of a text creates unity and coherence and reflects a line of reasoning.
- REO** 6.B Use transitional elements to guide the reader through the line of reasoning of an argument.
- STL** 7.A Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text.
- STL** 8.A Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument.

### Personal Progress Check 3

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

Free-response: 1 question

### Personal Progress Check 4

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

Free-response: 1 question

### Personal Progress Check 5

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

Free-response: 1 question

## Unit 6: \_\_\_\_\_

~15 Class Periods

- CLE** 3.A Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument.
- CLE** 4.A Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim.
- CLE** 3.B Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument's structure.
- CLE** 4.B Write a thesis statement that requires proof or defense and that may preview the structure of the argument.
- STL** 7.A Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text.
- STL** 8.A Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument.

## Unit 7: \_\_\_\_\_

~15 Class Periods

- RHS** 1.A Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message.
- RHS** 2.A Write introductions and conclusions appropriate to the purpose and context of the rhetorical situation.
- CLE** 3.C Explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives.
- CLE** 4.C Qualify a claim using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternative perspectives.
- STL** 7.B Explain how writers create, combine, and place independent and dependent clauses to show relationships between and among ideas.
- STL** 8.B Write sentences that clearly convey ideas and arguments.
- STL** 7.C Explain how grammar and mechanics contribute to the clarity and effectiveness of an argument.
- STL** 8.C Use established conventions of grammar and mechanics to communicate clearly and effectively.

## Unit 8: \_\_\_\_\_

~15 Class Periods

- RHS** 1.B Explain how an argument demonstrates understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs.
- RHS** 2.B Demonstrate an understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs.
- STL** 7.A Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text.
- STL** 8.A Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument.
- STL** 7.B Explain how writers create, combine, and place independent and dependent clauses to show relationships between and among ideas.
- STL** 8.B Write sentences that clearly convey ideas and arguments.

### Personal Progress Check 6

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

Free-response: 1 question

### Personal Progress Check 7

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

Free-response: 1 question

### Personal Progress Check 8

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

Free-response: 1 question

## Unit 9: \_\_\_\_\_

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**~15** Class Periods

**CLE** **3.C** Explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives.

**CLE** **4.C** Qualify a claim using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternative perspectives.

### Personal Progress Check 9

**ONLINE ONLY**

**Multiple-choice:** ~5 questions

**ONLINE OR PAPER**

**Free-response:** 1 question