

Chapter 6

Comprehensive Review— Analysis

SOME BASICS

What Is *ANALYSIS*?



For the AP English Language Exam student, the definition of *analysis* is quite specific. It means that *you* are going to take apart a particular passage and divide it into its basic components for the purpose of examining how the writer develops his or her subject.

Are There Different Types of Analysis?

For the AP English Language Exam, the *different types of analysis* include the analysis of structure, purpose, and style.

What Is *DISCOURSE*?

Discourse simply means “conversation.” For the writer, this “conversation” takes place between the text and the reader. To communicate with the reader, the writer uses a particular method or combination of methods to make his or her idea(s) clear to the reader.

What Is *RHETORIC*?

Don't let professional jargon throw you. Rhetoric is basically an umbrella term for *all* of the strategies, modes, and devices a writer can employ to allow the reader to easily accept and understand his or her point of view.

What Is a *MODE OF DISCOURSE*?

Here's another piece of the lingo puzzle that you need not fear. Prose can be divided into FOUR primary categories. They are:

1. EXPOSITION: illustrates a point
2. NARRATION: tells a story
3. DESCRIPTION: creates a sensory image
4. ARGUMENTATION: takes a position on an issue and defends it

These are generally referred to as the *modes of discourse*. You should be able to distinguish among them, but, do not become bogged down in worrying about these classes. They will be obvious to you. Being familiar with the professional terminology of this course is a way of beginning to develop a common vocabulary needed to discuss writing.

What Are *RHETORICAL STRATEGIES*?

Rhetorical strategies include example, contrast and comparison, definition, cause and effect, process, analysis/division, and classification. The writer may also employ descriptive and narrative strategies. These are the basic approaches a writer uses to tell a story, explain a point, describe a situation, or argue a position. (Modes of discourse, for those in the know.)

What Is the Analysis of *RHETORICAL STRUCTURE*?

Regardless of the length of a passage, the writer will employ one or one or more strategies to develop the purpose of the piece. Your job is to:

- carefully read the passage
- recognize and identify strategies used in the passage
- determine how these strategies are utilized in the development of the author's purpose

✓ After this, it is up to you to use your own rhetorical strategies to present the points you want to illustrate in your analysis. Remember, your primary purpose is to analyze the passage. In so doing, you will probably employ one or more of the rhetorical strategies, such as example, cause and effect, or contrast and comparison.

There Is So Much to Know, How Can I Prepare Myself for the Exam?

First, don't panic. You're in an AP English Language course, and you will have a year to become prepared. The work of this course centers on developing those analytical skills required by the AP English Language

Exam. In this chapter, we are going to provide you with a brief overview of the different rhetorical strategies. For each rhetorical strategy, we will:

- define the term
- cite examples
- provide practice with analysis
- offer suggestions for writing your own AP essays using that strategy

RHETORICAL STRATEGIES

Example

Definition: Example is a specific event, person, or detail of an idea cited and/or developed to support or illustrate a thesis or topic.

Here is an excerpt from Jane Jacobs's "A Good Neighborhood" that uses examples.

Perhaps I can best explain this subtle but all-important balance between people's desire for essential privacy and their wish to have differing degrees of contact with people in terms of the stores where people leave keys for their friends. In our family, we tell friends to pick up the key at the delicatessen across the street. Joe Cornacchia, who keeps the delicatessen, usually has a dozen or so keys at a time for handing out like this. He has a special drawer for them.

Around on the other side of our block, people leave their keys at a Spanish grocery. On the other side of Joe's block, people leave them at a candy store. Down a block they leave them at the coffee shop, and a few hundred feet around the corner from that, in a barber shop. Around one corner from two fashionable blocks of town houses and apartments in the Upper East Side, people leave their keys in a butcher shop and a bookshop; around another corner they leave them in a cleaner's and a drug store. In unfashionable East Harlem, keys are left with at least one florist, in bakeries, in luncheonettes, in Spanish and Italian groceries.

Practice with Analysis



1. Underline the thesis statement.
2. The topic/subject of the passage is _____.
3. The purpose of the passage is to ___inform___ persuade ___entertain.
4. Does the passage contain an extended example? _____
5. The passage contains how many examples? _____

6. Briefly list the examples. _____
7. The organization is ___chronological ___spatial ___least to most important ___most to least important.

Remarks About Passage

This informative passage uses a lengthy list of examples to indicate informally the relationship between people and businesses in a neighborhood. There is no single extended example, but rather a series of more than eight examples.



Tip: It's a good idea to actually mark up the passage as you answer the analysis questions. It will give you practice and help this process to become second nature to you.

Contrast/Comparison

Definition: Contrast/comparison is a method of presenting similarities and differences between or among at least two persons, places, things, ideas, etc. The contrast/comparison essay may be organized in several ways including:

- Subject by subject—Subject A is discussed in its entirety and is followed by a full discussion of subject B.
- Point by point—A major point related to A is examined and is immediately followed with a corresponding point in Subject B.
- Combination—In a longer essay, the writer may employ both of the strategies described above.

Here is an example of a passage that uses contrast/comparison from W. H. Auden's "Work, Labor, and Play."

Between labor and play stands work. A man is a worker if he is personally interested in the job which society pays him to do; and that which society views as necessary labor, is from his own point of view voluntary play. Whether a job is to be classified as labor or work depends, not on the job itself, but on the tastes of the individual who undertakes it. The difference does not, for example, coincide with the difference between a manual and a mental job; a gardener or a cobbler may be a worker, a bank clerk, a laborer. Which a man is can be seen from his attitude toward leisure. To a worker, leisure means simply the hours he needs to relax and rest in order to work efficiently. He is therefore more likely to take too little leisure than too much; workers die of coronaries and forget their wives' birthdays. To the laborer, on the other hand, leisure means freedom from compulsion, so that it is natural for him to imagine that the fewer hours he has to spend laboring, the more hours he is free to play, the better.

Practice with Analysis

1. The topic/subject of the passage is _____.
2. Underline the thesis statement.
3. The purpose of the passage is to ___inform ___persuade ___entertain.
4. The items being compared/contrasted are _____.
5. One example of a comparison in the passage is _____.
6. One example of contrast in the passage is _____.
7. The pattern of development is ___opposing ___alternating.
8. The organization is ___subject to subject ___point by point ___combination.

Remarks About the Passage

As with most of your AP contrast/comparison selections, the emphasis is on distinction and contrast. In this passage, the author uses a pattern of alternating points which develops the contrast between work, labor, and leisure.

Cause and Effect

Definition: Cause and effect establishes a relationship: B is the result of A. The cause-and-effect essay can emphasize the cause, or the effect, or can treat both equally. It can detail a single cause with many effects, or several causes with a single effect, or any combination. The organization can present the cause or the effect first. All of this depends upon the intent of the writer. Depending on his or her purpose, the writer can choose to present the most important idea in the beginning, middle, or end. The author can also choose from myriad strategies to develop the cause and effect, such as:

- facts
- statistics
- authorities
- anecdotes
- cases
- real or imagined scenarios



It should be noted that, in some cases, the successful writer of a cause and effect essay anticipates and addresses reader objections and/or questions.

Here is an example of a passage using cause and effect from Thomas Hobbes's "Of the Natural Condition of Mankind" (1651).

From this equality of ability arises equality of hope in the attaining of our ends. And therefore if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies; and in the way to their end (which is principally their own conservation, and sometimes their delectation only), endeavor to destroy or subdue one another. And from hence it comes to pass that where an invader has no more fear than another man's single power, if one plant, sow, build, or possess a convenient seat, others may probably be expected to come prepared with forces united to dispossess and deprive him, not only of the fruit of his labor, but also of his life, or liberty. And the invader again is in like danger of another.

Practice with Analysis



1. Underline the thesis statement.
2. The topic/subject of the passage is _____.
3. The purpose of the passage is to ___inform ___persuade ___entertain.
4. List the causes. _____.
5. List the effects. _____.
6. The emphasis is on ___cause ___effect ___causes ___effects.
7. The passage makes use of ___statistics, ___facts ___authorities ___anecdotes ___cases ___real/imaginary scenarios.

Remarks About the Passage

The entire focus of this paragraph is on the singular result of one person's envy for the possessions of another. If both cannot possess it, envy ensues, which leads to dispossession and/or violence.

Classification

Definition: Classification separates items into major categories and details the characteristics of each group and why each member of that group is placed within the category. It is possible to divide the categories into subgroups. The principle of classification should be made clear to the reader. (This is the umbrella term under which everything fits.)

Here is a passage that makes use of classification from Jane Howard's "All Happy Clans Are Alike."

... If blood and roots don't do the job, then we must look to water and branches, and sort ourselves into new constellations, new families.

These new families, to borrow the terminology of an African tribe (the Bangwa of the Cameroons), may consist either of friends of the road, ascribed by chance, or friends of the heart, achieved by choice. Ascribed friends are those we happen to go to school with, work with, or live near. They know where we went last weekend and whether we still have a cold. Just being around gives them a provisional importance in our lives, and us in theirs. Maybe they will still matter to us when we or they move away; quite likely they won't. Six months or two years will probably erase each from the other's thoughts, unless by some chance they and we have become friends of the heart . . . [Those] will steer each other through enough seasons and weathers so that sooner or later it crosses our minds that one of us . . . must one day mourn the other.

Practice with Analysis

3

1. The topic/subject of the passage is _____.
2. Underline the thesis statement.
3. The purpose of the passage is to ___inform___ persuade ___entertain.
4. Identify the principle of division/classification. _____.
5. List the main sub-groups. _____.
6. Cite the major characteristic(s) of each sub-group. _____.

Remarks About the Passage

This passage briefly details two classes of friends, one by chance and the other by choice. The thesis given at the beginning of the excerpt is stated in general terms that lead the reader to the specific classifications.

Process

Definition: Process is simply "how to" do something or how something is done. Process can have one of two purposes. It can either give instructions or inform the reader about how something is done. It is important

to understand that a clear process presentation must be in chronological order. In other words, the writer leads the reader step by step, from beginning to end, through the process. A clear process essay will define necessary terms and will cite any precautions if needed.

Here is a passage that makes use of process from L. Rust Hills's "How to Care for and About Ashtrays."

To clean ashtrays the right way, proceed as follows. Take a metal or plastic or wooden (but never a basket) wastebasket in your left hand, and a paper towel in your right. Approach the ashtray that is to be cleaned. Put the wastebasket down on the floor, and with your released left hand pick up the ashtray and dump its contents of cigarette ends, spent matches, and loose ashes (nothing else should be in an ashtray!) into the wastebasket. Then, still holding the ashtray over the basket, rub gently with the paper towel at any of the few stains or spots that may remain. Then put the ashtray carefully back into its place, pick up the wastebasket again, and approach the next ashtray to be cleaned. It should never be necessary to wash an ashtray, if it is kept clean and dry. Throughout its whole lifetime in a well-ordered household, an ashtray need never travel more than three feet from where it belongs, and never be out of place at all for more than thirty seconds.

Practice with Analysis



1. Underline the thesis.
2. What is the topic/subject? _____.
3. The purpose is to ___give specific directions ___be informative.
4. List the major steps given in the selection. _____.
5. Is the essay in chronological order? ___yes ___no
6. List any words that are defined. _____.
7. Were there any other words that should have been defined? _____.
8. List any precautions given. _____.
9. The process presented is ___clear ___unclear ___complete ___incomplete.

Remarks About the Passage

The formal tone of such a menial process makes this small paragraph a bit humorous. Its clearly developed ashtray cleaning process is quite complete and needs no added definitions nor precautions.

Definition

Definition: Definition identifies the class to which a specific term belongs and those characteristics which make it different from all the other items in that class. There are several types of definitions: physical, historical, emotional, psychological, and relationship(s) to others.

An essay of definition can be developed using any of the rhetorical strategies, and the writer should decide whether to be serious or humorous. Here is a passage that uses definition.

BUGDUST

The dinner was fine, the play funny; let's hope my drive home will easily top off a relaxing and rewarding evening. What a surprise! Brightly perched on my car's windshield is a yellow ticket which not so brightly announces that I am being fined \$50.00 for an expired parking meter. Grabbing the thing and choking it, I exclaim, "Bugdust!"

Now, let's be honest. This ticket is neither an insect, nor is it dirt. So, am I blind, ignorant or just plain crazy? I hope none of the above. The expletive, "Bugdust," is my personal substitute for the ever-popular, overused and vulgar, four letter curses. My background forces me to avoid these common, rude and inappropriate four letter words. And, heaven only knows that over the years I've had many occasions where I would have loved to use them. For much of my young life, when I found myself in a situation which cried out for some sort of exclamation, I usually reverted to RATS! or CRUMB! Really harsh curses, huh? However, years ago I came upon a substitute by sheer accident.

I was helping out in the kitchen at my sorority house. While chopping onions, I accidentally slipped and cut my thumb quite badly. I really needed a way to express my surprise, pain, and fear. Nothing inside my head would allow me to scream the usual expletives words. (By the way, I sincerely believe that a good deal of money spent on psychotherapy could have been saved had I been able to "just say IT.") In that nanosecond, I wanted, I demanded that my mind come up with something—anything—that I could use. My mind obviously obeyed and began working at a frantic pace. "I hate insects; I hate housework." My mind works in strange ways; it's really warped. (Hmm, that's a word I should also define.) Put two abominable conditions together. Voila! Murf's rule = one new expression = BUGDUST. What a mind!

*The people around me during the birth of this little word-gem said, "What the *@#?! does that mean?" I had to stop for a second. They were right. What did it mean? It was not the incinerated remains of a roach colony. It was not the unkempt environs of a roach motel. It was a way for me to say that I was monumentally*

angry. It was also a way for me to say I was hurting. It was original and ME.

Years have passed. And, so today . . .

It's 15°; it's snowing and icy; I'm cold. Let's shop. I join the rest of the universe at the supermarket. Heaven only knows one needs rice crispy treats in the house when it snows. What I don't need is the keys locked in my car. BUGDUST!

I'm doing 7 mph behind a 1965 Volkswagen Beetle being driven by its original owner. I miss the green light. I'm late for my dental appointment. BUGDUST!

And, into cyberspace . . . My computer just crashed. BUGDUST!

Practice with Analysis

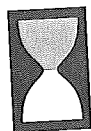


1. Underline the thesis.
2. The topic/subject is _____.
3. The purpose is to ___inform ___persuade ___entertain.
4. The attitude of the writer is ___serious ___humorous.
5. To what class does the word being defined belong? _____.
6. List the major rhetorical strategies used. _____.
7. The definition is ___historical ___physical ___emotional ___psychological ___relationship(s) to others.
8. Do you, as a reader, have an understanding of the definition presented? _____
9. Briefly state your understanding of the term. _____.

Remarks About the Passage

The topic of the essay is the definition of the expletive *bugdust*. The thesis is the fifth sentence of the second paragraph. The primary purpose is to inform using humor. The rhetorical strategies used throughout the essay are example [paragraph 1] and anecdote [paragraphs 3 and 4]. The definition of *bugdust* is primarily emotional [last two sentences in paragraph 3 and the last two sentences in paragraph 4].

Now it's your turn. Write a paragraph that defines a favorite word that is special or unique to you or your friends or family. Choose an attitude and go for it. When finished, ask yourself the same analytical questions you asked for the sample essay.



Narration

Definition: Narration is nothing more than storytelling. There is a beginning, a middle, and an end. Moreover, there's a point to it—a reason for recounting the story that becomes clear to the reader. There should be a focus to the story as well. For example, your point might be that lying gets you into trouble. To illustrate this, you might focus on an anecdote about the repercussions of a specific lie you told your parents. Narration requires a specific point of view, such as:

- 1st person
- 3rd person omniscient
- 3rd person objective
- stream-of-consciousness

A narrative generally revolves around a primary tension and employs character, plot, and setting. The point the author is trying to make corresponds to the literary term, *theme*. The development of a narrative may be extended and fully developed or brief to support or illustrate the subject of an essay.

The following excerpt from “Death of a Soldier” by Louisa May Alcott is an example of a narrative.

John was dying. Even while he spoke, over his face I saw a gray veil falling that no human hand can lift. I sat down by him, wiped drops from his forehead, stirred the air about him with a slow wave of a fan, and waited to help him die. For hours he suffered dumbly, without a moment's murmuring; his limbs grew cold, his face damp, his lips white, and again and again he tore the covering off his breast, as if the lightest weight added to his agony.

One by one, the other men woke, and round the hospital ward appeared a circle of pale faces and watchful eyes, full of awe and pity; for, though a stranger, John was beloved by all. “Old boy, how are you?” faltered one. “Can I say or do anything for you anywheres?” whispered another.

“Take my things home, and tell them that I did my best.”

Practice with Analysis



1. The topic/subject is _____.
2. The purpose is to ___inform___ persuade ___entertain.
3. The focus is _____.
4. The point of view is ___1st person___ 3rd person objective ___3rd person omniscient___ stream-of-consciousness.

5. The setting is _____.
6. The main character(s) is/are _____.
7. The gist of the plot is _____.
8. List the sequence of the major events (beginning, middle, end)

Remarks About the Passage

This brief excerpt is enough of a story to allow you to identify the basic narrative elements. Employing first person point of view, Alcott provides a beginning, middle, and ending to this episode that occurs in a hospital ward. Focusing on the boy's death, the author illustrates the quality of John's character.

Description

Definition: Description is writing that appeals to the senses. It can be objective, which is scientific or clinical, or it can be impressionistic, which tries to involve the reader's emotions or feelings. Description can also be direct or indirect, and the organization can be:

- chronological
- spatial
- emphasizing the most important detail
- emphasizing the most noticeable detail

To create his or her description, the writer can employ any or all of the following literary devices:

- analogy
- concrete, specific words
- appeals to the senses
- personification
- hyperbole
- contrast and comparison
- onomatopoeia
- other figurative language

The following excerpt from Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* uses description.

Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, where it flows among green aits and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among

tiers of shipping and waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex marshes, fog on the heights, fog creeping into the cabooses of [coal barges]. Fog lying out on the yards, and hovering in the rigging of great ships; fog drooping on the gunwales of barges and small boats. Fog in the eyes and throats of ancient Greenwich pensioners, wheezing by the firesides of their wards; fog in the stem and bowl of the afternoon pipe of the wrathful skipper, down in his close cabin; fog cruelly pinching the toes and fingers of his shivering little 'prentice boy on deck. Chance people on the bridges peeping over the parapets into a nether sky of fog, with fog all round them, as if they were up in a balloon, and hanging in the misty clouds.

Practice with Analysis



1. Underline the thesis.
2. The topic/subject of the passage is _____.
3. The description is ___objective ___impressionistic.
4. The passage contains examples of
 - ___analogy, ex. _____
 - ___concrete words, ex. _____
 - ___imagery, ex. _____
 - ___contrast/comparison, ex. _____
 - ___personification, ex. _____
 - ___onomatopoeia, ex. _____
 - ___other figurative language, ex. _____
5. The intended effect is to ___inform ___persuade ___entertain.

Remarks About the Passage

In its appeal to the senses, this loaded passage about fog contains about every descriptive device possible to recreate the almost palpable scene for the reader.

ABOUT STYLE

What Is Style?



Ask yourself a question—What is the difference between the comedy of Bill Cosby and Eddie Murphy? We would all agree that they are both

funny, but we would also say that each man has his own style. What makes Cosby's comedy different from Murphy's? Consider the following:

- subject matter
- language (diction)
- pacing
- selection of detail
- presentation—body language
- attitude toward his material
- attitude toward his audience

This is what we call style. You do this all the time. You know Jennifer Lopez has a different style than does Barbra Streisand.

If we were to give you two literary passages, you could probably tell which was written by Hemingway and which was written by Dickens. How would you know? Simple, you would use the same principles you considered with the two comedians:

- subject matter
- selection of detail
- point of view
- diction
- figurative language/imagery
- attitude
- tone
- pacing/syntax
- organization

See how easy it is? The AP English Language and Composition exam expects you to be able to recognize and to explain how these elements function in a given passage.

How Do I Talk About Style?

You need to understand and to refer to some basic writing terms and devices. These include subject matter, selection of detail, organization, point of view, diction, syntax, language, attitude, and tone.

What follows is a brief review of each of these *elements of style*. In this review, we define each device, cite examples, and provide practice for you. (In addition, we have incorporated suggested readings and writing for you.)

Subject Matter and Selection of Detail

Since these two are dependent on each other, let's look at them together. Unlike the poor, beleaguered AP Comp student who is assigned a topic,

each author makes a conscious decision about what he or she will write. (In most instances, so do you.) It is not hit or miss. The author wants to make a point about his or her subject and makes numerous conscious decisions about which detail to include and which to exclude. Here's an example. Two students are asked to write about hamburgers. One is a vegetarian, and one is a hamburger fanatic. You've already mentally categorized the details each would choose to include in making his or her points about hamburgers. Got it? Selection of detail is part of style.

✓ *Note:* Many authors become associated with a particular type of subject matter: for example, Mario Puzo with organized crime (*The Godfather*); Steven King with horror and suspense (*The Shining*), Upton Sinclair with muckraking (*The Jungle*). This, then, becomes part of their recognized style.

Think about a couple of your favorite writers, rock groups, singers, comedians, etc. and list their primary subjects and selection of details.

Organization

The way in which a writer presents his or her ideas to the reader is termed *organization*. You do this every day. For example, look at your locker. How are your books, jacket, gym clothes, lunch, etc. arranged in it? If someone else were to open it, what conclusion would that person draw about you? This is your personal organization. The same can apply to a writer and his or her work. Let's review a few favorite patterns of organization.

Writers can organize their thoughts in many different ways, including:

- ! •
- chronological
 - spatial
 - specific to general
 - general to specific
 - least to most important
 - most important to least
 - flashback or fast forward
 - contrast/comparison
 - cause/effect

✓ As with your locker, an outside viewer—known here as the reader—responds to the writer's organizational patterns. Keep these approaches in mind when analyzing style. (You might want to make marginal notes on some of your readings as practice.)

Point of View

Point of view is the method the author utilizes to tell the story. It is the vantage point from which the narrative is told. You've had practice with this in both reading and writing.

- *First person*: The narrator is the story's protagonist (I went to the store.).

Here is an example from Charles Dickens's *The Personal History of David Copperfield*.

Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show. To begin my life with the beginning of my life, I record that I was born (as I have been informed and believe) on a Friday, at twelve o'clock at night. It was remarked that the clock began to strike, and I began to cry, simultaneously.

- *Third person objective*: The narrator is an onlooker reporting the story (She went to the store.).

Here is an example from Sinclair Lewis's *Elmer Gantry*.

Elmer Gantry was drunk. He was eloquently drunk, lovingly and pugnaciously drunk. He leaned against the bar of the Old Home Sample Room, the most gilded and urbane saloon in Cato, Missouri, and requested the bartender to join him in "The Good Old Summer time," the waltz of the day

- *Third person omniscient*: The narrator reports the story and provides information that the character(s) is unaware of. (She went to the store unaware that in three minutes she would meet her unknown mother selling apples on the corner.).

Here is an example from Evan S. Connell's *Mrs. Bridge*.

Her first name was India—she was never able to get used to it. It seemed to her that her parents must have been thinking of someone else when they named her. Or were they hoping for another sort of daughter? As a child she was often on the point of inquiring, but time passed, and she never did.

- *Stream-of-consciousness*: This is a narrative technique that places the reader in the mind and thought process of the narrator, no matter how random and spontaneous that may be. (e.g., James Joyce's *Ulysses*)

Here is an example from William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*.

I dont know what I am. I dont know if I am or not. Jewel knows who he is, because he does not know that he does not know whether he is or not. He cannot empty himself because he is not what he is and he is what he is not. Beyond the unlamped wall I can hear the rain shaping the wagon that is ours . . . And then I must be, or I could not empty myself for sleep in a strange room. And so if I am not emptied yet, I am is.

- *Chorus*: Ancient Greek plays employed a chorus as a narrative device. The chorus, as needed, could be a character, an assembly, the playwright's voice, the audience, an omniscient forecaster.
- *Stage Manager*: This technique utilizes a character who comments omnisciently. (e.g., *Our Town*, *The Glass Menagerie*)
- *Interior Monologue*: This technique reflects the inner thoughts of the character.

Here is an example from Christopher Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin*.

I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording, not thinking. Recording the man shaving at the window opposite and the woman in the kimono washing her hair. Some day, all this will have to be developed, carefully printed, fixed.

Diction

Diction, also termed *word choice*, refers to the conscious selection of words to further the author's purpose. Once again, place yourself in the writer's position. How would you describe your date last weekend to your parents? Your peers? Yourself? We're guessing you used different words (and selection of details) for each audience. And, may we say, "good choice."

That personal note out of the way, a writer searches for the most appropriate, evocative or precise word or phrase to convey his or her intent. The author is sensitive to denotation, connotation, and symbolic aspects of language choices.

For example, let's look at "The evening invaded the street." Here James Joyce chooses a strong verb to express his thought. What do you associate with this word? Does it affect you? What if he had said, "The evening caressed the street?" Diction makes a difference. (By the way, the first example is from "Eveline," which is a story about a character's personal war with herself.)

Diction is placing the right word in the right place. It is a deliberate technique to further the author's purpose or intent. Diction builds throughout a piece so that ideas, tone, or attitude are continually reinforced. You should be able to identify and link examples of specific diction to the ideas, purpose, tone, or intent of the passage.

Let's Try Another

Here is the bare-bones sentence outline of a paragraph.

She heard the story and accepted its significance. She wept in her sister's arms. She went to her room alone.

Here is how Kate Chopin actually wrote her paragraph in “The Story of an Hour”:

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment in her sister's arms. When the storm had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.



Now, you highlight those changes in words/phrases which transform the whole tone of the passage.

In this brief paragraph that describes Louise's reaction to the news of her husband's death, we can easily see diction at work. The first and last lines use a negative word to establish her separation from other women. The adjective *paralyzed* is also contrasted with Louise's *sudden, wild abandonment*. The *storm* of grief is *spent*—as are her emotional responses. She is going *away* to be *alone* with herself.

See how the diction enriches the paragraph. Here, the reader begins to get a feeling for Louise's unique character.



Tip: When writing your essay write, “Diction IS . . .” or “An example of Salinger's diction IS. . .” Avoid saying, “Salinger *uses* diction.” It is a little point, but it is one which indicates that a mature writer is at work.

Figurative Language and Imagery

Imagery is the written creation of sensory experience achieved through the use of figurative language. Figurative language includes:

- analogy
- sensory description
- poetic devices, which include:
 - metaphor
 - simile
 - hyperbole
 - onomatopoeia
 - personification
 - oxymoron
 - metonymy
 - synecdoche
 - alliteration
 - assonance
 - consonance

As an example, here is a passage excerpted from Herman Melville's “Nantucket.”

And thus have these naked Nantucketers, these sea hermits, issuing from their anthill in the sea, overrun and conquered the watery world like so many Alexanders; parceling out among them the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans, as the three pirate powers did Poland. Let America add Mexico to Texas, and pile Cuba upon Canada; let the English overswarm all India, and hang out their blazing banner from the sun; two thirds of this terraqueous globe are the Nantucketer's. For the sea is his; he owns it, as Emperors own empires; other seamen having but a right of way through it. Merchant ships are but extension bridges; armed ones but floating forts; even pirates and privateers, though following the sea as highwaymen the road, they but plunder other ships, other fragments of the land like themselves, without seeking to draw their living from the bottomless deep itself. The Nantucketer, he alone resides and riots on the sea; he alone, in Bible language, goes down to it in ships; to and fro ploughing it as his own special plantation. There is his home; there lies his business, which a Noah's flood would not interrupt, though it overwhelmed all the millions in China. He lives on the sea, as prairie dogs in the prairie; he hides among the waves, he climbs them as mountain goats climb the Alps. For years he knows not the land; so that when he comes to it at last, it smells like another world, more strangely than the moon would to an Earthsman. With the landless gull, that as sunset folds her wings and is rocked to sleep between billows; so at nightfall, the Nantucketer, out of sight of land, furls his sail, and lays him to his rest, while under his very pillow rush herds of walruses and whales.



Can you recognize the different examples of figurative language used in this paragraph? List several now.

Syntax

Risking your closing the book, we are going to use the dreaded “G” word—*grammar*. Grammar refers to the function of words and their uses and relationship in a sentence. Syntax is the grammatical structure of sentences. Without syntax, there is no clear communication. It is the responsibility of the author to manipulate language so that his or her purpose and intent are clear to the reader.

Note: When we refer to syntax in the context of rhetorical analysis, we are *not* speaking of grammatical correctness, but rather of the deliberate sentence structure the author chooses to make his or her desired point.

We assume that you are already familiar with the basics of sentence structure and are able to recognize and clearly construct:

- phrases
- clauses
- basic sentence types: declarative, interrogative, imperative, exclamatory

- simple sentences
- compound sentences
- complex sentences
- compound–complex sentences

We also assume that you have a good working knowledge of:

- punctuation
- spelling
- paragraphing

If you are in doubt about any of these, refer to the English handbook section of your composition textbooks. We also recommend *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White. And, don't forget, your teacher is your major resource who can provide you with information and practice. Be honest with yourself. If you need help, get it early in the term.

Carefully read the following passage for *more practice with syntax*.



*It struck eight. Bella waited. Nobody came.
She sat down on a gilt chair at the head of the stairs, looked steadily before her with her blank, blue eyes. In the hall, in the cloakroom, in the supper-room, the hired footmen looked at one another with knowing winks. "What does the old girl expect? No one'll have finished dinner before ten."*

—(Mr. Loveday's *Little Outing*; "Bella Gave a Party," Evelyn Waugh, 1936)

Did you notice the following syntactical elements and their effects in this selection?

- Short declarative sentences
 - Repetitiveness is like the ticking of a clock
 - Immediately introduces tension
- Simple declarative sentence beginning with subject/verbs
- Parallel structure with phrases beginning with *in*
 - Pacing: clock ticking away time, uncaring
- Periodic sentence draws attention to the setting rather than the footmen
- Ends with a rhetorical question: reader drawn into the tension

You can see from just a brief analysis of the sentence structure of this passage that syntax plays an important role in the creation of character, setting, and tension.



We recommend that you choose brief passages from works which you study in your AP Comp class and practice this process on them throughout the year.

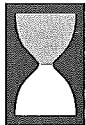
Here is a sentence structure activity you can use to review creating sentences using coordination and subordination.

Consider the following set of sentences.

I write.
 I have a writing problem.
 The problem is wordiness.
 This tendency leads me somewhere.
 It leads me to my writing awkward sentences.
 These sentences confuse my readers.
 I must edit my writing.
 I must be very careful.



Rewrite this set of simple sentences **THREE** different ways, with each new sentence containing **ALL** of the information given. Each new sentence is to emphasize a different simple sentence (main clause) given in the original set. Bracket the clause you are emphasizing in each new sentence.



Tip: You might wish to work on this type of activity throughout the year with your class or with an AP Comp study group that you have formed.

Tone and Attitude

We are guessing that these terms have confused you, as indeed, they have confused our own students in the past. Both terms refer to the author's perception and presentation of the material and the audience.

Tone, which often reinforces the mood of a piece, is easy to understand. Think of Edgar Allen Poe and the prevailing mood and tone of a short story such as "The Telltale Heart." There is no doubt that the single effect of this story is macabre horror, which clearly establishes the tone.

An author's attitude is not just the creation of a mood. It represents the stance or relationship the author has toward his or her subject. This type of analysis may require that you "read between the lines," which is the close reading of diction and syntax.

There are some basics for you to consider when determining tone and attitude.

The author can indicate several attitudes toward the reader:

- talking down to the reader as an advisor
- talking down to the reader as a satirist
- talking eye-to-eye with the reader as an equal
- talking up to the reader as a supplicant or subordinate

The attitude may also be formal or informal.

- Formal tends to use diction and syntax that are academic, serious, and authoritative.
- Informal is more conversational and engages the reader on an equal basis.

In “The Telltale Heart,” it is fairly obvious that the diction and syntax help to create a macabre tone. At the same time, Poe’s highly academic and mature diction and syntax create a formal attitude as he relates his tale to his reader as an equal.

Jonathan Swift in “A Modest Proposal” presents a satiric attitude as he speaks down to (instructs) his audience. Likewise, Charles Lamb in “A Dissertation on Roast Pig” engages his reader with an informal attitude in his satire.

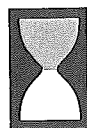
If you want to see a subservient or subordinate attitude, see Chief Seattle’s speech in our Practice Exam #1, essay question #1. Here, you will see how he employs diction and syntax to create a mocking humility that would serve his greater purpose.

The following is a list of adjectives often used to describe tone and attitude in a literary work. Feel free to add your own appropriate words.

bitter	objective	idyllic
sardonic	naïve	compassionate
sarcastic	joyous	reverent
ironic	spiritual	lugubrious
mocking	wistful	elegiac
scornful	nostalgic	gothic
satiric	humorous	macabre
vituperative	mock-serious	reflective
scathing	pedantic	maudlin
confidential	didactic	sentimental
factual	inspiring	patriotic
informal	remorseful	jingoistic
facetious	disdainful	détached
critical	laudatory	angry
resigned	mystified	sad
astonished		



Note: Be aware that tone and attitude are frequently described using a *pair* of words in the multiple-choice section of the AP English Language and Composition Exam. For example: *bitter and disdainful*. Both adjectives must apply for the question to be correct.



What follows is a set of activities that can provide practice recognizing and analyzing tone and attitude. We suggest you try them as you progress through your AP Comp course.

Consider the following passages:

Passage A

I am looking at a sunset. I am on the rim of the Grand Canyon. I have been on vacation for the past two weeks which I have been planning for over a year. I have always wanted to visit this geographic location. There are many people also looking at the same sight that I see. This is the first time I have witnessed this place and this event. There are many varied

colors while this sunset is taking place. The sun disappears behind the Canyon walls, and darkness comes quickly after that.

Passage B

It was Monday morning. The sun was out, and I walked into the meeting. I was expecting to find some new people there. They were. I was introduced to them. The room was warm. Coffee was served. The meeting began, and the subject was our budget for the next year. There was discussion. I did not agree with many of the people there. A vote was taken after a period of time. The new budget was passed.

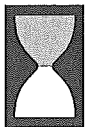
Passage C

I am looking at the new Wondercar. I am trying to decide whether or not to purchase or lease this car. It offers ABS, four wheel drive, a V-8 engine and the following extras: CD player, AC, power windows, door locks, etc., tinted glass, heated leather seats, a cellular phone, and luggage and ski racks. I would like the color forest green. The purchase price is \$48,500. The monthly leasing payment after a \$6,000 down payment would be \$589.00 for three years.



Using your knowledge of tone, rewrite each of the above passages so that a specific tone is evident to your reader. Identify that tone/attitude. Once you have written the new passage, highlight those changes in diction and syntax which help you to create the tone and attitude you wanted.

Here is another activity that will allow you to practice your skills with analyzing tone and attitude:



Locate reviews of films, music, plays, cars, sports events, or teams—anything you can find that has been reviewed or criticized. These reviews can come from newspapers and/or periodicals you locate in an actual publication, or they can be from a *real* newspaper or periodical with articles posted on the web. We suggest that you cut them out or print them out from the web.

Under each review:

- cite the source and the date of the review
- state the *tone* the reviewer has
- underline those words and/or phrases (*diction*) used in the review that support and or develop this *tone*

As an extra practice, you might try this. Follow the directions above. Only this time, you will be collecting the reviews for only *one* film, sports event, etc. Let's see. You could try *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *People*, or *Entertainment Weekly*. Of course, you may know of others. Terrific; feel free to use them.

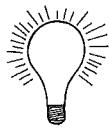
Again, try this with your class or study group. The more the merrier.



The following may serve as a final look at our review of style. We have been taking a rather concentrated look at some of the components of what the experts call “literary” style. As you know, two of the major components of style are: (1) the types of sentences an author chooses to

use (*syntax*); and (2) word choice (*diction*). Below is a sample paragraph that provides some further practice with these two areas. *This is the first, bare-bones draft.*

Last night was chilly. I went into New York City. I went to see a reading of a play. It was a new play. It was a staged reading. It was read at the Roundabout Theater. The Roundabout Theater is on Broadway. It is on the corner of 45th Street. The play was written by Ruth Wolf. She writes about historical people. This play is about Mary Shelley. She was the wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Percy B. Shelley was a poet. He is a very famous Romantic poet. Mary Shelley wrote books. She wrote Frankenstein. Many people know this novel. Many people really like the story. There were more than 200 people there. The play was long. It had two acts. It takes place in France and Italy. It also takes place in heaven and hell. There are three main characters. One character is Mary Shelley. One character is Percy B. Shelley. One character plays the archangel and the devil. There is a lot of talking. There is little action. I liked the talking. I wished there was more action. It is called a comedy. Many of the scenes were not comical. The play could not make up its mind. I do not think it will be produced.



1. Now, using your knowledge of syntax and diction, rewrite this paragraph using coordination, subordination, phrases, and so forth.
2. Once you have written a revised paragraph, work with someone and **REWRITE** it in a **new and different** way.

Here's an example of one way to revise the passage.

Last night, I went into chilly New York City to see a staged reading of a new play at the Roundabout Theater on the corner of 45th and Broadway. Ruth Wolf who is known for her productions about historical figures has written a play about Mary Shelley, the wife of the Romantic poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley. Many people know Mary Shelley as the author of the popular novel Frankenstein. The play takes place in France, Italy, heaven and hell with main characters; Mary, herself, Percy B. Shelley and an archangel who doubles as the devil. The drama contains much dialog and very little action, which I sorely missed. Billed as a comedy, this play seemed to be unable to make up its mind between being a comedy or a serious tragedy. Because of this problem, I don't believe this play has a real chance of being produced.

THE "CONNECTIVE TISSUE" ISSUE

Throughout this book, we use the term *connective tissue*. For us, this "tissue issue" has four components. The most obvious refers to transi

tions between paragraphs or sections of a piece. The other three are not as readily recognizable as is transition, but you need to know that they play a major role in the coherence of a written work. The mature reader and writer will learn to recognize and employ these elements:

- transition—indicates a logical connection between ideas;
- subject consistency—the subjects of the main clauses in a sequence of sentences is consistent (inconsistency is often the result of passive voice);

Example: no: The photography was by Ansel Adams. I have always been a fan of this great photographer. The temptation to buy the photo due to the price was quite strong.

yes: I have always been a fan of the great photographer Ansel Adams. Because of the price of one of his photographs, I was tempted to buy it.

- tense consistency—the use of the same tense throughout the selection

Example: no: When I have driven to work, I always used the same route.

yes: I always use the same route when I drive to work.

- voice consistency—use of the active voice and avoidance of the passive voice when possible

Example: no: The bear was seen when Tim opened the door.

yes: Tim opened the door and saw the bear.

Note: Another method of creating cohesion and topic adherence is the use of “echo words” or synonymous words or phrases throughout the selection.

Those authors you recognize as good writers are skilled at building connective tissue. You should be able to recognize and to employ it in your own work.

The following is a guide to transitional words and phrases.

Most often used and most “natural” transitions in sentences or brief sequences of sentences:

- and
- but
- or
- nor
- for
- yet

Some other commonly used transitions between paragraphs or sections of longer works:

- numerical: first, second, third, primarily, secondly, etc.
- sequential: then, finally, next

- additional: furthermore, moreover, again, also, similarly
- illustrative: for example, for instance, to illustrate
- contrast, comparison, alternative: on the other hand, nevertheless, conversely, instead, however, still
- cause and effect: therefore, consequently, as a result, accordingly
- affirmation: of course, obviously, indeed

Here is an activity that will provide practice with transitions. Using one of your essays, highlight all of the transitions and complete the following:



The following are the *transition words/phrases* that I have used to connect each paragraph to the one before it.

#2: _____

#3: _____

#4: _____

#5: _____

#6: _____

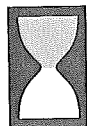
#7: _____

#8: _____

#9: _____

#10: _____

If you find that you are missing a needed transition between paragraphs, indicate that on the appropriate line that corresponds to that paragraph. Then, write the needed transitional word or phrase.



Tip: This practice activity should be one which you do as often as possible. You may wish to do this type of editing with your class or study group. No matter how you do it, just DO IT.

VOICE: PEN, PAPER, ACTION!

Writing is a living process. Good writing moves the reader clearly from point to point. Voice and pacing play a major role in this process. Subjects are responsible for their actions. In the context of rhetorical

analysis, the *first type of voice* is that “picture” of yourself as a writer that you consciously try to create for your reader. Just how do you want your reader to “see” and “hear” you: as confident, mature, knowledgeable, witty, reverent, friendly, caring, audacious . . .? What? This first type of voice is the result of all of the elements that make up style.

And, one of those components is the *second type of voice*. This type of voice refers to *active* or *passive voice*, which simply is the relationship between the subject and its verb. Almost every instructor or writer who teaches says one thing—“Use ACTIVE voice.”



Just What Is ACTIVE VOICE?

To answer this question, look at the following sentences:

The ball was thrown by Jessica.

1. What is the subject? _____
2. What is the verb tense? _____
3. Is the verb simple or compound? _____
4. What is the prepositional phrase? _____
5. How many words are in the sentence? _____

Jessica threw the ball.

1. What is the subject? _____
2. What is the verb tense? _____
3. Is the verb simple or compound? _____
4. Is there a prepositional phrase? _____
5. How many words are in the sentence? _____

Which of the two sentences has the subject of the sentence doing the action? _____

Which one has the subject being acted upon? _____

When the writing lets the reader know that the subject is *doing the acting*, you have ACTIVE VOICE. When the subject is acted upon or is the goal of the action, and, therefore, NOT responsible, you have PASSIVE VOICE.

With this information, now identify which of the two sentences above is active and which one is passive. Without doubt, we know you chose the second as active and the first as passive. Good for you.