

AP Language Exam – Essay Practice

For each essay in the packet (A-F), complete the following steps. Steps 1-3 may be word processed, but Step 4 must be handwritten. DO NOT use a dictionary, thesaurus or other reference tool (including terms list) on these essays. Each response should take between 30-40 minutes to complete.

1. Outline the essay prompt.

- A. **Background:** Explain the information you learn from the prompt itself and the judgments that you can make based on that information (underlined below). This information must be written out (not on the prompt itself) so that I can “see” your thinking, but you may use fragments. Consider the time period, writer/speaker, audience and purpose/additional information. Remember that this serves as scaffolding for your reading of the passage.

For the Banneker passage, this information could be outlined as follows:

- *1791: formal language; a letter to Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State to Washington.*
- *Writer: African American, son of former slaves & scientist. Has a vested interest in the fight against slavery; has moved way beyond the expectations of someone so closely connected to slavery.*
- *Audience Analysis: Jefferson wrote the “Declaration of Independence” so patriotism and freedom should be important to him; as a fellow writer, he may be more difficult to persuade, but also more appreciative of a good writer.*
- *Additional Info: purpose: to argue against slavery.*

- B. **Prompt Analysis:** Determine what the prompt is asking you to do. Each prompt will ask you to accomplish more than one task. Do not use words like “analyze” in your outline. Explain what you need to do (specifically and simply) in order to address the prompt.

For the Banneker passage, this information could be outlined as follows:

- *Identify Banneker’s position*
- *Identify and explain the use of the rhetorical strategies that reveal Banneker’s purpose. Focus on HOW he shows his purpose.*

2. Write the thesis statement. You must address all aspects of the prompt (from the analysis) in the thesis. If that means you need a thesis and method statement, write both. If it doesn’t, combine all aspects into one sentence. DO NOT REPEAT THE PROMPT (or main words from the prompt) – responding to it does not require using the same words.

3. Develop an outline for your essay. In outline form, write out how you would prove your thesis. Because you are not required to include concrete details from the passage in your response, you may want to use line numbers to reference particular parts of the passage instead. Each essay should take 2-3 paragraphs. A prompt that asks you to develop your own argument should take three paragraphs. You do not need to write complete sentences for your outline.

4. Using your outline, write out one paragraph for your essay. Make sure you mark which paragraph you are writing. DO NOT use a computer when writing. Get used to writing by hand in INK (as you will have to on the test). Consider finding that special pen that you can establish a relationship with, one that will sustain you through the many difficult essays in your future.

Your responses are due on **Friday, May 10.**

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total Time—2 hours

Prompt A

Question 1

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts one-third of the total essay section score.)

The passages below are from two different novels. In each passage, a man is proposing marriage. Compare the rhetorical strategies—such as arguments, assumptions, attitudes, diction—used by the speakers in the two passages and comment on both the intended and the probable effects of the proposals on the women being addressed.

Line
(5) "My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish. Secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly—which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness. Twice has she condescended to give me her opinion (unasked too!)
(10) on this subject; and it was but the very Saturday night before I left Hunsford—between our pools at quadrille,* while Mrs. Jenkinson was arranging Miss de Bourgh's foot-stool, that she said, 'Mr. Collins, you must marry. A clergyman like you must marry.—Chuse properly,
(15) chuse a gentlewoman for *my* sake; and for your *own*, let her be an active, useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way. This is my advice. Find such a woman as soon as you can, bring her to Hunsford, and I will visit her.' Allow
(20) me, by the way, to observe, my fair cousin, that I do not reckon the notice and kindness of Lady Catherine de Bourgh as among the least of the advantages in my power to offer. You will find her manners beyond anything I can describe; and your wit and vivacity I
(25) think must be acceptable to her, especially when tempered with the silence and respect which her rank will inevitably excite."

* a card game

—Jane Austen
(1813)

Line
(5) "You know what I am going to say. I love you. What other men may mean when they use that expression, I cannot tell; what *I* mean is that I am under the influence of some tremendous attraction which I have resisted in vain and which overmasters me. You could draw me to fire, you could draw me to water, you could draw me to the gallows, you could draw me to any death, you could draw me to anything I have most avoided, you could draw me to any exposure and disgrace. This and the confusion of my
(10) thoughts, so that I am fit for nothing, is what I mean by your being the ruin of me. But if you would return a favourable answer to my offer of myself in marriage, you could draw me to any good—every good—with equal force. My circumstances are quite easy, and you would want for
(15) nothing. My reputation stands quite high, and would be a shield for yours. If you saw me at my work, able to do it well and respected in it, you might even come to take a sort of pride in me:—I would try hard that you should. Whatever considerations I may have thought of against this offer,
(20) I have conquered, and I make it with all my heart. Your brother favours me to the utmost, and it is likely that we might live and work together; anyhow, it is certain that he would have my best influence and support. I don't know that I could say more if I tried. I might only weaken what is
(25) ill enough said as it is. I only add that if it is any claim on you to be in earnest, I am in thorough earnest, dreadful earnest."

—Charles Dickens
(1865)

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

1998

Prompt B

The College Board

Advanced Placement Examination

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total time—2 hours

Question 1

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts one-third of the total essay section score.)

Carefully read the following letter from Charles Lamb to the English romantic poet William Wordsworth. Then, paying particular attention to the tone of Lamb's letter, write an essay in which you analyze the techniques Lamb uses to decline Wordsworth's invitation.

January 30, 1801

- I ought before this to have reply'd to your very kind invitation into Cumberland. With you and your Sister I could gang anywhere. But I am afraid whether I shall ever be able to afford so desperate a Journey. Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't much care if I never see a mountain in my
- Line life. I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments, as
(5) any of your *Mountaineers* can have done with dead nature. The Lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street, the unnumerable trades, tradesmen and customers, coaches, wagons, playhouses, all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent Garden, the very women of the Town, the Watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles; —life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night, the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street, the crowds, the very dirt & mud, the Sun shining upon houses and pavements, the print
(10) shops, the old *Book* stalls, parsons cheap'ning books, coffee houses, steams of soup from kitchens, the pantomimes, London itself a pantomime and a masquerade, all these things work themselves into my mind and feed me without a power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impells me into night walks about the crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much *Life*. —All these emotions must be strange to you. So are your rural emotions to me. But
(15) consider, what must I have been doing all my life, not to have lent great portions of my heart with usury to such scenes?—
- My attachments are all local, purely local —. I have no passion (or have had none since I was in love, and then it was the spurious engendering of poetry & books) to groves and vallies. —The rooms where I was born, the furniture which has been before my eyes all my life, a book case which has
(20) followed me about (like a faithful dog, only exceeding him in knowledge) wherever I have moved, old tables, streets, squares, when I have sunned myself, my old school, —these are my mistresses. Have I not enough, without your mountains? I do not envy you, I should pity you, did I not know, that the Mind will make friends of any thing. Your sun & moon and skies and hills & lakes affect me no more, or scarcely come to me in more venerable characters, than as a gilded room with tapestry and tapers,
(25) where I might live with handsome visible objects.—

2007 AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)

Question 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

In the introduction to her book *Poison Penmanship: The Gentle Art of Muckraking*, investigative journalist Jessica Mitford (1917-1996) confronts accusations that she is a “muckraker.” While the term was used by United States President Theodore Roosevelt in a 1906 speech to insult journalists who had, in his opinion, gone too far in the pursuit of their stories, the term “muckraker” is now more often used to refer to one who “searches out and publicly exposes real or apparent misconduct of a prominent individual or business.” With this more current definition in mind, Mitford was ultimately happy to accept the title “Queen of the Muckrakers.”

Do you agree with Mitford’s view that it is an honor to be called a “muckraker,” or do you think that journalists who search out and expose real or apparent misconduct go too far in the pursuit of their stories? Explain your position in a well-written essay that uses specific evidence for support.

2006 AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)

Question 3

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

Read the following passage by the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860). Then write a carefully reasoned essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies one of Schopenhauer’s claims. Support your argument with appropriate evidence.

The difference between the effect that thinking for oneself and that reading has on the mind is incredibly great; hence it is continually developing that original difference in minds which induces one man to think and another to read. Reading forces thoughts upon the mind which are as foreign and heterogeneous to the bent and mood in which it may be for the moment, as the seal is to the wax on which it stamps its imprint. The mind thus suffers total compulsion from without; it has first this and first that to think about, for which it has at the time neither instinct nor liking.

On the other hand, when a man thinks for himself he follows his own impulse, which either his external surroundings or some kind of recollection has determined at the moment. His visible surroundings do not leave upon his mind *one* single definite thought as reading does, but merely supply him with material and occasion to think over what is in keeping with his nature and present mood. This is why *much* reading

20 robs the mind of all elasticity; it is like keeping a spring under a continuous, heavy weight. If a man does not want to think, the safest plan is to take up a book directly he has a spare moment.

25 This practice accounts for the fact that learning makes most men more stupid and foolish than they are by nature, and prevents their writings from being a success; they remain, as Pope has said,

“For ever reading, never to be read.”—*Dunciad*,
iii. 194.

30 Men of learning are those who have read the contents of books. Thinkers, geniuses, and those who have enlightened the world and furthered the race of men, are those who have made direct use of the book of the world.

2006 AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)

Question 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

In the following passage from George Bernard Shaw's play *Saint Joan*, which is based on the life of Joan of Arc (1412?-1431), Joan, a young French woman, is on trial in a church court for allegedly spreading heresy (beliefs at variance with established religious doctrine). Dressed in armor, Joan led the French troops against the English. She was eventually captured, turned over to the English, and then tried by French clerics who supported the English. The most serious crime she was charged with was her claim that she had received direct inspiration from God.

Carefully read the Inquisitor's speech to the church court whose members were to decide Joan's fate. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze the rhetorical strategies the Inquisitor uses to argue his case against Joan.

THE INQUISITOR [*dropping his blandness and speaking very gravely*] If you had seen what I have seen of heresy, you would not think it a light thing even in its most apparently harmless and even lovable and pious origins. Heresy begins with people who are to all appearance better than their neighbors. A gentle and pious girl, or a young man who has obeyed the command of our Lord by giving all his riches to the poor, and putting on the garb of poverty, the life of austerity, and the rule of humility and charity, may be the founder of a heresy that will wreck both Church and Empire if not ruthlessly stamped out in time. The records of the holy Inquisition are full of histories we dare not give to the world, because they are beyond the belief of honest men and innocent women; yet they all began with saintly simpletons. I have seen this again and again. Mark what I say: the woman who quarrels with her clothes, and puts on the dress of a man, is like the man who throws off his fur gown and dresses like John the Baptist: they are followed, as surely as the night follows the day, by bands of wild women and men who refuse to wear any clothes at all. When maids will neither marry nor take regular vows, and men reject marriage and exalt their lusts into divine inspirations, then, as surely as the summer follows the spring, they begin with polygamy, and end by incest. Heresy at first seems innocent and even laudable; but it ends in such a monstrous horror of unnatural wickedness that the most tender-hearted among you, if you saw it at work as I have seen it, would clamor against the mercy of the Church in dealing with it. For two hundred years the Holy Office has striven with these diabolical madnesses; and it knows that they begin always by vain and ignorant persons setting up their own judgment

against the Church, and taking it upon themselves to be the interpreters of God's will. You must not fall into the common error of mistaking these simpletons for liars and hypocrites. They believe honestly and sincerely that their diabolical inspiration is divine. Therefore you must be on your guard against your natural compassion. You are all, I hope, merciful men: how else could you have devoted your lives to the service of our gentle Savior? You are going to see before you a young girl, pious and chaste; for I must tell you, gentlemen, that the things said of her by our English friends are supported by no evidence, whilst there is abundant testimony that her excesses have been excesses of religion and charity and not of worldliness and wantonness. This girl is not one of those whose hard features are the sign of hard hearts, and whose brazen looks and lewd demeanor condemn them before they are accused. The devilish pride that has led her into her present peril has left no mark on her countenance. Strange as it may seem to you, it has even left no mark on her character outside those special matters in which she is proud; so that you will see a diabolical pride and a natural humility seated side by side in the selfsame soul. Therefore be on your guard. God forbid that I should tell you to harden your hearts; for her punishment if we condemn her will be so cruel that we should forfeit our own hope of divine mercy were there one grain of malice against her in our hearts. But if you hate cruelty—and if any man here does not hate it I command him on his soul's salvation to quit this holy court—I say, if you hate cruelty, remember that nothing is so cruel in its consequences as the toleration of heresy.

Question 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

In the following passage from *The Great Influenza*, an account of the 1918 flu epidemic, author John M. Barry writes about scientists and their research. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Barry uses rhetorical strategies to characterize scientific research.

Line
5 Certainty creates strength. Certainty gives one something upon which to lean. Uncertainty creates weakness. Uncertainty makes one tentative if not fearful, and tentative steps, even when in the right direction, may not overcome significant obstacles.

To be a scientist requires not only intelligence and curiosity, but passion, patience, creativity, self-sufficiency, and courage. It is not the courage to venture into the unknown. It is the courage to accept—indeed, embrace—uncertainty. For as
10 Claude Bernard, the great French physiologist of the nineteenth century, said, “Science teaches us to doubt.”

A scientist must accept the fact that all his or her
15 work, even beliefs, may break apart upon the sharp edge of a single laboratory finding. And just as Einstein refused to accept his own theory until his predictions were tested, one must seek out such findings. Ultimately a scientist has nothing to believe
20 in but the process of inquiry. To move forcefully and aggressively even while uncertain requires a confidence and strength deeper than physical courage.

All real scientists exist on the frontier. Even the
25 least ambitious among them deal with the unknown, if only one step beyond the known. The best among them move deep into a wilderness region where they know almost nothing, where the very tools and techniques needed to clear the wilderness, to bring order to it, do not exist. There they probe in a
30 disciplined way. There a single step can take them through the looking glass into a world that seems entirely different, and if they are at least partly correct their probing acts like a crystal to precipitate an order out of chaos, to create form, structure, and direction.

35 A single step can also take one off a cliff.

In the wilderness the scientist must create . . .
everything. It is grunt work, tedious work that begins with figuring out what tools one needs and then making them. A shovel can dig up dirt but
40 cannot penetrate rock. Would a pick be best, or would dynamite be better—or would dynamite be too indiscriminately destructive? If the rock is impenetrable, if dynamite would destroy what one is looking for, is there another way of getting
45 information about what the rock holds? There is a stream passing over the rock. Would analyzing the water after it passes over the rock reveal anything useful? How would one analyze it?

Ultimately, if the researcher succeeds, a flood
50 of colleagues will pave roads over the path laid, and those roads will be orderly and straight, taking an investigator in minutes to a place the pioneer spent months or years looking for. And the perfect tool will be available for purchase, just as laboratory
55 mice can now be ordered from supply houses.

Not all scientific investigators can deal comfortably with uncertainty, and those who can may not be creative enough to understand and design the experiments that will illuminate a subject—to know
60 both where and how to look. Others may lack the confidence to persist. Experiments do not simply work. Regardless of design and preparation, experiments—especially at the beginning, when one proceeds by intelligent guesswork—rarely yield the
65 results desired. An investigator must make them work. The less known, the more one has to manipulate and even force experiments to yield an answer.

2006 AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Prompt G

Question 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

The passage below is an excerpt from “On the Want of Money,” an essay written by nineteenth-century author William Hazlitt. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the rhetorical strategies Hazlitt uses to develop his position about money.

Line Literally and truly, one cannot get on well in the
world without money. To be in want of it, is to pass
through life with little credit or pleasure; it is to live
5 it is not to be sent for to court, or asked out to dinner,
or noticed in the street; it is not to have your opinion
consulted or else rejected with contempt, to have your
acquirements carped at and doubted, your good things
disparaged, and at last to lose the wit and the spirit to
10 say them; it is to be scrutinized by strangers, and
neglected by friends; it is to be a thrall to
circumstances, an exile in one’s own country; to
forego leisure, freedom, ease of body and mind, to be
dependent on the good-will and caprice of others, or
15 earn a precarious and irksome livelihood by some
laborious employment; it is to be compelled to stand
behind a counter, or to sit at a desk in some public
office, or to marry your landlady, or not the person
you would wish; or to go out to the East or West
20 Indies, or to get a situation as judge abroad, and return
home with a liver-complaint; or to be a law-stationer,
or a scrivener or scavenger, or newspaper reporter; or
to read law and sit in court without a brief; or to be
deprived of the use of your fingers by transcribing
25 Greek manuscripts, or to be a seal-engraver and pore
yourself blind; or to go upon the stage, or try some of

the Fine Arts; with all your pains, anxiety, and hopes,
and most probably to fail, or, if you succeed, after the
exertions of years, and undergoing constant distress of
30 mind and fortune, to be assailed on every side with
envy, back-biting, and falsehood, or to be a favourite
with the public for awhile, and then thrown into the
background—or a gaol,* by the fickleness of taste
and some new favourite; to be full of enthusiasm and
35 extravagance in youth, of chagrin and disappointment
in after-life; to be jostled by the rabble because you
do not ride in your coach, or avoided by those who
know your worth and shrink from it as a claim on
their respect or their purse; to be a burden to your
40 relations, or unable to do anything for them; to be
ashamed to venture into crowds; to have cold comfort
at home; to lose by degrees your confidence and any
talent you might possess; to grow crabbed, morose,
and querulous, dissatisfied with every one, but most
45 so with yourself; and plagued out of your life, to look
about for a place to die in, and quit the world without
any one’s asking after your will. The *wisecracs* will
possibly, however, crowd round your coffin, and raise
a monument at a considerable expense, and after a
50 lapse of time, to commemorate your genius and your
misfortunes!

(1827)

*jail