

# Scaling the AP Language Mountain: Managing the Paper Load for Rookie Rhetoricians Version 2.0

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# Sheryl L. Miller Hosey

- 21 years of teaching experience
- 15 years with current district
- 6 years teaching AP Language and Composition
- Specialization in teaching Shakespeare through performance, public speaking and theatre
- Traditional schedule in a suburban, upper-class school with 2,450 students. AP classes average 25-30 students; 3 sections offered
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# Quality vs. Quantity

- I believe that it is not about how MUCH students write; rather, it is about how WELL they write.
- Ultimately, students clearly benefit from learning how to write effectively even if they submit completed work less often as they would in a “traditional” writing class.
- Our time should be spent on assessing the students’ best work rather than rushed or sloppy work.

# Tips to Encourage Top-quality Student Work



- Students email thesis statements to teacher
  - Teacher can then provide specific, clear, personal response efficiently.
  - Thesis statement must be approved prior to a pre-set date/time.
- Use of comprehensive, interactive peer edit sheets and conferencing. See handout for example.
- Essay Reflections
  - Prior to submitting final essay, students compose a reflective piece (approximately 1/2 page) detailing thought process behind essay development and peer-editing experience. See handout for example.

# Tips to Encourage Effective and Efficient Assessment of Writing



- In research papers, students highlight citations (primary and secondary) in two different colors.
- In thesis-driven essays, students highlight thesis statement, topic sentences, and summative comment in the conclusion. See later slides for in-depth instruction on writing thesis statements.
- When focus is on specific rhetorical devices, sentence patterns, etc., have students identify and label them.

# Tips to Encourage Effective and Efficient Assessment of Writing



- Provide clear, specific instruction sheet/rubric.
- Grade portions of essay prior to completion so that it can be assessed in stages.
- Students assess other students' work using the AP rubric. Writer then defends or challenges that score. Teacher gives cursory read and grade of 1-9.

# Revision List



Students often complain about the inability to read and understand suggestions for improvements in their writing.

Therefore, by using a numerical system to indicate changes needed, teachers can efficiently provide clear, specific feedback that is constructive and easy to understand.

I require students to resubmit work for re-evaluation after edit/improvements are made. See handout for example.

# Strategies for the AP Language and Composition Classroom



The creative writing process can still be useful and valuable in an AP Language environment.

1. Getting to know your students as people rather than just scholars is essential; encourage them to write about themselves to help you learn about them. On the first day of school, I assign the shell essay (see handout for student sample by Christina Lauletta).



# Seashell Assignment

## (get to know your students)



### Sea Shell Assignment

This is a creative "get-to-know-you" writing assignment so that I can see the quality of your writing, creativity, and style/use of language. Write one paragraph telling me about yourself. The challenge is that you must include an analysis of your shell to reveal your true self. Below find a brief statement about me so that you can see an example. You do not need to include the explanation unless you feel as though it is necessary.

Please use standard MLA formatting (top left corner: your name, my name, class, date; times new roman 12 point font; double spaced). If you have any questions/concerns, please email me at [mh@millerhosey.com](mailto:mh@millerhosey.com).

### Example:

This shell is small but mighty. On the outside it has spines and sharp edges, but on the inside it is smooth and calming. On that side the deep purple and gold flecks remind the viewer that it is a special shell: one that can be easily misunderstood if only judged by its surface on the exterior.

### Explanation:

Yours should be longer, but I hope this gives you an idea as to what I mean. My favorite color is purple; my favorite jewelry tone is gold. Students often hear that I am a "tough" teacher, one who seems sharp and even mean. However, once people get to know me, they understand that underneath I am a very calming and kind person who will go to any length to help others. I have a true affection for my students and keep in touch with them way past high school. Some graduates from 15 years ago still email me.

## Strategies:



2. To add a bit of poetry, students create one per season and must use certain teacher-identified devices. Students label them on the poem.

Please see handout for poem by Jaclyn Sattler entitled “Fall.”

# Strategies:



## 3. Games!

- You've Been Sentenced



- A board game that can be purchased and adapted for use in the classroom (McNeill Designs)

- Rhetorical Devices games

- Cards found *Within 5 Steps to a 5* (McGraw-Hill)

- Terms Triple Play (Applied Practice)



# Strategies:



4. Creating the thesis statement. This is one of the most important skills for a student to learn (at any level).

I explain that writing is like baking; we all start with a strict recipe, and then once we get really good at it, we adapt it to our tastes. My way is not the only way, simply what I prefer.

# Writing a Thesis Statement

The MH method to successful  
academic writing

# A literary thesis statement must have five parts.

## Think TAGQB

- **T**itle of work (correctly punctuated)
- **A**uthor (full name)
- **G**enre
- **Q**uestion/prompt answered: Point that is being made/what is proven in the essay/answer to the question
  - This **MUST** be controversial
- **B**ig picture connection

# Examples

(without the big picture/ lesson learned connection)

- In the play *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare, Hamlet experiences internal conflict because he is in love with his mother.
- In the short story “Hills Like White Elephants,” by Ernest Hemingway, the hills represent a pregnant woman who does not want to keep her baby.

# The “What???” Factor

- Thesis statements
  - must be controversial
  - must make a reader stop and consider the topic
  - are short and succinct, strong, simple yet sophisticated
  - by nature, will make people wonder and argue about its correctness and value



# Writing About Themes

- A theme, at this level of literary study, should not be one word; “love” is not a theme. It is a topic.
- A theme should be composed in one of two ways:
  - A versus statement (each side opposes the other)
  - A subject/verb statement

# Examples of versus statement themes

- appearance versus reality
- man versus nature
- black versus white
- love versus lust
- honesty versus deception

# Examples of subject/verb statement themes

- How one appears is not necessarily how he is in reality.
- No matter how much humans think they have control over themselves and others, nature's power almost always trumps humanity's.
- The belief that white men are more valuable than blacks is prevalent in Southern literature.
- The love the character feels for his wife is more important than the lust that occupies his mind.

# Things to remember while writing thesis statements

- It cannot simply be a statement of fact.
- It DOES NOT include the three main points that will prove that the thesis is correct and worthy.
- It is only ONE sentence.

# Checklist to consider while writing thesis statements

- Does your thesis statement respond directly to the prompt/question?
- Does your thesis contain a definite statement?
- Is your thesis an arguable claim?
- Does your thesis show you have knowledge about your topic?

## Checklist (cont.)

- Does your thesis illustrate a passionate perspective?
- Is your statement neither too specific nor too broad?
- Can you provide evidence to back up your thesis? (quotes from the text)

# Approaches to writing an excellent thesis statement

- Brainstorm
  - list/web of written words
  - drawings/doodling
  - talking
  - combination of above idea generators
- Narrow the focus.
- Draft a statement that is interesting/  
controversial and includes all four parts (see  
earlier slide).
- Email it to MH for approval and comments.

# Strategies: Grade in Stages



- Thesis statement emailed and approved (sometimes it takes a dozen passes to get it right).
- Doggy draft (the rough rough draft). Thank you Dr. Donald Stoll of Rowan University for that gem; it gets a laugh every time!
- Main points/examples approved.
- Write first draft.



# Strategies: Know where you are going before you get there.



- Create/Adapt AP Language and Composition Essential Questions (see handout).
- Simplify/Clarify instructions (see handout for an example of an explanation of figurative language and tropes).
- Begin the year with rhetorical analysis (see handout for rhetorical term paper #1).

# Seven Assignments to Teach Writing



- Be sure to provide:
- Clearly written assignment (consider a checklist)
- Well defined rubric
- Examples of student writing (feel free to use those included with this presentation).
- Feedback on stages of the creation of the writing piece (do not wait until the paper is finished—that is too late).

# Assignment One:

## Style and Tone



In a five-paragraph, formal essay, analyze Toni Cade Bambara's use of style and tone in her characterization of Sylvia in the short story, "The Lesson." See handout for full assignment with preparation work.

Sheryl Miller Hosey, 2009.

# Examples of style/tone essays



Please see handout for essays by

- Jessica Michels
- Alex Rose
- Viktoriya Kecherak
- Jack Franklin

# Assignment Two:

## Nonfiction Unit Using an Analysis Essay



- Unit consists of excerpts from Douglass, King, Lincoln, Malcolm X, Obama, Jefferson, Chief Seattle.
- Students must create their own AP prompt and answer it.

# Example of nonfiction assignment

## Nonfiction Analysis Essay Grade Rubric

This writing assignment must include a minimum of two works we have read within this nonfiction unit and be a standard five-paragraph essay. It should also include an analysis of the use of argumentation, persuasion, and/or diction.

Prompt (20 points)

Introduction (15 points)

- Three sentence minimum 3 points

- A powerful opening sentence that grabs the reader's attention 2 points

- Thesis sentence that clearly explains your position on the topic (answering the prompt you created) 5 points

- Evidentiary overview, arranged effectively 5 points

Main Points (100 points)

- Topic sentences with clear ideas (sentences also provide transitions) 20 points

- Intelligent, thoughtful development with specific details 40 points

- Relevant, integrated quotes and examples (with citations) 20 points

- Closing sentences that synthesize and re-align on the topic 20 points

Conclusion (15 points)

- Restates thesis in a clear, concise, and powerful manner 5 points

- Provides synthesis and evaluation 10 points

Conventions (25 points) Formal essay conventions are to be followed.

Total=175

Sheryl Miller Hosey, 2007.

# Example of student nonfiction essay



Please see handout for essays

- Joy Wang compares the inaugural addresses of Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Barack Obama.
- Gabriela Vogeley compares MLK and Malcolm X.
- Maura Reilly compares The Declaration of Independence to Cady Stanton's "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions."
- Sam Sadow compares MLK's "I Have a Dream" and Obama's first inaugural address.
- Ronit Shvarzman also compares MLK and Obama.

# Assignment Three:

## Fiction/Nonfiction Essay



Pair *The Great Gatsby* or *The Grapes of Wrath* with a non-fiction piece that is in some way related to it. To help you get started, check in the shared folder under “Miller Hosey”; then open the “shortcuts to fiction/non-fiction” folder. There you will find resources for the non-fiction piece. The materials are on reserve for you behind the circulation desk.

Read the companion non-fiction piece and analyze that and the novel of your choice in terms of their similarities and their differences. Look at how the writer of each piece effectively transmits character, theme, and any other literary elements. You will need to draw at least three parallels or distinctions between the styles of the two pieces in whatever configuration you decide (three parallels, two parallels and one distinction, etc.).

This is an extended five paragraph research essay. You need to include quotes and the appropriate citations. Your paper should be at least two pages in length, 1” margins, times new roman 12. It will be graded on the following rubric:

See handout for complete assignment with rubric and sample essays from Katie Bagdon and Deanna Della Pia.





# Assignment Four:

## Synthesis Essay Practice: Tiger Moms



(Based on AP List Serve Ideas)

See handout for the sources that coincide with this assignment.

Prompt #1: Much attention has been given lately to Amy Chua's recently released memoir *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*. After having her excerpt published in *The Wall Street Journal*, Chua has received fierce criticism, even a couple of death threats, because of her stance on parenting. In an essay that synthesizes at least three of the sources for support, evaluate the most important factors that a parent should consider when trying to achieve the best for his or her child.

Prompt #2: In an essay that synthesizes at least three of the sources for support, evaluate whether society should or should not have a say in a parent's decision to help his or her child achieve his/her best.

Your essay will be evaluated on your response to the prompt and the use of sources to support your position. Standard formal English as well as MLA conventions should be used.

# Synthesis Essay Rubric (Tiger Moms)

Synthesis Essay/Tiger Moms

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Prompt Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Introduction \_\_\_\_\_/15

- three sentence minimum (3)
- powerful opening sentence (2)
- thesis sentence/answer to prompt (5)
- evidentiary overview (5)

Evidence \_\_\_\_\_/70

- topic sentences (10)
- development (20)
- quotes and examples from three sources and seamlessly incorporated (20)
- show connections between sources (10)
- closing sentences (10)

Conclusion \_\_\_\_\_/15

- restates thesis (5)
- synthesis and evaluation (5)
- explain the logic as to how you arrived at the conclusion you did, based on the information provided in the sources (5)

Conventions \_\_\_\_\_/25

- Attribute both direct and indirect citations
- Standard English

• Total: \_\_\_\_\_/125

# Synthesis essay example



Please see handout for related article by Joy Wang published in *The Bucks County Courier Times* and the essay written by Martin Silberberg.

# Assignment Five:

## Argument Essay



### Rogerian Arguments

In cases involving tense situations or highly sensitive issues, the techniques of Carl Rogers can prove especially helpful. Rogers was a noted psychotherapist who developed a procedure for presenting what he called “the nonthreatening argument.” He believed that people involved in a debate should use clear and honest communication in order to achieve a resolution of the issue at hand. This approach focuses on the attempt to recognize common ground and then arrive at a solution that addresses the needs of both parties. Writers who follow Rogerian approaches seek to understand the perspectives of those with whom they disagree, looking for “both/and” or “win/win” solutions (rather than “either/or” or “win/lose” ones) whenever possible.

Below are listed the techniques that a Rogerian argument uses:

- A clear, objective statement of the problem or issue
- A clear, objective summary of the opposition’s position that shows you understand its point of view and goals
- A clear, objective summary of your point of view, stated in nonthreatening language
- A discussion that emphasizes the beliefs, values, and goals that you and your opposition have in common
- A description of any of your points that you are willing to concede or compromise
- An explanation of a plan or proposed solution that meets the needs of both sides

(see handout for rubric and detailed instructions)

# Argument Essay

In an argumentative essay what matters is not the position you take or the topic you choose but rather how effective you are at making your argument.

You will need to accomplish the following as you prepare to write the essay:

- An “although/because” statement (working thesis): Example: Although many people support the concept of using professional note takers in college, it is in fact detrimental to education because it encourages students to miss class, it is a form of cheating, and it does not challenge students to excel.
- An analysis of your audience (me): Answer all of the questions listed on page 275 in *Steps to Writing Well*.
- A clear outline of your argument: Which pattern do you think will fit most logically with your thesis? (see page 277 in *Steps to Writing Well*)
- A logical argument (see page 279-280 in *Steps to Writing Well*)
- A pro/con t-chart: Make sure you consider both sides of your position.
- Several forms of supporting evidence: (see page 280-1 in *Steps to Writing Well*)

Your final product will be an argumentative essay of at least 2 pages in length. It must be typed, double spaced, 1” margins, and will be graded with the rubric on the back of this page.

Sheryl Miller Hosey, 2009

# Argument Essay



See handout for informative speech assignment that accompanies this essay.

See handout for student examples:

- Viktoriya Kucherak discusses juvenile offenders in an adult criminal justice system.
- Ronit Shvarzman addresses “Islam Meets the Western World.”
- Christina Lauletta argues for homosexual adoption. Fully processed draft is included.

# Assignment Six:

## This I Believe



- Good Night, and Good Luck
  - Please see handout for introduction from Dr. Stacey Aronow, Souderton Area School District.
- Edward R. Murrow's rhetoric provides inspiration for both the written and spoken word.
- See handout for supplemental materials.

# Assignment Seven:

## Ethos/Pathos/Logos Essay



Written response to three essays from *50 Essays: A Portable Anthology*

- ❖ Write an essay explaining how Angelou (“Graduation”) uses figurative language to serve her rhetorical purposes.
- ❖ Write an essay that discovers how Mairs (“On Being a Cripple”) uses humor. How does this serve her rhetorical purposes?
- ❖ Evaluate the effectiveness of Hearne’s argument (“What’s Wrong with Animal Rights?”) and how she serves her rhetorical purposes.
  - ✓ First consider SOAPStone. Then figure out an answer to one of the above questions.
  - ✓ Your essay should be typed, double spaced, one inch margins, Times New Roman font, size 12. It should have a heading in the upper left hand corner.
  - ✓ Your essay will be graded using the following rubric:

Intro (includes thesis and 3 main points)	<u>    </u> /10
Body 1	<u>    </u> /25
• Ts	<u>    </u> /5
• Dev	<u>    </u> /15
• Clincher	<u>    </u> /5
Body 2	<u>    </u> /25
• Ts	<u>    </u> /5
• Dev	<u>    </u> /15
• Clincher	<u>    </u> /5
Body 3	<u>    </u> /25
• Ts	<u>    </u> /5
• Dev	<u>    </u> /15
• Clincher	<u>    </u> /5
Conclusion	<u>    </u> /5
Conventions	<u>    </u> /10
Total Points	<u>    </u> /100



# Ethos/Pathos/Logos Essay



See handout for supplemental information on the teaching of this popular topic.

## Student Examples:

- Ronit Shvarzman discusses Maya Angelou's "Graduation."
- Hamzah Shariff interprets Nancy Mairs's "On Being a Cripple."

# AP Language Exam Evaluation

- After students have taken the AP Language exam, this evaluation is an opportunity for them to reflect on their preparation and experience.
- Please see handout for evaluation form.

# Thank You

- The students of Council Rock High Schools:  
Katie Bagdon, Deanna Della Pia, Jack Franklin, Viktoriya Kucherak, Christina Lauletta, Jessica Michels, Drew Musto, Maura Reilly, Alex Rose, Sam Sadow, Jaclyn Sattler, Hamzah Shariff, Ronit Shvarzman, Martin Silberberg, Braun Taylor, Gabriela Vogeley, Joy Wang
- Council Rock School District for copying materials
- AP Language and Composition teachers at Council Rock High Schools North and South, and Souderton Area School District.

# Closing Comments

- Time to think/pair/share!
- Questions/Answers