



# **STUDYRESOURCES**

## **DISCORD**

### **AP EXAM 2020**

### **Notes**

**<https://t.me/studyresources3>**



AP Lit this year is a test of how well you know the AP Lit rubric. Learn it and learn it well.

## 2: Exam Directions - ONLY READ BEFORE THE EXAM

### 2.1: What it says

- *The following excerpt is from [text and author, date of publication]. In this passage, [comment on what is being addressed in the passage]. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how [author] uses literary elements and techniques to [convey/portray/develop a thematic, topical, or structural aspect of the passage that is complex and specific to the passage provided].*
- Example: *The following excerpt is from an 1852 novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne. In this passage, two characters who have been living on the Blithedale farm—a community designed to promote an ideal of equality achieved through communal rural living—are about to part ways. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Hawthorne uses literary elements and techniques to portray the narrator’s complex attitude towards Zenobia.*

### 2.2: What this means for you

- Do not waste any time trying to figure out the directions during the exam. You literally do not have the time to spare. Understand them before you take the exam.
- Pay attention to the background! This will be especially important for the sophistication point discussed in 3.4
- “Literary Techniques” does not necessarily mean figurative language - simply listing off types of figurative language is insufficient. You must explain how each technique relates to your thesis. These include the style and forms of choices that the author makes.
- It is critical that you understand what the prompt is asking for

## 3: Recommended essay format to hit all 6 points:

### 3.1: [The Rubric](#) (see Q2 only)

- 1 point for a defensible on topic, relevant thesis that discusses literary devices
  - You must hit all of those properties to get the point
- 4 points for evidence and commentary
  - No direct quotes/line citations = Max 1 point
- 1 point for “sophistication” - basically you’ve gotta act like an english teacher and dive wayyyy too deep into the text

### 3.2: The Introduction Paragraph

- The introduction paragraph is crucial - no thesis point means max score = 2/6
- Your intro must do 3 things: include the thesis, introduce the text, and "demonstrate sophistication of thought and a complex literary argument."
- Recommended template:
  - **Grabber**: Generalization about life, snapshot of whole piece, or narrow in on a specific word or phrase from the piece
  - **TAG** - Title (if any), Author, Genre (novel, short story, play, etc.)
  - **Thesis**
  - **Thematic statement** - briefly explain what the text reveals about the human condition
- Example from the [2018 AP Lit Prose Analysis](#):
  - **How do you reconcile your former understanding of someone with the new person he appears to be?** In the provided **excerpt from Hawthorne's novel**, the narrator struggles to accept the seemingly new version of Zenobia, and frustrated with the superficiality she employs, attempts to break her façade and to gage a more honest understanding of who she has become. **Through the use of strongly unfavorable diction to underscore Zenobia's unpleasant and false disposition and repeated insitances on her actions as performance, Hawthorne portrays the narrator's attitude towards Zenobia as one of contempt and disapproval. Ultimately, Zenobia's splendor illustrates the corrupting influences of luxury.**
- Important: your thesis is not a statement of fact. "Hawthorne uses unfavorable diction" earns no points. "Hawthorne uses unfavorable diction *in order to X*" does earn the point.
  - The easiest way to structure your thesis is this: "Using an [adjective] [device] and a [adjective] [device], [author] conveys his [adjective] yet [adjective] attitude/relationship/concept"
    - **Example**: By using a disgusted tone towards Zenobia and an icy shift in demeanor towards her, Hawthorne conveys the speaker's repulsed yet dazzled attitude towards Zenobia, illustrating the speaker's hatred towards opulence.
    - Possible devices are outlined in section 4

### 3.3: Body Building

- For full points, your essay must do all of the following: Provide specific evidence, consistently relate the evidence to your thesis, and do so for multiple rhetorical devices
- It's easiest for me to follow the same base rule: **Assertion**, **Evidence**, **Commentary**
  - Start each paragraph with an assertion, then provide a piece of evidence to back up your claim, then relate that evidence back to your original thesis
    - Repeat Evidence-commentary as many times as necessary per Assertion

- Commentary is very important and should not only be limited to simple ideas. Ask yourself why the author is writing this, and how they are doing so. Commentary can also include your own questions regarding the text (these questions should serve to move your essay in a progressive direction) - and they'll help you earn that "sophistication" point too!
- Example: Throughout the passage, the narrator's contempt for Zenobia is also mixed with his criticism of her superficiality. He describes her as an "illusion," "a great action," underscoring her habit of hiding her true self and authentic emotions. The narrator repeatedly states that Zenobia "[seems] to be acting" and wonders when, or if ever, he has "beheld [her] in her truest attitude." Evidently, this defining falseness causes the narrator to both distrust and detest Zenobia. He longs to witness and genuine reaction from her, whether good or bad, simply to learn if she is capable and willing of any form of emotional vulnerability. This thirst for "a glimpse of something true" reveals his struggle to accept this new version of the woman he once knew, who has now become "self-complacent, condescending," and inauthentic.

### 3.4 Sophistication

- Assuming you've done everything right, you should've gotten "sophistication" somewhere in the last body paragraphs, but now you've really got to hammer it in
- Employing a deliberate style or syntactical structure to your paper will also help in furthering your sophistication. Try to employ these in a way that is vivid and persuasive (remember it should help your paper, not hurt it!)
- There are multiple ways to earn this point: exploring complexities within the passage, situating the text in a broader context, discussing opposing viewpoints, or just writing persuasively and vividly
  - Probably the easiest way to get this point is by unambiguously discussing an opposing viewpoint. The following is a good starter sentence:
    - Some readers might argue X. This argument [has merit/may be refuted/can be rejected] because Y ... (continue for a few lines)
- This is perhaps the hardest point to get, and you've really got to think critically here

## 4: Literary Devices You Can Write About

### 4.1 Figurative Language

- Allusions - are there biblical allusions or allusions to mythology made anywhere? If so, what effect do those allusions have? They help create an image in the reader's head and let them embrace the scene being described better if it's compared to a common character or event. Ex: Don't act like a Romeo in front of her. This example helps us realize that the guy is acting like a crazy lover and being extremely obvious when compared to Shakespeare's famous duo Romeo and Juliet.

- Similes - connecting two things together with the words "as" or "like". Ex: He was white as a ghost. He is acting like he was a monkey.
- Hyperbole - Extreme exaggeration. Ex: I'm so hungry, I could eat a horse
- Personification - giving an inanimate object human capabilities. Ex: The sheet danced around in the wind.
- Metaphor - comparing two very unrelated things. Ex: The world is my oyster. America is a melting pot
- Idiom - a common saying that has some more symbolic/deeper meaning. Curiosity killed the cat. You can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

#### 4.2 Structure

- The structure is usually indicating the structure of the entire excerpt in general like how many sections (paragraphs) and what is the general topic of each section.
- It could also be talking about the grammar of the sentences. Are they long sentences or short sentences? Are they compound sentences or simple sentences? Do the simple sentences indicate a sense of primitivism? etc.

#### 4.3 Diction

- The use of words that help indicate some sort of mood/tone. Words such as "gloomy", "dark", and "dreary" can be described as ominous diction. It might create a dreary and creepy tone to the entire excerpt. Words such as "sunny", "blossom", and "exuberant" reveal a more cheerful tone and can be called happy diction. (Don't use the same words to describe both literary devices).

#### 4.4 Mood

- Mood is setting a tone for how the reader should feel when going over your essay. Using proper tone is crucial. You do not want to have a casual, loose tone when writing your essay, but rather a more professional and informative tone. Use language that maintains the professionalist mood. It is what the reader is feeling while reading your essay. It's important to not have fluctuations in the mood especially when it comes to an analysis essay.

### 5: The DO and DON'T of the Prose Analysis

#### 5.1 DO

- Plug your essay through Grammarly or other proofreading software before submitting

#### 5.2 DON'T

- Use the words "you," "I," "the fact that," "shows," or almost any contractions

### Analyzing Complexity in Characterization

Expect to make multiple inferences about a character's nature, interest, and disposition

#### The Author's Setup

**POV:** The point of view chosen by the author determines how they wish to portray a character. For example a 3rd Person limited pov reveals a character's exigence or motivation behind actions in a piece, providing a more intimate understanding of the character's nature.

**Setting:** spatial and temporal

Different elements of the setting are *created* and influence the story, the characters, and the message.

There are two types of setting: spatial (location) and temporal (time).

Guide the trajectory of the story, as the writer will need to be true to the constraints of the setting.

The trick in analyzing setting is understanding where and how the setting influences each part of the story -- does it create more opportunities for characters to interact? Does it provide a conflict? Does it engender specific attitudes or serve as an impetus for a particular action or emotion?

In terms of contextualization characters do not exist in hermetically sealed vacuums, and so how a character interacts with the rest of the world will necessarily be impacted by his or her social and historical context provided by the author.

**Tone:** way the characters feel something -- how they express their emotions, how they speak about certain things, what they feel.

Key understanding of characterization is through tone; a character's feelings and emotions, particularly as regards a certain topic, will help to create your understanding of why the author made particular choices and how s/he executed them.

Tone is created through diction (specific word choice) and imagery; pay close attention to the language of the characters and of the world you are inhabiting, because the language will form the backbone of any analysis of tone that you perform.

#### *Tips on Understanding Characterization*

You'll need to pay close attention to any speech (diction, syntax), their interests and priorities, their backgrounds, their emotional connections, their social contexts, and even how they conduct themselves physically through space. (Are they agile hunters? Lethargic and lazy? Sick? Well? Particularly beautiful or ugly? Untraditional in their gender expression? How does their

physical form affect and impact the way they interact with the world, and influence how the world treats them?)

Characterization is often done indirectly through various literary devices (as outlined in Section 4)