

Introduction

An AP English Language and Composition course cultivates the reading and writing skills that students need for college success and for intellectually responsible civic engagement. The course guides students in becoming curious, critical, and responsive readers of diverse texts and becoming flexible, reflective writers of texts addressed to diverse audiences for diverse purposes. The reading and writing students do in the course should deepen and expand their understanding of how written language functions rhetorically: to communicate writers' intentions and elicit readers' responses in particular situations.

To support these objectives, this *AP English Language and Composition Course and Exam Description* delineates the knowledge and skills colleges and universities typically expect students to demonstrate in order to receive credit for an introductory college composition course.

This publication is not a curriculum. Teachers create their own curricula by selecting and sequencing the texts and tasks that will enable students to develop the knowledge and skills outlined in this document. In some cases, teachers also need to meet certain state or local requirements within the AP curriculum they develop for their school. The objective of this publication is to provide teachers with clarity regarding the content and skills students should learn in order to qualify for college credit and placement. The AP Program recognizes that the real craft is in the skill with which teachers develop and deliver instruction.

Students develop the skills of rhetorical analysis and composition as they repeatedly practice analyzing others' arguments, then compose their own arguments. As a model for teachers, the course content and skills are presented in nine units. The objective of this unit structure is to respect new AP teachers' time by suggesting one possible sequence they can adapt rather than having to build from scratch.

An additional benefit is that these units enable the AP Program to provide interested teachers with free formative assessments—the Personal Progress Checks—that they can assign their students at the end of each unit to gauge progress toward success on the AP Exam. However, experienced AP teachers who are satisfied with their current course organization and results should feel no pressure to adopt these units, which comprise an optional, not mandatory, sequence for this course.

Because these nine units only delineate the skills students should be developing across the AP English Language and Composition course but do not specify the content or themes students will study, teachers can assign a theme or title to each of the nine units (e.g., Humanity and Nature, Industry and Technology, Family and Community) or can dedicate multiple units to the same theme (e.g., Family and Community I, II, and III). This enables teachers to avail themselves of the scaffolded skill progressions detailed in each unit to help focus their students' learning and practice and then assign students the relevant Personal Progress Checks.