

AP[®] English Language and Composition: Syllabus 2

Syllabus 1058801v1



Scoring Components	Page(s)
SC1 The course requires students to write in several forms (e.g., narrative, expository, analytical, and argumentative essays) about a variety of subjects (e.g., public policies, popular culture, personal experiences).	2, 8–10
SC2 The course requires students to write essays that proceed through several stages or drafts with the revision incorporating, as appropriate, feedback from teachers and peers.	6
SC3 The course requires students to write in informal contexts (e.g., imitation exercises, journal keeping, collaborative writing, and in-class responses) designed to help them become increasingly aware of themselves as writers and/or aware of the techniques employed by the writers they read.	2, 6
SC4 The course requires students to produce one or more expository writing assignments. Topics should be based on readings representing a wide variety of prose styles and genres and might include such topics as public policies, popular culture, and personal experiences.	7–8
SC5 The course requires students to produce one or more analytical writing assignments. Topics should be based on readings representing a wide variety of prose styles and genres and might include such topics as public policies, popular culture, and personal experiences.	8, 10
SC6 The course requires students to produce one or more argumentative writing assignments. Topics should be based on readings representing a wide variety of prose styles and genres and might include such topics as public policies, popular culture, and personal experiences.	5, 8
SC7 The course requires nonfiction readings (e.g., essays, journalism, political writing, science writing, nature writing, autobiographies/biographies, diaries, history, criticism) that are selected to give students opportunities to explain an author's use of rhetorical strategies or techniques. If fiction and poetry are also assigned, their main purpose should be to help students understand how various effects are achieved by writers' linguistic and rhetorical choices.	4–6, 9
SC8 The course requires students to analyze how visual images relate to written texts and/or how visual images serve as alternative forms of texts.	3–4, 8, 11
SC9 The course requires students to demonstrate research skills and, in particular, the ability to evaluate, use, and cite primary and secondary sources.	7
SC10 The course requires students to produce one or more projects such as the researched argument paper, which goes beyond the parameters of a traditional research paper by asking students to present an argument of their own that includes the synthesis of ideas from an array of sources.	7
SC11 Students will cite sources using a recognized editorial style (e.g., Modern Language Association (MLA), The Chicago Manual of Style, American Psychological Association (APA), etc.).	6–7
SC12 The AP teacher provides instruction and feedback on students' writing assignments, both before and after the students revise their work that help the students develop a wide-ranging vocabulary used appropriately.	4
SC13 The AP teacher provides instruction and feedback on students' writing assignments both before and after the students revise their work that help the students develop a variety of sentence structures.	3–4, 11
SC14 The AP teacher provides instruction and feedback on students' writing assignments, both before and after the students revise their work that help the students develop logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques to increase coherence. Such techniques may include traditional rhetorical structures, graphic organizers, and work on repetition, transitions, and emphasis.	3, 5, 9
SC15 The AP teacher provides instruction and feedback on students' writing assignments both before and after they revise their work that help the students develop a balance of generalization and specific, illustrative detail.	3
SC16 The AP teacher provides instruction and feedback on students' writing assignments both before and after they revise their work that help the students establish an effective use of rhetoric including controlling tone and a voice appropriate to the writer's audience.	2

Course Overview

The course overview and objectives for the course are taken from the *AP® English Course Description* published by the College Board. The choice of texts is based on the representative authors list found therein. With the exception of Mark Twain, all authors chosen for the course come from that particular list, a list that is predominantly nonfiction. In addition, since the stated purpose of the course is to “emphasize the expository, analytical, and argumentative writing that forms the basis of academic and professional communication,” it is most appropriate that the reading selections provide models for such writing. The course textbooks, along with complete publication data, are listed in the Teacher Resources section at the end of this syllabus.

SC1—The course requires students to write in several forms (e.g., narrative, expository, analytical, and argumentative essays) about a variety of subjects (e.g., public policies, popular culture, personal experiences).

Course Planner

Fall Semester

The fall semester is dedicated to developing fluency in key aspects of argumentative writing, introducing critical thinking strategies and the canons of rhetoric, reviewing key style concepts, and exploring major themes in expository and argumentative writing.

SC3—The course requires students to write in informal contexts (e.g., imitation exercises, journal keeping, collaborative writing, and in-class responses) designed to help them become increasingly aware of themselves as writers and/or aware of the techniques employed by the writers they read.

Assertion Journals

In the first eight weeks, students receive one quote per week from a writer whom we will be studying sometime during the course of the year. For each quote, students must provide a clear explanation of the writer’s assertion, then defend or challenge it, noting the complexity of the issue and acknowledging any possible objections to the student’s point of view. These “short writes” are only 300 to 400 words, just enough to practice a key concept in argumentation: acknowledging alternative points of view. Students will also create “short writes” analyzing the rhetorical devices used in the quotes. Finally, students will identify and practice using language that develops tone and style. **[SC1, SC3 & SC16]** As the students become comfortable with these informal pieces of writing, and as we review components of clarity and style, students must include one example of each of the following syntactical techniques in their assertion journals: coordination, subordination, varied sentence beginning, periodic sentence, and parallelism. As students develop a sense of their own style through

SC16—The AP teacher provides instruction and feedback on students’ writing assignments both before and after they revise their work that help the students establish an effective use of rhetoric including controlling tone and a voice appropriate to the writer’s audience.

sentence structure, they also learn organizational strategies such as parallel structure, transitional paragraphs, and appropriate balance and sequencing of generalization and specific detail. **[SC13, SC14 & SC15]**

Strategies

Students receive instruction in the SOAPSTone strategy. In addition, students are introduced to strategies for analyzing prose and visual texts in relation to three of the five canons of rhetoric: invention, arrangement, and style. **[SC8]** These strategies are included in the College Board workshop “Pre-AP: Strategies in English—Rhetoric.” Students practice these strategies with the following pieces of prose and visual text:

SC13—The AP teacher provides instruction and feedback on students’ writing assignments both before and after the students revise their work that help the students develop a variety of sentence structures.

SC14—The AP teacher provides instruction and feedback on students’ writing assignments, both before and after the students revise their work that help the students develop logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques to increase coherence. Such techniques may include traditional rhetorical structures, graphic organizers, and work on repetition, transitions, and emphasis.

SC15—The AP teacher provides instruction and feedback on students’ writing assignments both before and after they revise their work that help the students develop a balance of generalization and specific, illustrative detail.

SC8—The course requires students to analyze how visual images relate to written texts and/or how visual images serve as alternative forms of texts.

Selected essays from *Satire or Evasion? Black Perspectives on "Huckleberry Finn,"* edited by James S. Leonard, Thomas A. Tenney, and Thadious M. Davis
 "Don't Drink and Drive" ad, Chapter 2 in *Everything's an Argument* **[SC8]**
 "Americans for the Arts" ad, Chapter 12 in *Everything's an Argument*
 "The Libido for the Ugly" by H. L. Mencken (*The Oxford Book of Essays*) **[SC7]**
 "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" by Jonathan Edwards
 "The Qualities of the Prince" by Niccolò Machiavelli (*A World of Ideas*) **[SC7]**

Vocabulary

Students will work to gain vocabulary and practice using new terms in context in order to develop a wide-ranging vocabulary used appropriately. **[SC12]**

Discussion

The course offers many opportunities for students to collaboratively practice the skills they need, derived from my belief that learning can only occur if students have opportunities to check their understanding and clarify their thinking. Additionally, in the fall semester, students conduct a Socratic Seminar over *Hunger for Memory* by Richard Rodriguez (see Student Activities, below). They develop their own questions based on the Socratic Seminar models provided by the National Center for the Paideia Program at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

Style

Because style is a major component of writing skill, students review the use of appositive phrases, participial phrases, and absolute phrases to improve the quality and sophistication of their writing. Initially, students complete sentence and paragraph-imitation exercises; later, they are expected to highlight their use of these phrases in their major compositions. **[SC13]** In addition, students receive instruction in how to recognize and incorporate figures of rhetoric in a piece of writing, particularly schemes and tropes. Our study of schemes in context includes parallelism, isocolon, antithesis, zeugma, anastrophe, parenthesis, ellipsis, asyndeton, polysyndeton, alliteration, anaphora, epistrophe, anadiplosis, antimetabole, chiasmus, erotema, hypophora, and epiplexis; our study of tropes includes metaphor, simile,

SC8—The course requires students to analyze how visual images relate to written texts and/or how visual images serve as alternative forms of texts.

SC7—The course requires nonfiction readings (e.g., essays, journalism, political writing, science writing, nature writing, autobiographies/biographies, diaries, history, criticism) that are selected to give students opportunities to explain an author's use of rhetorical strategies or techniques. If fiction and poetry are also assigned, their main purpose should be to help students understand how various effects are achieved by writers' linguistic and rhetorical choices.

SC12—The AP teacher provides instruction and feedback on students' writing assignments, both before and after the students revise their work that help the students develop a wide-ranging vocabulary used appropriately.

SC13—The AP teacher provides instruction and feedback on students' writing assignments both before and after the students revise their work that help the students develop a variety of sentence structures.

synecdoche, metonymy, antonomasia (periphrasis), personification, anthimeria, litotes, irony, oxymoron, and paradox. [SC14]

Exposition and Argumentation

Students need many models of expository and argumentative writing to see the possibilities for their own writing. The following list of readings is organized by the two quarters of study in the fall semester:

First Quarter: An Introduction to the Canons of Rhetoric (eight weeks)

Selected essays from *Satire or Evasion? Black Perspectives on "Huckleberry Finn,"* edited by James S. Leonard, Thomas A. Tenney, and Thadious M. Davis
 "The Libido for the Ugly" by H. L. Mencken (*The Art of the Personal Essay*)
 "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" by Jonathan Edwards
 "The Qualities of the Prince" by Niccolò Machiavelli (*A World of Ideas*)
 Excerpt from "A Definition of Justice" by Aristotle (*A World of Ideas*)
 "Everything's an Argument," Chapter 1 in *Everything's an Argument*
 "Reading and Writing Arguments," Chapter 2 in *Everything's an Argument*
 "Structuring Arguments," Chapter 8 in *Everything's an Argument*
 "Proposals," Chapter 12 in *Everything's an Argument*
 "Figurative Language and Argument," Chapter 14 in *Everything's an Argument* [SC7]

Second Quarter: A Study of Justice (nine weeks)

"Second Inaugural Address" by Abraham Lincoln (2002 AP English Language and Composition Exam)
Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, by Frederick Douglass
 "Reply to A. C. C. Thompson's Letter" by Frederick Douglass
 "I Am Here to Spread Light on American Slavery" by Frederick Douglass
 "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" by Frederick Douglass
 "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions" by Elizabeth Cady Stanton (*A World of Ideas*)
 "Civil Disobedience" by Henry David Thoreau (*A World of Ideas*)
 "The Battle of the Ants" by Henry David Thoreau (*The Longwood Reader*)
 "Letter from Birmingham Jail" by Martin Luther King, Jr. (*A World of Ideas*)
 "The Position of Poverty" by John Kenneth Galbraith (*A World of Ideas*)
Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez by Richard Rodriguez
 "Arguments of Definition," Chapter 9 in *Everything's an Argument*
 "Evaluations," Chapter 10 in *Everything's an Argument* [SC7]

Essay Writing

The fall semester is geared to introducing the structure of arguments and varying styles of argumentative essays. Students complete three major arguments, each one consisting of 750 to 1,000 words and each one fully described in our textbook, *Everything's an Argument*: an argument of proposal, an argument of definition, and an argument of evaluation. [SC6] These essays proceed from the proposal stage through formative drafts with feedback from teacher and peers to a final draft. The teacher

SC14—The AP teacher provides instruction and feedback on students' writing assignments, both before and after the students revise their work that help the students develop logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques to increase coherence. Such techniques may include traditional rhetorical structures, graphic organizers, and work on repetition, transitions, and emphasis.

SC7—The course requires nonfiction readings (e.g., essays, journalism, political writing, science writing, nature writing, autobiographies/biographies, diaries, history, criticism) that are selected to give students opportunities to explain an author's use of rhetorical strategies or techniques. If fiction and poetry are also assigned, their main purpose should be to help students understand how various effects are achieved by writers' linguistic and rhetorical choices.

SC6—The course requires students to produce one or more argumentative writing assignments. Topics should be based on readings representing a wide variety of prose styles and genres and might include such topics as public policies, popular culture, and personal experiences.

will return each draft to the student with suggestions for revision. **[SC2]** In addition, students write a précis of a criticism of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (our summer reading requirement) and an essay responding to Niccolò Machiavelli's "The Qualities of the Prince," comparing Machiavelli's recommendations for gaining what one wants to those espoused by Henry David Thoreau in "Civil Disobedience."

All essays are accompanied by a profile or information page and a rubric (scoring guideline). Each rubric has a self-assessment component to help students learn how to be better assessors of their own writing development.

Sample profile

Essay: Argument of Proposal

Due Date: Wednesday, September 22 (65 points)

Length: Approximately 750–1,000 words (typed)

Resources: Thesis and Organization (*Little, Brown Compact Handbook*, 19–26). Students will have focused instruction in the development of a thesis and in the effective organization of ideas.

MLA Text Citation (*Little, Brown Compact Handbook*, 356–63)

MLA Works Cited (*Little, Brown Compact Handbook*, 363–88, 397) **[SC11]**

MLA Paper Format (*Little, Brown Compact Handbook*, 388–96)

Syntax (*Sentence Composing for College*, 1–96). Students will have focused instruction in creating sentence variety.

Timed Writings

During the fall semester, students complete five timed essay questions, one of which appears on the semester exam. Of all the techniques I have tried, I have found that integrating the timed writings into the natural progression of the course helps build students' confidence and expertise. For example, when we read *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, students complete the timed free-response (essay) question on Abraham Lincoln's "Second Inaugural Address" from the 2002 AP English Language and Composition Exam; when we read *Hunger for Memory*, students complete the timed free-response question on Richard Rodriguez's *Days of Obligation* from the 2004 AP Exam.

Writer's Notebook

Students begin the new semester by reading an excerpt from Joan Didion's *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* (1968) where she talks about the difference between a journal and a notebook. Each student receives a composition book to record 12 notebook entries on a variety of topics over a period of two weeks. Discussion centers on how writers will use a notebook as a way to catch the bits and pieces of life and experience for their writing projects. As the students are working on their notebooks, we are studying the personal reflective essay as a writing form. **[SC3]** Students examine the characteristics of personal reflective writing with the following pieces of prose:

"Once More to the Lake" by E. B. White

"The Courage of Turtles" by Edward Hoagland

"In Bed" by Joan Didion

"The Knife" by Richard Selzer **[SC7]**

SC2—The course requires students to write essays that proceed through several stages or drafts with the revision incorporating, as appropriate, feedback from teachers and peers.

SC11—Students will cite sources using a recognized editorial style (e.g., Modern Language Association (MLA), The Chicago Manual of Style, American Psychological Association (APA), etc.).

SC3—The course requires students to write in informal contexts (e.g., imitation exercises, journal keeping, collaborative writing, and in-class responses) designed to help them become increasingly aware of themselves as writers and/or aware of the techniques employed by the writers they read.

SC7—The course requires nonfiction readings (e.g., essays, journalism, political writing, science writing, nature writing, autobiographies/biographies, diaries, history, criticism) that are selected to give students opportunities to explain an author's use of rhetorical strategies or techniques. If fiction and poetry are also assigned, their main purpose should be to help students understand how various effects are achieved by writers' linguistic and rhetorical choices.

Following this reading, each student must write an essay describing an experience from his or her life that has brought some personal insight. **[SC4]** Students are encouraged to examine their writer’s notebooks for ideas. Each student’s essay is ultimately published in a class book titled *Reflections*. It is the highlight of the year!

A Study in Style and Influence

In preparation for the research-based causal argument, students will review research skills, including identification and evaluation of primary and secondary sources; organization and integration of source material; and documentation and organization of a researched argument using MLA format. **[SC9, SC10 & SC11]** The major project of the second semester is a research-based causal argument examining the contextual influences (historical, cultural, environmental, etc.) on a selected pre-twentieth-century essayist and the impact and effects of those influences on his or her style, purpose, and intent in at least one representative essay. The causal argument is different from a traditional research paper because the student must consider and present alternative causes and effects in direct opposition to his or her position. Students are required to synthesize at least five sources into their project using MLA documentation. **[SC9]**

This five-week study begins with an overview of the essay as genre, noting its early beginnings as a Renaissance invention. As the weeks progress, students study the characteristics of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries and approximately 25 representative essays. Each student selects a pre-twentieth-century essayist from an established list and is responsible for making a Prezi presentation on the day assigned to discuss that particular writer’s work. This study provides a fascinating look at the growth of language and ideas. The culmination of the study is the research-based causal argument.

Discussion

Students participate in a roundtable discussion as they present their research on their chosen pre-twentieth-century essayist and examine the rhetoric of pre-twentieth-century prose. Additionally, in the spring semester students again conduct a Socratic seminar, this time on *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* by Annie Dillard, developing their own questions.

SC4—The course requires students to produce one or more expository writing assignments. Topics should be based on readings representing a wide variety of prose styles and genres and might include such topics as public policies, popular culture, and personal experiences.

SC9—The course requires students to demonstrate research skills and, in particular, the ability to evaluate, use, and cite primary and secondary sources.

SC10—The course requires students to produce one or more projects such as the researched argument paper, which goes beyond the parameters of a traditional research paper by asking students to present an argument of their own that includes the synthesis of ideas from an array of sources.

SC11—Students will cite sources using a recognized editorial style (e.g., Modern Language Association (MLA), The Chicago Manual of Style, American Psychological Association (APA), etc.).

Analyzing Visual Arguments

Students learn OPTIC, a new strategy for analyzing visual arguments, which is fully described in the Teaching Strategies section below. In addition, Appendix B in *Seeing and Writing* presents key guidelines and questions for reading images, advertisements, paintings, and photographs that help students complete a close reading of visual text. Each student will provide three examples of visual text (advertisements, cartoons, etc.) and will write a short analysis of each using the OPTIC strategy. **[SC1, SC5 & SC8]**

Exposition and Argumentation

Students continue to work with examples of expository and argumentative writing to use as models for their own writing. **[SC4 & SC6]** The following list of readings is organized by the two quarters of study in the spring semester:

SC1—The course requires students to write in several forms (e.g., narrative, expository, analytical, and argumentative essays) about a variety of subjects (e.g., public policies, popular culture, personal experiences).

SC5—The course requires students to produce one or more analytical writing assignments. Topics should be based on readings representing a wide variety of prose styles and genres and might include such topics as public policies, popular culture, and personal experiences.

SC8—The course requires students to analyze how visual images relate to written texts and/or how visual images serve as alternative forms of texts.

SC4—The course requires students to produce one or more expository writing assignments. Topics should be based on readings representing a wide variety of prose styles and genres and might include such topics as public policies, popular culture, and personal experiences.

SC6—The course requires students to produce one or more argumentative writing assignments. Topics should be based on readings representing a wide variety of prose styles and genres and might include such topics as public policies, popular culture, and personal experiences.

Third Quarter: A History of the Essay as an Art Form (nine weeks)

Excerpt from *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* by Joan Didion (*The Longwood Reader*)
 “Once More to the Lake” by E. B. White (*The Art of the Personal Essay*)
 “The Courage of Turtles” by Edward Hoagland (*The Art of the Personal Essay*)
 “In Bed” by Joan Didion (*The Art of the Personal Essay*)
 “The Knife” by Richard Selzer (*The Art of the Personal Essay*)
 Thirty selected pre-twentieth-century essays from *The Oxford Book of Essays*
 “Causal Arguments,” Chapter 11 in *Everything’s an Argument*. [SC7]

Fourth Quarter: A Final Look at Argumentation (eight weeks)

“The Four Idols” by Francis Bacon (*A World of Ideas*)
 “Nature Fights Back” by Rachel Carson (*A World of Ideas*)
 “Nonmoral Nature” by Stephen Jay Gould (*A World of Ideas*)
Pilgrim at Tinker Creek by Annie Dillard
 “Pernicious Effects Which Arise from the Unnatural Distinctions Established in Society”
 by Mary Wollstonecraft (*A World of Ideas*)
 “Shakespeare’s Sister” by Virginia Woolf (*A World of Ideas*)
 “Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory” by bell hooks (*A World of Ideas*)
 “Visual Arguments,” Chapter 15 in *Everything’s an Argument*
 “Fallacies of Argument,” Chapter 19 in *Everything’s an Argument* [SC7]

Essay Writing

The spring semester continues to acquaint students with various argumentative structures: causal argument, argument of proposal, and visual arguments. [SC1 & SC14]

SC7—The course requires nonfiction readings (e.g., essays, journalism, political writing, science writing, nature writing, autobiographies/biographies, diaries, history, criticism) that are selected to give students opportunities to explain an author’s use of rhetorical strategies or techniques. If fiction and poetry are also assigned, their main purpose should be to help students understand how various effects are achieved by writers’ linguistic and rhetorical choices.

SC14—The AP teacher provides instruction and feedback on students’ writing assignments, both before and after the students revise their work that help the students develop logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques to increase coherence. Such techniques may include traditional rhetorical structures, graphic organizers, and work on repetition, transitions, and emphasis.

SC1—The course requires students to write in several forms (e.g., narrative, expository, analytical, and argumentative essays) about a variety of subjects (e.g., public policies, popular culture, personal experiences).

Timed Writings

During the spring semester, students complete eight timed essays to develop skill in writing rhetorical analysis essays. **[SC1 & SC5]** As in the fall semester, the timed writings are integrated into the natural progression of the course. When we are working with the reflective essay, students complete the 2002 AP English Language and Composition Exam free-response question on an excerpt from Virginia Woolf’s memoirs; when we are studying pre-twentieth-century essayists, students complete the 2004 exam question on Lord Chesterfield’s letter to his son; and when we are reading *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, students complete the question from the 2003 exam that asked students to compare and contrast Dillard’s and Audubon’s styles.

SC1—The course requires students to write in several forms (e.g., narrative, expository, analytical, and argumentative essays) about a variety of subjects (e.g., public policies, popular culture, personal experiences).

Plagiarism Policy

The following paragraph must be submitted with proposals and all drafts of student assignments. Students must sign below the paragraph to indicate that they are aware of this policy:

Plagiarism is using another person’s thoughts and accomplishments without proper acknowledgment or documentation. It is an unconscionable offense and a serious breach of the honor code. In keeping with the policy, students will receive a zero for the plagiarized work.

SC5—The course requires students to produce one or more analytical writing assignments. Topics should be based on readings representing a wide variety of prose styles and genres and might include such topics as public policies, popular culture, and personal experiences.

Teaching Strategies

Even though students in an AP English Language and Composition course may be strong readers and writers, they still need a bank of strategies to draw from as they encounter challenging text. The most effective strategies are those that teach students how to infer and analyze.

Subject-Occasion-Audience-Purpose-Speaker-Tone (SOAPSTone)

This is a text analysis strategy as well as a method for initially teaching students how to craft a more thoughtful thesis. The SOAPSTone strategy was developed by Tommy Boley and is taught in the College Board workshop “Strategies in English Writing—Tactics Using SOAPSTone”:

- **Speaker:** the individual or collective voice of the text
- **Occasion:** the event or catalyst causing the writing of the text to occur
- **Audience:** the group of readers to whom the piece is directed
- **Purpose:** the reason behind the text
- **Subject:** the general topic and/or main idea
- **Tone:** the attitude of the author

Syntax Analysis Chart

A syntax analysis chart is an excellent strategy for style analysis as well as an effective revision technique for a student's own writing. **[SC13]** One of the key strategies mentioned in *The AP Vertical Teams® Guide for English*, published by the College Board, the syntax analysis chart involves creating a five-column table with the following headings: Sentence Number, First Four Words, Special Features, Verbs, and Number of Words per Sentence. This reflective tool not only helps students examine how style contributes to meaning and purpose but also helps students identify various writing problems (repetitiveness, possible run-ons or fragments, weak verbs, and lack of syntactical variety). In addition, students are made aware of their own developing voices and use of diction.

SC13—The AP teacher provides instruction and feedback on students' writing assignments both before and after the students revise their work that help the students develop a variety of sentence structures.

Overview-Parts-Title-Interrelationships-Conclusion (OPTIC)

The OPTIC strategy is highlighted in Walter Pauk's book *How to Study in College* and provides students with key concepts to think about when approaching any kind of visual text. **[SC8]**

SC8—The course requires students to analyze how visual images relate to written texts and/or how visual images serve as alternative forms of texts.

A sample OPTIC lesson would include the following steps:

1. Provide students with a single visual text that presents a position or point of view on an issue. One example is James Rosenquist's 1996 painting *Professional Courtesy* (in *Seeing and Writing*, 588), which portrays handguns as instruments of violence.
2. Pair students and lead them through the OPTIC strategy, step by step.
 - **O** is for *overview*—write down a few notes on what the visual appears to be about.
 - **P** is for *parts*—zero in on the *parts* of the visual. Write down any elements or details that seem important.
 - **T** is for *title*—highlight the words of the *title* of the visual (if one is available).
 - **I** is for *interrelationships*—use the title as the theory and the parts of the visual as clues to detect and specify the *interrelationships* in the graphic.
 - **C** is for *conclusion*—draw a *conclusion* about the visual as a whole. What does the visual mean? Summarize the message of the visual in one or two sentences.
3. Debrief the effectiveness of the strategy in analyzing visuals.
4. Compare and contrast the visual with a piece of expository text dealing with the same subject but perhaps a different position. In *Seeing and Writing*, Gerard Jones's essay on "Killing Monsters" presents the author's viewpoint on why children are helped, not harmed, by viewing images of imagined violence. Both these texts could be used to discuss different positions on the effects of violence on children and young people.

Students need to practice new strategies in a safe environment, one that allows them to explore and clarify their ideas with their peers. In this course, students are always paired or grouped in threes to practice the components of the strategies. Spencer Kagan's Think-Pair-Share grouping technique works well when students are learning a new strategy.

In our school calendar, there are three weeks left in the quarter after the AP English Language and Composition Exam, allowing for a variety of activities and assignments to be completed in that time frame. Sometimes we read a novel or drama as a transition to AP English Literature and Composition, and other times we study techniques in composing the college application essay. However, since the May and June administrations of the SAT® come directly after the AP English Language and Composition Exam, I primarily use that time to help students prepare for the critical reading and writing sections of the SAT. I find *The Official SAT Study Guide™* and *ScoreWrite™: A Guide to Preparing for the SAT Essay* to be valuable resources as I work with my students.

Student Evaluation

Students' grades are based on an accumulated point system. Each graded assignment or activity is assigned a certain number of points based on its complexity and overall importance to the objectives of the course. Typically each assessment within each quarter equates to about one-eighth of the total average for that marking period. At the end of each quarter, the student's quarter grade is determined by dividing the number of points earned by the number of points possible.

Very few grades are given during the class; students are mostly assessed on major assignments such as out-of-class essays, timed writings, Socratic Seminars, grammar exercises, annotated readings, practice on multiple-choice questions based on reading passages, informal writings, and class participation. Traditional daily grades are not given, as I prefer to model a college course rather than a high school one.

The percentages that are figured using the accumulated point system translate into the following letter grades:

- 100–97 percent = A+
- 96–93 percent = A
- 92–90 percent = A–
- 89–87 percent = B+
- 86–83 percent = B
- 82–80 percent = B–
- 79–77 percent = C+
- 76–73 percent = C
- 72–70 percent = C–
- 69–67 percent = D+
- 66–63 percent = D
- 62–60 percent = D–
- 59–50 percent = F

Teacher Resources

Course Texts

- Aaron, Jane E. *The Little, Brown Compact Handbook*. 5th ed. New York: Longman, 2004.
- Dillard, Annie. *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. New York: Harper's Magazine Press, 1974.
- Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself: Authoritative Text, Contexts, Criticism*. Edited by William L. Andrews and William S. McFeely. New York: W. W. Norton, 1996.
- Gross, John, ed. *The Oxford Book of Essays*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Jacobus, Lee A., ed. *A World of Ideas: Essential Readings for College Writers*. 6th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002.
- Killgallon, Don. *Sentence Composing for College: A Worktext on Sentence Variety and Maturity*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Boynton/Cook, 1998.
- Lunsford, Andrea A., John J. Ruszkiewicz, and Keith Walters. *Everything's an Argument: With Readings*. 3rd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004.
- Rodriguez, Richard. *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez; An Autobiography*. New York: Bantam Books, 2004.
- Twain, Mark. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: An Authoritative Text, Contexts and Sources, Criticism*. Edited by Thomas Cooley. New York: Norton, 1999. (Summer reading.)

Course Supplements

- Dornan, Edward A., and Charles W. Dawe, eds. *The Longwood Reader*. 3rd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997.
- Edwards, Jonathan. "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Christian Classics Ethereal Library Accessed September 15, 2004. www.ccel.org/e/edwards/sermons/sinners.html.
- Leonard, James S., Thomas A. Tenney, and Thadious M. Davis, eds. *Satire or Evasion? Black Perspectives on "Huckleberry Finn."* Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1992.
- Lopate, Phillip, ed. *The Art of the Personal Essay: An Anthology from the Classical Era to the Present*. New York: Anchor Books, 1994.
- McQuade, Donald, and Christine McQuade. *Seeing and Writing*. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003.

References

- Adler, Mortimer J. *The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto*. New York: Macmillan, 1982.
- College Board. *AP English Course Description*. New York: The College Board, 2010.
- College Board. *The AP Vertical Teams Guide for English*. New York: The College Board, 2002.
- College Board. *The Official SAT Study Guide*. 3rd ed. New York: The College Board, 2012.
- College Board. *ScoreWrite: A Guide to Preparing for the SAT Essay 2012–2013*. New York: The College Board, 2012.
- Corbett, Edward P. J., and Robert J. Connors. *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*. 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Covino, William A., and David A. Jolliffe. *Rhetoric: Concepts, Definitions, Boundaries*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995.
- Kagan, Spencer. "The Structural Approach to Cooperative Learning." *Educational Leadership* 47 (December 1989–January 1990): 12–15.
- Kolln, Martha. *Rhetorical Grammar: Grammatical Choices, Rhetorical Effects*. 4th ed. New York: Longman, 2002.
- Pauk, Walter. *How to Study in College*. 7th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001.
- Ruddell, Martha R. *Teaching Content Reading and Writing*. 2nd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997.