

- **The *AP* STANDARDS:**  
an introduction to **reading** and **writing** for the *AP English Literature & Composition Exam*

**YOUR MISSION:**

**Answer the question in light of a  
holistic interpretation taking  
into account the complexity of  
the work while highlighting  
personal mastery of language.**

## SCORING:

Essays are scored on a 9-point scale:

5,6-7 = “adequate answer”

8-9 = “eminently effective”

0-4 = “inadequate answer”

Ask yourself, does *MY* essay...

[1] answer the question?

[2] consider a holistic interpretation?

[3] recognize the complexity of the work?

[4] demonstrate mastery of language?

## SCORING:

Upper level essays answer “YES” to all 4 of these questions... the STRONGER the YES, the HIGHER the SCORE!

“5” is the “passing”; style, insight, and complexity move the essay up the scale

# [1] Answer the question...

- Every work has a PURPOSE or idea
- Essentially, every prompt demands the same thing: Connect TECHNIQUE to PURPOSE
  - ◆ Analyze the text to determine “*what* did the author do, and *how* did the author do it?”
- Be **explicit**, but not formulaic
  - ◆ **DO** conclude every paragraph by revisiting your thesis

## [2] ...in light of a holistic interpretation...

- a narrow focus will not elicit a complex interpretation
- Don't
  - ◆ limit yourself to the beginning
  - ◆ address only the easiest elements
  - ◆ limit ideas *merely* to what was discussed in class...
  - ◆ write everything you know... DO write what you know about *the answer to the question!*

## [2]...in light of a holistic interpretation...

- The best writers analyze what occurs, what recurs...and what *doesn't*
- Look for patterns of thought, textual organization, symbols, motifs, and so forth

# [3]...taking into account the complexity of the work...

- Avoid the obvious (*a reader will score approximately 1000 essays on the same topic; complex, original insight stands out!*)
- Remember, **OBSERVATION ≠ ANALYSIS:**
- If a “STORY” is a VEHICLE, then...
- “Observation” describes the vehicle
- “ANALYSIS”:
  - ◆ EXPLORES WHERE the author is taking the audience and WHY (what is the “purpose”)?
  - ◆ EXAMINES HOW does the author uses the vehicle to arrive at the destination

## **[3]...taking into account the complexity of the work...**

- Showcase your ability to READ and THINK CRITICALLY: look for subtleties that might elude careless readers
- Write “outside the text”

## **[4]...while highlighting personal mastery of language.**

- Does the writing have rhythm and flow?
- Is the writing free of awkward word patterns?
- Do the sentences vary in length and style?
- Does the work cry to be read aloud?
- Is language rich, colorful, and precise?
- Does the language clarify and expand upon ideas?

## **[4]...while highlighting personal mastery of language.**

- Does the language give the reader a vision?
- Does the writer use common words uncommonly?
- Does the writer understand his/her audience?
- Is the text lively, expressive, and engaging?
- Is the writer personally engaged in the topic?

## **[4]...while highlighting personal mastery of language.**

- These qualities make the “8” or “9”!
- I can teach you to write a “7,” but from there it’s about PRACTICE that develops develops individual skills!