MULTIPLE-CHOICE SECTION

In order to be successful on the multiple-choice section, you must
- follow sophisticated syntax
- respond to *diction* and vocabulary
- be familiar with *rhetorical terminology* – study your rhetorical terms
- make inferences from the reading
- be sensitive to *tone* and *irony*
- recognize organization and style
- be familiar with *modes of discourse*, and rhetorical organization and strategies.

**Multiple-Choice Strategies**
- Underline, mark, and circle text (no highlighting allowed on real AP, so don’t do it here)
- Pay attention to the author’s meaning, purpose, audience, and tone as you read
- Note the author’s name, title of work, copyright and footnotes (if provided)
- Pay attention to the organization of the passage (chronological, cause-effect, process, etc.)
- Underline the author’s theme(s) (thesis) and details
- Do not rely on your memory: go back and find information in passage.
- Before reading the passages, read the questions, but NOT the answers. Often, this helps you focus your understanding of the passage as it directs you to key words and ideas.

**Types of Multiple-Choice Questions**
- Questions about Rhetoric:
  - *The passage is an example of...*
  - *The phrase “_____” has the effect of...*
  - *The style of the passage can best be characterized as...*
- References to lines to draw conclusions or interpretations
  - *Lines 52-57 serve to...*
  - If you are asked about specific lines of a passage, read at least two lines above and two lines below the stated lines in order to understand the context of the specific lines.
- The “All...Except” questions
- Make an inference or infer a concept not stated
  - *The reader can infer...*
- Roman-Numeral Time-Consuming Questions
  - I. A only  II. Both A & B , etc.
  - Note: These are the most time-consuming questions.

**Specific Strategies for Multiple-Choice Questions**
- Work questions in the order in which they appear on the test
- Write on the prompts
- Quickly read questions before reading the passage
- Do not take too long on any one question
- Do not be misled by length of selections (shortest sections may be the most difficult)
- Work within the given context (ignore prior knowledge you may have about the topic/text)
- Consider all choices for each question
- Remember that *all* parts of an answer must be correct
ESSAY SECTION

Rhetorical Analysis Essay Tips

Things you must know in order to accurately analyze a text:
1. SOAPS – Identify the Subject, Occasion, Audience, Purpose, and Speaker (author) of the text. This is how you will determine if the rhetorical strategies used are effective.
2. Rhetorical Strategies
   a. Appeals (ethos, logos, pathos)
   b. Style (diction, imagery, details, language, syntax, tone, etc.)
3. Why did the author choose these strategies for the particular audience, occasion, and/or purpose?
   a. This is the analysis part! Without this, you are merely summarizing the text.
   b. Think about these questions:
      -- HOW do the rhetorical strategies help the author achieve his/her purpose?
      -- WHY does the author choose those strategies for that particular audience and for that particular occasion?
      -- SAYS (what the text literally says/argues) – DOES (how the author does this) – BECAUSE (why do these rhetorical choices work in this rhetorical situation (think about SOAPS)

Once you’ve identified the information above, it’s time to begin putting your thoughts and ideas into a format that proves you have accurately analyzed the text. There are many ways to write an effective rhetorical analysis essay. Below is one way that is a good, simple format to help you get started. You may deviate from this format as long as you are still focusing on numbers 1-3 from above.

Introduction:
The introductory paragraph to an analysis essay is usually brief. However, it must contain some essential information.

Use SOAPS in your introduction in a format similar to this:

In 1986 after the Challenger space shuttle exploded, killing all seven astronauts on board including an elementary school teacher, the country was consumed with grief over the very public tragedy. President Ronald Reagan spoke to the nation that evening from the White House (speaker, occasion, audience, subject). In his address, Reagan attempts to unite the nation by comforting those who witnessed the horrific event, commemorating the brave astronauts, and encouraging future space exploration even in the light of such tragedies (purpose). He initially adopts a solemn tone, expresses empathy by referencing his own family to highlight the grief of the astronauts’ families, and ultimately recasts the dead astronauts as pioneers expressing the greatest ideals of American exploration (thesis).

**Notice how the introduction uses a SAYS/DOES/BECAUSE structure.**

Body:
This is the analysis part! This is where you include a detailed analysis of strategies used by the writer. When writing an analysis, it is crucial that you work chronologically through the text. This means that you start at the beginning of the text and work your way through it by discussing what the writer is saying and the effectiveness of the strategies he/she is using at the beginning, middle, and end of the text. Sometimes this means that you will discuss each paragraph (one at a time), and sometimes this means that you will divide the text into sections and discuss the beginning, middle, and end of the text. Whether you discuss each paragraph or each section depends on the length and organization of the text itself. To help you move chronologically through the text, there are transition words you can use, such as the author begins, opens, closes, contrasts, shifts to, juxtaposes, ends, moves to, etc.

Every analysis paragraph MUST:
1) Identify the part of the text you are analyzing by using transition words and strong verbs to explain what is being said.
2) Identify the **strongest rhetorical strategies** used in that particular section. This includes incorporating **specific text examples** (exact words from the text) into your own words. Do NOT try to discuss every strategy the writer uses; pick the strongest!

3) Clearly and specifically **explain how** the rhetorical strategies are used to help the writer achieve his purpose and reach his audience.

4) The above items must be woven together seamlessly into **one sophisticated paragraph** of the body of your analysis essay. A body paragraph sample is below:

*from President Reagan’s speech after the space shuttle Challenger explosion:*

1. The first sentence identifies which section of the text you are discussing, the main idea of that section, **and your analytical assertion about that section** (this is a topic sentence, and **must** be an argument related directly to your thesis):

   Reagan first appeals to the emotions of the audience by referencing his personal grief, and then extending that reference to the nation as a whole in order to both emphasize his leadership and unite the country.

2. The second sentence introduces your evidence for your assertion from the first sentence:

   Reagan admits that “Nancy and I are pained to the core” by the tragedy, and acknowledges that today is rightfully a “day for mourning and remembering,” and that the accident is “truly a national loss.” He broadens his viewpoint to cover all Americans, and by beginning with his family and moving to the nation, he portrays himself as a leader and as a person who feels pain like everyone else does.

3. The third sentence explains how the rhetorical choices you discussed in the previous sentence(s) help the writer achieve his purpose, often by using an **in order to** statement — the “because.”

   He joins in this time of mourning in order to unify the nation, and humbly admits that “we share this pain with all of the people of our country,” suggesting the tragedy is a personal loss for him as well as a loss for the astronaut families and for the nation.

4. The fourth sentence identifies the effect of the writer’s use of these rhetorical strategies on the audience — part of the “because” statement.”

   This outpouring of emotion from the president conveys a calming tone that reassures the nation that their grief is both understandable and proper.

**Put it all together and this is what one paragraph of the body of a rhetorical analysis essay might look like:**

Reagan first appeals to the emotions of the audience by referencing his family, and then extending that reference to the nation as a whole in order to both express his own leadership and unite the country. Reagan admits that “Nancy and I are pained to the core” by the tragedy, and acknowledges that today is rightfully a “day for mourning and remembering,” and that the accident is “truly a national loss.” He broadens his viewpoint to cover all Americans, and by beginning with his family and moving to the nation, he portrays himself as both a leader and as a person who feels pain like everyone else does. He joins in this time of mourning in order to unify the nation, and humbly admits that “we share this pain with all of the people of our country,” suggesting the tragedy is a personal loss for him as well as a loss for the astronaut families and for the nation. This outpouring of emotion from the president conveys a calming tone that reassures the nation that their staggering grief is both understandable and proper.
You will do this again with a second and third rhetorical strategy, resulting in at least 3 body paragraphs.

Potential topic sentences:
Paragraph 2: 
In commemorating the astronauts, Reagan adopts a more resolute tone to remind the country that their deaths were not in vain.

Paragraph 3: 
Finally, Reagan appeals to American patriotism by recommitting the nation’s resources to space exploration.

Conclusion
Be brief. In 3-4 sentences, remind the reader what you said in your introduction, but with new references from the text. Often, you can conclude with a quote from near the end of the text you are analyzing:

President Reagan’s Challenger speech was designed to present Reagan as an ordinary person sharing in the American people’s grief, but also allowed him to appear steadfast and in charge. He was successful in asserting continued space exploration as a fitting testament to the astronauts who died. He closed his speech as he opened it, with a strong appeal to emotion, emphasizing that “we will never forget them.”

Strong vs. Weak Verbs
To help you avoid summary and move to ANALYSIS, you need to incorporate strong verbs into your writing when discussing the writer’s rhetorical choices. Below is a list of verbs that are considered weak because they imply summary and a list of verbs that are considered strong because they imply analysis. Strive to use the stronger verbs in your essays to help push yourself away from summary and toward analysis: “The writer flatters…” NOT “The writer says…”

WEAK VERBS (Summary)
Says, relates, goes on to say, tells, this quote shows, explains, states

STRONG VERBS (Analysis)
implies trivializes flatters qualifies processes
describes suggests denigrates lionizes dismisses
analyzes questions compares vilifies praises
supports enumerates contrasts emphasizes demonizes
establishes admonishes expounds argues defines
ridicules minimizes narrates lists warns

Powerful and meaningful verbs to use in your analyses
Alternatives to “show”

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<th>Acknowledge</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Dismiss</th>
<th>Express</th>
<th>Imply</th>
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<td>Explain</td>
<td>Implement</td>
<td>Loosen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consider</td>
<td>Discuss</td>
<td>Exploit</td>
<td>Implicate</td>
<td>Maintain</td>
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Analyzing DICTION

Diction means the words the writer chooses to convey a particular meaning. When analyzing diction, look for specific words or short phrases that seem stronger than the others. Diction is NEVER the entire sentence! Also, look for a pattern (or similarity) in the words the writer chooses (ex. Do the words imply sadness, happiness, anger, etc?). This pattern helps to create a particular kind of diction. This pattern can also include repetition of the same words or phrases. Repeating the same word or phrase helps the reader emphasize a point, feeling, etc.

Effective diction is shaped by words that are clear, concrete, and exact. Good writers avoid words like pretty, nice, and bad because they are not specific enough. Instead, they rely on words that invoke a specific effect in order to bring the reader into the event being described.

Examples:
A coat isn’t torn; it is tattered.
A crime victim does not want revenge; he is thirsting for revenge.
A door does not shut; it thuds.

Diction depends on subject, occasion, audience, purpose, and speaker — and it establishes TONE.

Below are just a few words that you may use to describe the type of diction used by the writer. Do NOT say a writer “uses diction”; say a writer “uses (scholarly, sentimental, inflammatory, etc.) diction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>abstract</th>
<th>learned</th>
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<th>monosyllabic</th>
<th>brusque</th>
<th>nostalgic</th>
<th>cacophonous</th>
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<td>plain</td>
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<td>emotional</td>
<td>pretentious</td>
<td>esoteric</td>
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<td>romantic</td>
<td>euphonious</td>
<td>scholarly</td>
<td>sentimental</td>
<td>exact</td>
<td>shocking</td>
<td>fanciful</td>
<td>sincere</td>
<td>flowery</td>
<td>figurative</td>
<td>insincere</td>
<td>folksy</td>
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<tr>
<td>symbolic</td>
<td>formal</td>
<td>tame</td>
<td>grandiose</td>
<td>technical</td>
<td>trite</td>
<td>inflammatory</td>
<td>unifying</td>
<td>inflated</td>
<td>informal</td>
<td>vague</td>
<td>vulgar</td>
<td>jargon</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analyzing SYNTAX

Syntax refers to the way words are arranged within sentences.
Schemes
One aspect of syntax is schemes. Most English sentences follow a subject-verb-object pattern (ex. I went to the store.) Deviating from this pattern can serve to add emphasis to the author’s ideas. [See the scheme section of your rhetorical terms handout for different ways authors can change the pattern of their sentences.]

Sentence Length
Another aspect of syntax is sentence length. Good writers will use a variety for emphasis.
- Short sentences – imply straightforward
- Long sentences – imply descriptive, detailed

Sentence Type
A third aspect of syntax is sentence type. Again, good writers use a variety.
- Simple: subject-verb (I went to the store.)
- Compound: 2 independent clauses joined by a conjunction (I went to the store, and I bought candy.)
- Complex: independent clause and dependent clause (While traveling to the store, I saw my friend.)
- Compound-complex: 2 independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses (While traveling to the store, I saw my friend, and she gave me money for candy.)
- Declarative: statement (I went to the store.)
- Exclamatory: strong feeling (What a wonderful candy store!)
- Interrogative: question (Is this a candy store?)
- Imperative: command (Go to the store.)

Punctuation
A final aspect of syntax is punctuation. Yes, good writers use a variety here, too.
- Semicolon(;) gives equal weight to two or more independent clauses in a sentence – it takes the place of a period, not a comma. Writers use this to reinforce parallel ideas and show how both ideas are equally important. Ex.: Some people appreciate the wit of politically incorrect humor; others find it offensive in most cases.
- Colon(:) directs the reader’s attention to the words that follow. Writers use this to show the reader that the information after the colon is important. Ex.: There are two reasons to be concerned: money and time.
- Dash (—) marks a sudden change in thought or tone, sets off a brief summary, or acts as a parenthetical pause. Ex.: The student hoped the final exam — which his teacher said would be brutal — wouldn’t ruin his course grade.

Analyzing TONE
Tone is the writer’s attitude or feeling about the subject of his text. It is a special kind of rhetorical strategy because tone is created by the writer’s use of all of the other rhetorical strategies.
- Diction & Tropes (figures of speech, words used to mean something other than their dictionary definitions)
- Syntax & Schemes (diversion from normal word order in sentences)
- Details & Lack of Details
When discussing an author’s tone, you must be careful to choose the right word. Below is a small list of tone words (there are hundreds). Use them in your essay to describe the tone of the piece, but only if you are sure you know the word’s meaning (not sure? look them up).
When writing your essay, avoid saying: “The writer uses tone” since ALL writers use tone of some kind. Instead, say: “The writer creates a (sympathetic, bitter, condescending, etc.) tone by…[rhetorical strategy].”

Words to describe tone:

angry
sad
sentimental
cloying
bitter
sharp
cold
fanciful
dramatic
audacious
upset
urgent
complimentary
provocative
benevolent
silly
joking
condescending
didactic
tired

poignant
sympathetic
proud
frivolous
afraid
detached
contemptuous
giddy
irreverent
happy
confused
apologetic
pitiful
seductive
Words to describe tone (cont.):

- restrained
- allusive
- zealous
- satiric
- sweet
- mocking
- dreamy
- motivational
- joyful
- sarcastic
- shocking
- tactful
- peaceful
- candid
- patriotic
- respectful
- horrific
- nostalgic
- serious
- humorous
- somber
- vexed
- serious
- mocking
- objective
- vibrant
- patriotic
- zealous
- dreamy
- sarcastic
- satiric
- motivational
- tactful
- respectful
- humorous

Common issues I have noticed through the years of grading essays:

**Thesis** – Include author’s purpose and specific rhetorical devices you will analyze. Your grade is based upon your success in delivering the promise of your argument here. No argument? No delivery.

Thesis template: [Author’s name] uses [device, device, and device] to [purpose].

Example: In the excerpt from The Great Influenza, John M. Berry uses rhetorical questions, parallel structure, and an extended metaphor to characterize scientific research as something far less certain than laymen generally expect.

Or

In the excerpt from The Great Influenza, John M. Berry shifts from the concrete to the abstract, employing rhetorical questions, parallel structure, and an extended metaphor to characterize scientific research as something far less certain than laymen generally expect.

Thesis should tell what it says, what it does, because…

**Author’s purpose** is rarely to simply inform, explain, describe, etc. It is usually an argument he/she is making, a point of view, an assertion, a challenge to conventional wisdom, a new way of seeing something, etc. Read deeply!

See list of “Alternatives to ‘show’” above.

**Topic sentences**: Name the device you will analyze AND the reason it is used, its likely effect. This should be an argument, tied very clearly to the larger argument of your thesis.

**THEY/THEIR** are not singular pronouns.

Yes: Students hate to carry their heavy books.

No: A student hates to carry their heavy books. (should be his or her – or use the plural students)

Use all or most examples of a given strategy as evidence, not just one.

Use *quotes* in every body paragraph, smoothly embedded with your own prose. Use short, targeted quotes that best illustrate your rhetorical argument while paraphrasing the rest of the longer quote:

In explaining why she “hates” country music, Smith calls it “grating” and notes that the limited number of chords it typically uses amount to “a middle school student’s sense of music composition.”

Jones adopts of nostalgic tone throughout his piece, recalling “mom’s apple pie” from his childhood, suggesting that the country “would do well” to celebrate the 4th of July “more vigorously,” and lamenting the loss of “family traditions.”

Punctuation goes inside quotation marks.

Authors rarely employ a strategy to make readers “see” or “relate to” or “understand” something. Go deeper!

Please don’t discuss authors trying to make something “relatable” or say they use figurative language in such as way as to “make the reader see it in his mind.” This is weak analysis. Go for specificity, strength.

Always give brief context for quotations, and give it before the quotation:

In describing a typical first date, Smith says…

Suggesting that all people should learn to drive, Jones asserts that…

While speaking at his mother’s funeral, Smith notes that the guests…
Other Detractors from a Mature Academic Voice

1. Use of first person. Avoid “I think,” “I believe,” “To me this means…”


3. Colloquial speech and immature, excessively informal vocabulary. Examples: “Your average Joe,” “Joe College,” “Back in the olden days,” “Nowadays,” “24/7,” “A bunch of…a ton of…” (Does the writer mean “a significant number of…?”) “I would have to say…” (Not really); “That would have to be…” (Again, not really)

4. Use of psychobabble: “The peer pressure on Hester Prynne,” “Proctor was depressed by…” “Abigail’s lifestyle in Puritan Salem…” “Virginia Woolf, herself a depressed person, writes a rather bi-polar essay.”

5. Use of absolutes: “always” “never” “everybody” “I’ll bet 99.9% of the people…”

6. Excesses of tone: hysterical, breathless, indignant, self-righteous, cute, breezy, etc. Example: *If a homeless man in America even talks he gets arrested.*

7. Cheerleading, a special kind of excess of tone when the student lavishes praise on an author or her work. Examples: “The greatest writer…” “Does a magnificent job of…” “so awesome,” “obviously a genius,” “…will affect me for the rest of my life.”

8. Silly, weak, childish examples: students’ lack of discernment with regard to quality examples or evidence; using cartoons, Disney movies, pop song lyrics, etc., as legitimate evidence.

9. Rhetorical questions, especially those with an indignant response, such as: *Do we Americans have to put up with this? I think not!*

10. Clichés, all of them. They’re as old as the hills.

11. Exclamation points, especially lots of them!!!!!!!

12. Most adverbs, such as basically, obviously, surely, certainly, very, really, incredibly, totally, etc., should be used sparingly!

13. Misspelling the author’s name!

14. Referring to authors by their first names. Please use “Smith and Jones,” never “Bob and Susan.”

15. Writing about an author’s life rather than his or her work or specific purpose in a text. Weak: “Whitman and Dickinson write about death differently due to their different life experiences.” Better: “Dickinson’s purpose in using this image is…” or “Whitman’s imagery suggests…”

16. Using technical vocabulary incorrectly. Examples: “Green uses emotional syntax.” “She uses dictional phrases like…” “His short fragments are all connected by commas and collaborated into a few run-on sentences.”

17. Gobbledygook, usually some kind of combination of the characteristics listed above. It imitates pretentious writing but says little. Examples: “The author brilliantly uses a hyphen in order to emphasize and reinforce motivation and justice that God provides and installs in each and every man.”

18. Don’t be thrown by terminology. “Stylistic devices,” “resources of language,” “literary devices,” “rhetorical devices” and “strategies” are largely interchangeable terms for the same things – *what is the author doing with language to achieve his/her purpose?*