

**The Landscape of Advanced Placement English Language & Composition:  
An Introduction to the Essays of the Advanced Placement Exam  
through the Writings of Henry David Thoreau**

by

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11th grade English AP class  
July 2010

<b>Title of Unit:</b> The Landscape of Advanced Placement Language & Composition: An Introduction to the Essays of the Advanced Placement Exam through the Writings of Henry David Thoreau
<b>Name:</b> Inna Kantor London
<b>Duration of Unit:</b> The entire unit will not be taught together. Typically, the rhetorical devices essay is introduced in Term I. That part of the unit will probably last two weeks. The persuasive essay is introduced in Term II. That part of the unit will probably last a week. The synthesis essay is introduced in Term III. That part of the unit will last about a week and a half to two weeks.
<b>School:</b> Framingham High School
<b>School City and State:</b> Framingham, Mass.
<b>Number of Lesson in Unit:</b> 13
<b>Subject:</b> English (Advanced Placement English Language and Composition)
<b>Related Subjects:</b> None
<b>Grade Level(s):</b> 11
<b>Date:</b> July 2010

**Short Abstract of Curriculum:**

Selections from Henry David Thoreau's writings will be used to introduce students to the three essays of the Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Exam: the rhetorical devices essay, the persuasive essay and the synthesis essay. Students will explore their sense of place in the projects and journals. These assignments reaffirm the concepts necessary for effectively writing these three essays. The unit will combine both analytical and creative work. Final assessments in the form of actual former AP essay prompts will be used. These final assessments will also implicitly address the notion of one's sense of place. These lessons will serve as an introduction to the essays; the essays will be practiced and revisited throughout the year using various other materials.

**List of Reading Materials:**

Approaching Walden. [www.walden.org](http://www.walden.org).

Cody, Anthony. "Obama calls for Richer Assessments, Teacher Involvement." Education Week Teacher. February 2010. 16 July 2010. [blogs.edweek.org](http://blogs.edweek.org).

College Board: AP Central. [www.apcentral.collegeboard.com](http://www.apcentral.collegeboard.com)

Gardner, Walt. "The 'crisis' of U.S. education." The New York Times. 14 January 2008. 16 July 2010. [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com).

Johnson, Kirk and Krista Kafer. "Why More Money Will Not Solve America's Education Crisis." The Heritage Foundation. 11 June 2001. 16 July 2010. [www.heritage.org/Research/Reports](http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports).

McKenzie, Jamie. "Learning the Script." Nochildleft.com. 2004. 16 July 2010.  
NoChildleft.com/cartoon21.html.

National Education Association. "ESEA: It's Time for a Change." NEA. 2002-2010. 16 July 2010.  
www.nea.org/home/13193.htm.

Rubenstein, Grace. "Outside In." Edutopia. March 2007. 24-27.

Thoreau, Henry David. Civil Disobedience and Other Essays. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1993.

Thoreau, Henry David. Walden. Concise Anthology of American Literature. Ed. George McMichael. New York: Macmillan, 1985. 682-791.

University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center. "Student Gains From Place-Based Education." November 2007. 16 July 2010. www.cudenver.edu/cye.

### **List of Equipment:**

On certain occasions, students will go to the library or computer lab to look at outside sources.

### **Massachusetts State Standards:**

Standard 1: Discussion  
Standard 2: Questioning, Listening and Contributing  
Standard 3: Oral Presentations  
Standard 4: Vocabulary and Concept Development  
Standard 6: Forman and Informal English  
Standard 8: Understanding a Text  
Standard 9: Making Connections  
Standard 13: Non-fiction  
Standard 15: Style and Language  
Standard 19: Writing  
Standard 20: Consideration of Audience and Purpose

## Introduction

The AP English Language and Composition exam is composed of 55 multiple choice questions and three essay questions. Students receive a 15 minute reading period for the synthesis essay and 40 minutes to write each of the three essays. The first type of essay is known as a *rhetorical devices essay*, in which a student is given a passage of non-fiction and is asked to analyze the various literary and rhetorical devices used to convey the author's purpose. The second type of essay is known as a *persuasive essay*, in which a student is given either a quotation or a statement, and the student must write a persuasive essay defending, challenging or qualifying the claim made by the quotation or statement. The student must use specific examples from literature, history, pop culture, current events or personal experiences to defend his or her response. The best essays are those that display an understanding of an opposing position with an efficient and clever challenge to that position. The third type of essay is known as a *synthesis essay*. It is similar to the persuasive essay in the sense that the student is asked to make an argument about a given topic, but, unlike the persuasive essay, the synthesis essay offers selections from various sources that must be synthesized in creating one's argument. At least one of the given sources is a visual text (map, illustration, painting, cartoon, chart, etc.). Students must refrain from summarizing the works and instead engage in a conversation with the sources, thereby presenting their own position on the given topic.

It is my overarching goal in this unit to offer the students an introduction to the three types of essays through Henry David Thoreau's works. At the same time, I want students to be inspired by the actual content of these works. Consequently, the students will be given an opportunity to consider and reflect upon their sense of place through the journal and project work that the unit offers. Ultimately, the AP English Language and Composition curriculum seeks the creation of an educated citizen. It is through one's learning of one's environment and place that one can become a truly educated and contributing citizen. Therefore, an individual's sense of place will be a guiding theme in all assignments. The final assessments will be in the form of actual former AP essay prompts; these essays will be done in class under actual testing conditions. All essays are graded on a 9-point scale, with 9 being the highest score (rubrics will be provided). I have specifically chosen former prompts that link into our theme and exploration of one's sense of place. The lessons will serve as an introduction to the essays; the essays will be practiced and revisited throughout the year using various other materials.

**Brief Unit Outline:**

- I. Rhetorical Devices Essay (6 lessons)
  - A. Analysis of various Thoreau passages
  - B. Journal writings about natural environment
  - C. Rhetoric on the Town Project
  - D. In-class essay
  
- II. Persuasive Essay (4 lessons)
  - A. Four Corner Activity
  - B. Socratic Seminar
  - C. Journal writings about local issues
  - D. Newspaper Activity
  - E. In-class essay
  
- III. Synthesis Essay (3 lessons)
  - A. Education Synthesis (including discussion of place-based education)
  - B. Synthesis research regarding environmental activism (research paper)
  - C. In-class essay

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<b>Unit Title:</b> The Landscape of Advanced Placement Language & Composition: An Introduction to the Essays of the Advanced Placement Exam through the Writings of Henry David Thoreau
<b>Lesson #:</b> 1-6
<b>Lesson Title:</b> The Rhetorical Devices Essay
<b>Lesson Duration:</b> Each lesson is a 60 minute class.

**Abstract:**

The rhetorical devices essay is probably the hardest essay for most students. It seeks not only an understanding and identification of various literary and rhetorical devices, but it also demands that students demonstrate an understanding of why the author chooses to use certain devices in conveying his or her purpose. On the AP Exam, students will have 40 minutes to complete this essay.

**Goals/Objectives:**

Students will define and identify the following literary terms: rhetoric, imagery, symbolism, detail, diction, simile, metaphor, allusion, personification, juxtaposition, syntax, and rhetorical questions.

Students will apply the various literary devices in their own writing.

Students will generalize their understanding of the various literary devices by exploring rhetoric in their own communities and settings.

Students will work in a collaborative setting.

Student will go outside to explore their natural surroundings.

Students will familiarize themselves with a variety of Henry David Thoreau’s writings.

Students will practice writing an AP essay in a timed fashion.

**Lesson 1:**

The teacher will define the term rhetoric.

As a class, we will gather definitions of the following terms: imagery, symbolism, detail and diction.

Students will read Thoreau’s “The Ponds” from Walden. They will then receive the following handout to annotate for the literary terms we discussed. Then students will explore the questions: (1) why did Thoreau employ these specific devices? (2) what was his purpose in this passage? and (3) how does the employment of these devices contribute to his message? We will discuss these issues as a class.

From Thoreau’s “The Ponds,” Walden.

The scenery of Walden is on a humble scale, and, though very beautiful, does not approach to grandeur, nor can it much concern one who has not long frequented it or lived by its shore; yet this pond is so remarkable for its depth and purity as to merit a particular description. It is a clear

and deep green well, half a mile long and a mile and three quarters in circumference, and contains about sixty-one and a half acres; a perennial spring in the midst of pine and oak woods, without any visible inlet or outlet except by the clouds and evaporation. The surrounding hills rise abruptly from the water to the height of forty to eighty feet, though on the southeast and east they attain to about one hundred and one hundred and fifty feet respectively, within a quarter and a third of a mile. They are exclusively woodland. All our Concord waters have two colors at least; one when viewed at a distance, and another, more proper, close at hand. The first depends more on the light, and follows the sky. In clear weather, in summer, they appear blue at a little distance, especially if agitated, and at a great distance all appear alike. In stormy weather they are sometimes of a dark slate-color. The sea, however, is said to be blue one day and green another without any perceptible change in the atmosphere. I have seen our river, when, the landscape being covered with snow, both water and ice were almost as green as grass. Some consider blue "to be the color of pure water, whether liquid or solid." But, looking directly down into our waters from a boat, they are seen to be of very different colors. Walden is blue at one time and green at another, even from the same point of view. Lying between the earth and the heavens, it partakes of the color of both. Viewed from a hilltop it reflects the color of the sky; but near at hand it is of a yellowish tint next the shore where you can see the sand, then a light green, which gradually deepens to a uniform dark green in the body of the pond. In some lights, viewed even from a hilltop, it is of a vivid green next the shore. Some have referred this to the reflection of the verdure; but it is equally green there against the railroad sandbank, and in the spring, before the leaves are expanded, and it may be simply the result of the prevailing blue mixed with the yellow of the sand. Such is the color of its iris. This is that portion, also, where in the spring, the ice being warmed by the heat of the sun reflected from the bottom, and also transmitted through the earth, melts first and forms a narrow canal about the still frozen middle. Like the rest of our waters, when much agitated, in clear weather, so that the surface of the waves may reflect the sky at the right angle, or because there is more light mixed with it, it appears at a little distance of a darker blue than the sky itself; and at such a time, being on its surface, and looking with divided vision, so as to see the reflection, I have discerned a matchless and indescribable light blue, such as watered or changeable silks and sword blades suggest, more cerulean than the sky itself, alternating with the original dark green on the opposite sides of the waves, which last appeared but muddy in comparison. It is a vitreous greenish blue, as I remember it, like those patches of the winter sky seen through cloud vistas in the west before sundown. Yet a single glass of its water held up to the light is as colorless as an equal quantity of air. It is well known that a large plate of glass will have a green tint, owing, as the makers say, to its "body," but a small piece of the same will be colorless. How large a body of Walden water would be required to reflect a green tint I have never proved. The water of our river is black or a very dark brown to one looking directly down on it, and, like that of most ponds, imparts to the body of one bathing in it a yellowish tinge; but this water is of such crystalline purity that the body of the bather appears of an alabaster whiteness, still more unnatural, which, as the limbs are magnified and distorted withal, produces a monstrous effect, making fit studies for a Michael Angelo.

The water is so transparent that the bottom can easily be discerned at the depth of twenty-five or thirty feet. Paddling over it, you may see, many feet beneath the surface, the schools of perch and shiners, perhaps only an inch long, yet the former easily distinguished by their transverse bars, and you think that they must be ascetic fish that find a subsistence there. Once, in the winter, many years ago, when I had been cutting holes through the ice in order to catch pickerel, as I stepped ashore I tossed my axe back on to the ice, but, as if some evil genius had directed it, it slid four or five rods directly into one of the holes, where the water was twenty-five feet deep. Out of curiosity, I lay down on the ice and looked through the hole, until I saw the axe a little on one side, standing on its head, with its helve erect and gently swaying to and fro with the pulse of the pond; and there it might have stood erect and swaying till in the course of time the handle rotted off, if I had not disturbed it. Making another hole directly over it with an ice

chisel which I had, and cutting down the longest birch which I could find in the neighborhood with my knife, I made a slip-noose, which I attached to its end, and, letting it down carefully, passed it over the knob of the handle, and drew it by a line along the birch, and so pulled the axe out again.

Homework: (20 points quiz)

Students will read Thoreau's "Slavery in Massachusetts." They will then receive the following handout to annotate for the literary terms we discussed. Then students will explore the questions: (1) why did Thoreau employ these specific devices? (2) what was his purpose in this passage? and (3) how does the employment of these devices contribute to his message? Students will write a short essay.

*From Thoreau's "Slavery in Massachusetts."*

But it chanced the other day that I scented a white water-lily, and a season I had waited for had arrived. It is the emblem of purity. It bursts up so pure and fair to the eye, and so sweet to the scent, as if to show us what purity and sweetness reside in, and can be extracted from, the slime and muck of earth. I think I have plucked the first one that has opened for a mile. What confirmation of our hopes is in the fragrance of this flower! I shall not so soon despair of the world for it, notwithstanding slavery, and the cowardice and want of principle of Northern men. It suggests what kind of laws have prevailed longest and widest, and still prevail, and that the time may come when man's deeds will smell as sweet. Such is the odor which the plant emits. If Nature can compound this fragrance still annually, I shall believe her still young and full of vigor, her integrity and genius unimpaired, and that there is virtue even in man, too, who is fitted to perceive and love it. It reminds me that Nature has been partner to no Missouri Compromise. I scent no compromise in the fragrance of the water-lily. It is not a *Nymphoea Douglasii*. In it, the sweet, and pure, and innocent are wholly sundered from the obscene and baleful. I do not scent in this the time-serving irresolution of a Massachusetts Governor, nor of a Boston Mayor. So behave that the odor of your actions may enhance the general sweetness of the atmosphere, that when we behold or scent a flower, we may not be reminded how inconsistent your deeds are with it; for all odor is but one form of advertisement of a moral quality, and if fair actions had not been performed, the lily would not smell sweet. The foul slime stands for the sloth and vice of man, the decay of humanity; the fragrant flower that springs from it, for the purity and courage which are immortal.

Slavery and servility have produced no sweet-scented flower annually, to charm the senses of men, for they have no real life: they are merely a decaying and a death, offensive to all healthy nostrils. We do not complain that they *live*, but that they do not get *buried*. Let the living bury them: even they are good for manure.

## Lesson 2:

We will go outside. Students will pick a natural object. In a journal, without naming the object, take two minutes to describe it. Use words, illustrations, or both. Make sure to look at things closely, to touch things, and to smell things. Now write a one page entry, using detail and imagery to describe your object based on your notes and drawings. Consider diction closely. Can your object transform into a symbol? Find a meaning in it.



Students will share journal entries in groups of four and then break into groups of two. In each pair, students will annotate each other's work for the terms we explored yesterday. Each student will write a response entry in the other's journal, where s/he will guess what the object is and then explore why the author used the various literary devices and what message the author was trying to establish through these devices. Students will reconvene in their groups of four and read each other's responses.

Homework: (20 points quiz)

Read Thoreau's "Walking." Pick a paragraph or two to annotate for the literary devices we studied. How does Thoreau use these devices to convey his purpose? Write a paragraph.

### **Lesson 3:**

As a class, we will gather definitions of the following terms: rhetorical questions, syntax, metaphor, and personification.

Students will have read Thoreau's "Walking" as homework. They will receive the following handout to annotate for the literary terms we discussed. Then students will explore the questions: (1) why did Thoreau employ these specific devices? (2) what was his purpose in this passage? and (3) how does the employment of these devices contribute to his message? We will discuss these issues as a class.

From Thoreau's "Walking."

What is it that makes it so hard sometimes to determine whither we will walk? I believe that there is a subtle magnetism in Nature, which, if we unconsciously yield to it, will direct us aright. It is not indifferent to us which way we walk. There is a right way; but we are very liable from heedlessness and stupidity to take the wrong one. We would fain take that walk, never yet taken by us through this actual world, which is perfectly symbolical of the path which we love to travel in the interior and ideal world; and sometimes, no doubt, we find it difficult to choose our direction, because it does not yet exist distinctly in our idea.

When I go out of the house for a walk, uncertain as yet whither I will bend my steps, and submit myself to my instinct to decide for me, I find, strange and whimsical as it may seem, that I finally and inevitably settle southwest, toward some particular wood or meadow or deserted pasture or hill in that direction. My needle is slow to settle,--varies a few degrees, and does not always point due southwest, it is true, and it has good authority for this variation, but it always settles between west and south-southwest. The future lies that way to me, and the earth seems more unexhausted and richer on that side. The outline which would bound my walks would be, not a circle, but a parabola, or rather like one of those cometary orbits which have been thought to be non-returning curves, in this case opening westward, in which my house occupies the place of the sun. I turn round and round irresolute sometimes for a quarter of an hour, until I decide, for a thousandth time, that I will walk into the southwest or west. Eastward I go only by force; but westward I go free. Thither no business leads me. It is hard for me to believe that I shall find fair landscapes or sufficient wildness and freedom behind the eastern horizon. I am not excited by the prospect of a walk thither; but I believe that the forest which I see in the western horizon stretches uninterruptedly toward the setting sun, and there are no towns nor cities in it of enough consequence to disturb me. Let me live where I will, on this side is the city, on that the wilderness, and ever I am leaving the city more and more, and withdrawing into the wilderness. I should not lay so much stress on this fact, if I did not believe that something like this is the

prevailing tendency of my countrymen. I must walk toward Oregon, and not toward Europe. And that way the nation is moving, and I may say that mankind progress from east to west. Within a few years we have witnessed the phenomenon of a southeastward migration, in the settlement of Australia; but this affects us as a retrograde movement, and, judging from the moral and physical character of the first generation of Australians, has not yet proved a successful experiment. The eastern Tartars think that there is nothing west beyond Thibet. "The world ends there," say they; "beyond there is nothing but a shoreless sea." It is unmitigated East where they live.

Homework: (20 points quiz)

Students will read Thoreau's "Conclusion" of Walden and receive the following handout to annotate for the literary terms we discussed. Then students will explore the questions: (1) why did Thoreau employ these specific devices? (2) what was his purpose in this passage? and (3) how does the employment of these devices contribute to his message? Write a paragraph.

From Thoreau's "Conclusion," Walden.

I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one. It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves. I had not lived there a week before my feet wore a path from my door to the pond-side; and though it is Eve or six years since I trod it, it is still quite distinct. It is true, I fear, that others may have fallen into it, and so helped to keep it open. The surface of the earth is soft and impressible by the feet of men; and so with the paths which the mind travels. How worn and dusty, then, must be the Highways of the world, how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity! I did not wish to take a cabin passage, but rather to go before the mast and on the deck of the world, for there I could best see the moonlight amid the mountains. I do not wish to go below now.

I learned this, at least, by my experiment: that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours. He will put some things behind, will pass an invisible boundary; new, universal, and more liberal laws will begin to establish themselves around and within him; or the old laws be expanded, and interpreted in his favor in a more liberal sense, and he will live with the license of a higher order of beings. In proportion as he simplifies his life, the laws of the universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, nor poverty poverty, nor weakness weakness. If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.

#### **Lesson 4:**

As a class, we will gather definitions of the following terms: simile, allusion, and juxtaposition.

Students have already read Thoreau's "Walking." They will receive the following handout to annotate for the literary terms we discussed. Then students will explore the questions: (1) why did Thoreau employ these specific devices? (2) what was his purpose in this passage? and (3) how does the employment of these devices contribute to his message? We will discuss these issues as a class.

From Thoreau's "Walking."

Moreover, you must walk like a camel, which is said to be the only beast which ruminates when walking. When a traveler asked Wordsworth's servant to show him her master's study, she answered, "Here is his library, but his study is out of doors."

Living much out of doors, in the sun and wind, will no doubt produce a certain roughness of character--will cause a thicker cuticle to grow over some of the finer qualities of our nature, as on the face and hands, or as severe manual labor robs the hands of some of their delicacy of touch. So staying in the house, on the other hand, may produce a softness and smoothness, not to say thinness of skin, accompanied by an increased sensibility to certain impressions. Perhaps we should be more susceptible to some influences important to our intellectual and moral growth, if the sun had shone and the wind blown on us a little less; and no doubt it is a nice matter to proportion rightly the thick and thin skin. But methinks that is a scurf that will fall off fast enough--that the natural remedy is to be found in the proportion which the night bears to the day, the winter to the summer, thought to experience. There will be so much the more air and sunshine in our thoughts. The callous palms of the laborer are conversant with finer tissues of self-respect and heroism, whose touch thrills the heart, than the languid fingers of idleness. That is mere sentimentality that lies abed by day and thinks itself white, far from the tan and callus of experience.

When we walk, we naturally go to the fields and woods: what would become of us, if we walked only in a garden or a mall? Even some sects of philosophers have felt the necessity of importing the woods to themselves, since they did not go to the woods. "They planted groves and walks of Platanes," where they took *subdiales ambulationes* in porticos open to the air. Of course it is of no use to direct our steps to the woods, if they do not carry us thither. I am alarmed when it happens that I have walked a mile into the woods bodily, without getting there in spirit. In my afternoon walk I would fain forget all my morning occupations and my obligations to Society. But it sometimes happens that I cannot easily shake off the village. The thought of some work will run in my head and I am not where my body is--I am out of my senses. In my walks I would fain return to my senses. What business have I in the woods, if I am thinking of something out of the woods? I suspect myself, and cannot help a shudder when I find myself so implicated even in what are called good works--for this may sometimes happen.

My vicinity affords many good walks; and though for so many years I have walked almost every day, and sometimes for several days together, I have not yet exhausted them. An absolutely new prospect is a great happiness, and I can still get this any afternoon. Two or three hours' walking will carry me to as strange a country as I expect ever to see. A single farmhouse which I had not seen before is sometimes as good as the dominions of the King of Dahomey. There is in fact a sort of harmony discoverable between the capabilities of the landscape within a circle of ten miles' radius, or the limits of an afternoon walk, and the threescore years and ten of human life. It will never become quite familiar to you.

Homework: (20 points quiz)

Students will read "The Bean-Field" in Thoreau's Walden. Find a passage rich in the literary devices which we have studied and annotate it. Consider Thoreau's use of various literary devices in conveying his purpose. Make sure to clearly identify Thoreau's purpose in his essay. Write a paragraph of your findings.

## Lesson 5

The class will go outside into the natural surroundings of our school. Kids will be divided into pairs. Each pair must find one element of nature (any element as long as each member of the pair writes about the same element) to write about in their journals. The students must employ the literary devices we covered (imagery, symbolism, detail, diction, simile, metaphor, allusion, personification, juxtaposition, syntax, and rhetorical questions) in a conscious and deliberate manner. Once students complete their entries, each pair will compare their entries and their various uses of the devices. We will discuss the various messages students tried to convey in their writings and consider the various devices used by the students to convey their individual messages.

Homework: (100 points test)

Assign "Rhetoric Out on the Town."

### **RHETORIC OUT ON THE TOWN**

You are to spend a lovely few hours around town (or go somewhere else if you are allowed!), going to stores (you don't have to buy anything!), going to restaurants (you don't have to eat anything!), being on the roads, walking the downtown(s), visiting cemeteries, walking down streets or paths looking for examples of rhetoric (in pictures and/or writing). When you see a good example of rhetoric in action, take a picture and record when/where you found it. For each example (you will need 5) you'll then type up answers to the following questions (a paragraph for each question - no personal pronouns, watch your grammar and mechanics, present tense):

1. Why do you think this is an example of rhetoric?
2. What is the message being given by this example?
3. Who is the audience/target for this particular example?
4. What techniques did the creator(s) of this example use to get this message across (explain how these techniques were used)?
5. Could other techniques be used more effectively? If so, what would you have done differently (no personal pronouns!)?

You will need to add a cover sheet explaining who the partners are and the places you looked for examples. Make sure to provide a page for each example, including the digital picture you took and the answers to the questions (need not all fit on a single page).

#### **Grading Criteria:**

**Correct Information:** clearly, correctly explain and answers questions (no personal pronouns, watch your grammar and mechanics, present tense)

**Completion:** 5 pictures; answer all questions for each picture; follow directions

**Organization:** employ a logical, user-friendly organizational form

**Neatness/Creativity:** take pride in your project's appearance

**Presentation:** take pride in your project when you present; do NOT read the paragraphs – EXPLAIN them to the class instead!

## Lesson 6

Assessment (100 point test grade):

Students will take an in-class essay practicing for the AP Exam. This prompt was chosen because of its subject matter, which deals with one's sense of place and close observation of one's surroundings. Because this is a compare/contrast essay, it builds on many of the journal activities we've done throughout the unit.

The rubric that will be used is the same as used by the AP readers. The prompt can be found on [http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/repository/ap05\\_frq\\_englishlang\\_45429.pdf](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/repository/ap05_frq_englishlang_45429.pdf).

See **Attachment A** for a copy of the essay prompt as well as the rubric that will be used for grading.

<b>Name:</b> Inna Kantor London
<b>Unit Title:</b> The Landscape of Advanced Placement Language & Composition: An Introduction to the Essays of the Advanced Placement Exam through the Writings of Henry David Thoreau
<b>Lesson #:</b> 7-10
<b>Lesson Title:</b> The Persuasive Essay
<b>Lesson Duration:</b> Each lesson is 60 minutes long.

**Abstract:**

The persuasive essay is usually the easiest essay for AP students to write, probably because the students get practice writing one for the SATs. The essay on the AP, however, requires more complex thinking. To receive a 7, 8, or a 9 on the exam, students must consider both sides of an argument. They must prove their argument with specific examples from literature, history, pop culture, current events and/or personal experiences. On the AP Exam, students will have 40 minutes to complete this essay.

**Goals/Objectives:**

Students will discuss central issues of Thoreau’s writings.

Students will debate their agreements or disagreements with Thoreau’s ideas and support their positions with specific examples from literature, history, pop culture, current events and/or personal experiences.

Students will explore local issues facing their town.

Students will consider actions for change.

Students will write persuasive pieces on various local and national issues.

Students will consider counterarguments.

Students will practice writing an AP essay in a timed fashion.

**Lesson 7:**

Four Corners Activity: Mark four corners of the room with the signs “Strongly Agree,” “Strongly Disagree,” “Somewhat Agree,” and “Somewhat Disagree.” Offer the students a list of Thoreau quotations. Read each quotation out loud. Students will disperse to the corner of the room that best represents their positions. Students in each corner will be called to support their positions. A debate/discussion will ensue.

All quotations were taken from Approaching Walden,  
<http://www.walden.org/Library/Quotations/>:

*We do not learn much from learned books, but from true, sincere, human books, from frank and honest biographies.*

*He who cannot read is worse than deaf and blind, is yet but half alive, is still-born.*

*There is always room and occasion enough for a true book on any subject; as there is room for more light the brightest day and more rays will not interfere with the first.*

*The world rests on principles.*

*It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right.*

*Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also in prison.*

*The value of any experience is measured, of course, not by the amount of money, but the amount of development we get out of it.*

*Men talk of freedom! How many are free to think? Free from fear, from perturbation, from prejudice? Nine hundred and ninety-nine in a thousand are perfect slaves.*

*I love my friends very much, but I find that it is of no use to go to see them. I hate them commonly when I am near them. They belie themselves and deny me continually.*

*To say that a man is your Friend means commonly no more than this, that he is not your enemy.*

*The rule is to carry as little as possible.*

*If we dealt only with the false and dishonest, we should at last forget how to speak truth.*

*Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth.*

*Say what you have to say, not what you ought. Any truth is better than make-believe.*

*It takes two to speak the truth, — one to speak, and another to hear.*

Homework: (20 points quiz)

Select a quotation and develop your position in greater detail using support from your personal life, pop culture, current events, history or literature. Write a short essay.

### **Lesson 8:**

Socratic Seminar. Students will be given the following passage from Thoreau's "Slavery in Massachusetts." Agree, disagree or qualify Thoreau's view of the press. We will debate this issue as a class. Make sure to provide specific examples in the course of our discussion from your personal life, pop culture, current events, history or literature in order to thoroughly back up your position.

From Thoreau's "Slavery in Massachusetts."

Among measures to be adopted, I would suggest to make as earnest and vigorous an assault on the press as has already been made, and with effect, on the church. The church has much improved within a few years; but the press is, almost without exception, corrupt. I believe that in this country the press exerts a greater and a more pernicious influence than the church did in its worst period. We are not a religious people, but we are a nation of politicians. We do not care for the Bible, but we do care for the newspaper. At any meeting of politicians — like that at Concord the other evening, for instance — how impertinent it would be to quote from the Bible! how pertinent to quote from a newspaper or from the Constitution! The newspaper is a Bible which we read every morning and every afternoon, standing and sitting, riding and walking. It is a Bible which every man carries in his pocket, which lies on every table and counter, and which the mail,

and thousands of missionaries, are continually dispersing. It is, in short, the only book which America has printed and which America reads. So wide is its influence. The editor is a preacher whom you voluntarily support. Your tax is commonly one cent daily, and it costs nothing for pew hire. But how many of these preachers preach the truth? I repeat the testimony of many an intelligent foreigner, as well as my own convictions, when I say, that probably no country was ever ruled by so mean a class of tyrants as, with a few noble exceptions, are the editors of the periodical press in *this* country. And as they live and rule only by their servility, and appealing to the worse, and not the better, nature of man, the people who read them are in the condition of the dog that returns to his vomit.

### **Rubric for Socratic Seminar:**

#### **A (18-20)... Socrates salutes you!**

**Conduct:** Brings all seminar materials to class, sits up straight, contributes to a formal dialogue, speaks to all seminar students (not just to the teacher), invites quiet students to join in, does not giggle with friends or mock the seminar.

**Speaking:** Speaks often enough to make points but does not dominate the conversation, speaks consistently throughout the seminar, speaks clearly and loudly so that all can hear, uses formal language, and avoid repeating points made by others.

**Reasoning:** Understands the text, makes textual references, understands the question before answering, moves the conversation forward with new insight or questions, avoid repetition or statements of the obvious, avoids summary, considers others' viewpoints, expresses thoughts in complete sentences rather than "one liners."

**Listening:** Does not interrupt the speaker, looks at the speaker, flips to the page being referenced by the speaker, writes down questions or notes to refer back to, offers a response to the speaker's comments or builds upon what the previous person said but avoids repetition.

#### **B (16-17)...Socrates smiles at you.**

#### **C (14-15)...Socrates looks at you amusingly.**

#### **D (12-13)...Socrates scowls.**

#### **F (10-11)...Socrates wonders if you've been playing with Play-doh! (Plato, get it?)**

Homework: (20 points quiz)

Look through your local newspaper (*The Metro West* or another local publication). Pick an editorial. Write a short essay in which you agree, disagree or qualify the editor's position. Remember that you must back up your own argument with specific examples from your personal life, pop culture, current events, history or literature.

### **Lesson 9:**

As a class, discuss the various issues that students have commented on in their homework. Further debate the issues as a class.



Go to the library or computer lab to look at other newspapers. Pick an issue facing our state, our country or even the world. In a paper, (A) explore your position on the issue using specific examples from your personal life, pop culture, current events, history or literature to develop your position. (B) In a separate paragraph, reflect on whether where you are from (namely, Framingham, but if you are an immigrant consider that in your response) affects your position on this issue. In what way(s)? Be specific. (C) In your last paragraph, consider what you can do for the issue? Once again, be specific. What steps will you need to take to ensure that your position ultimately "wins" or succeeds? Essays will be discussed in class. Students may work in pairs. This will be completed for homework. (100 points quiz)

### **Lesson 10:**

Assessment (100 point test grade):

Students will take an in-class essay practicing for the AP Exam. This prompt was chosen because of its subject matter, which deals with one's sense of place, namely in terms of awareness of one's local issues. The rubric that will be used is the same as used by the AP readers. The prompt can be found on [http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/repository/ap04\\_frq\\_english\\_lang\\_35918.pdf](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/repository/ap04_frq_english_lang_35918.pdf).

See **Attachment B** for a copy of the essay as well as the rubric that will be used for grading.

<b>Name:</b> Inna Kantor London
<b>Unit Title:</b> The Landscape of Advanced Placement Language & Composition: An Introduction to the Essays of the Advanced Placement Exam through the Writings of Henry David Thoreau
<b>Lesson #:</b> 11-13
<b>Lesson Title:</b> The Synthesis Essay
<b>Lesson Duration:</b> Each lesson is 60 minutes long.

**Abstract:**

The synthesis essay is like a mini-research paper, where the research has already been done on the student's behalf and the student must now figure out a way to synthesize the sources and create a coherent and cogent argument using these sources. Unlike the persuasive essay, the synthesis essay requires no outside information to support one's argument. In fact, the essay is graded mostly on one's ability to synthesize and engage with the given sources. Students are encouraged to come up with their own position before reading the sources so that sources can be scrutinized with their own position in mind. The essays that do best must consider counterarguments and engage in conversation with the sources. On the AP Exam, 15 minutes are given to students for reading the sources. Then, students have 40 minutes to complete the essay.

**Goals/Objectives:**

Students will engage in researching various sources to support their arguments.

Students will evaluate various sources.

Students will employ visual sources to support their arguments.

Students will employ Thoreau's writings to support their own positions on modern issues.

Students will develop arguments that synthesize, rather than summarize, sources in establishing their own positions.

Students will explore the topic of place-based education and education in general.

Students will write an AP essay in a timed fashion.

**Lesson 11:**

In anticipation of this class, students will be given the following introduction and assignment as well as all the readings. These readings are much longer than the ones that will appear on the AP Exam. When students come to class, having read the readings and completed their essays, students will engage in a discussion and debate (much like a Socratic Seminar) using the sources to build and defend their arguments. This essay will not be graded.

*Introduction:*

The argument over what education in the United States should consist of has been a hotly debated topic in every presidential election. When President George W. Bush passed the No Child Left Behind Bill (NCLB), he was applauded by some and severely criticized by others. The debate as to the appropriate educational model for our country continues. Some continue to panic at low test scores, others believe that adjustments to the current system will be sufficient,

and yet a growing population urges the abandonment of traditional education in favor of place-based education.

*Assignment:*

Read the following sources (including any introductory information) carefully. **Then write an essay in which you evaluate what the government needs to consider in reforming our education system and propose what you believe the education system should be in the United States. Synthesize at least three of the sources for support.**

Refer to the sources by their titles (Source A, Source B, etc.) or by the descriptions in the parentheses.

See **Attachment C** for the sources.

Source A (Thoreau)

Source B (Cody)

Source C (Johnson and Kafer)

Source D (Gardner)

Source E (McKenzie)

Source F (National Education Association)

Source G (Rubenstein)

Source H (Children, Youth and Environments Center for Research and Design)

**Rubric for Socratic Seminar:**

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**C (14-15)...Socrates looks at you amusingly.**

**D (12-13)...Socrates scowls.**

**F (10-11)...Socrates wonders if you've been playing with Play-doh! (Plato, get it?)**

## Lesson 12:

This lesson will begin in the library and be completed at home. A time extension may be necessary.

We will go to the library or computer lab. Once there, identify a place that demands or needs your protection. You are to gather six (6) sources that help support your argument. One source must be a visual (map, illustration, chart, cartoon, painting). One source must be a piece of Thoreau's writings. This will be your research paper; more specific guidelines and dates will be provided at a later time. Use the sources to support and establish your position in a well-argued essay. (100 points test grade)

### Research Paper Rubric:

**8:** Essays earning a score of 8 effectively develop a position on the topic. They support the position by successfully synthesizing<sup>1</sup> four different types of sources. The argument is convincing, and the sources effectively support the student's position. The prose demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of elements of effective writing and is close to flawless. The works cited is accurate and complete.

**6:** Essays earning a score of 6 adequately develop a position on the topic. They synthesize all four different types of sources. The argument is generally convincing and the sources generally support the student's position, but the argument is less developed or less cogent than the arguments of essays earning higher scores. The language may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear. The works cited is mostly accurate and complete.

**5:** Essays earning a score of 5 develop a position on the topic. They support the position by synthesizing all four sources, but their argument and their use of sources are somewhat limited, inconsistent or uneven. The argument is generally clear, and the sources generally support the student's position, but the links between the sources the argument may be strained. The writing may contain lapses in diction and syntax, but it usually conveys the writer's ideas adequately. The works cited is relatively accurate and complete, though may contain some minor punctuation errors.

**4:** Essays earning a score of 4 inadequately develop a position on the topic. They attempt to present an argument and support the position by synthesizing at least three sources but may misunderstand, misinterpret, or oversimplify either their own argument or the sources they include. The link between the argument and the sources is weak. The prose of 4 may suggest immature control of writing. The works cited contains some errors.

**2:** Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate little success in developing a position on the topic. They may merely allude to knowledge gained from reading the sources rather than citing the sources themselves. These essays may misread the sources, fail to present an argument, or substitute a simpler task by merely responding to the topic tangentially or merely summarizing the sources. The prose often demonstrates consistent weakness in writing, such as a lack of development or organization, grammatical problems, or a lack of control. The works cited contains numerous errors. The essay may have not many necessary components (MLA format, rubric, rough draft, paragraphs on sources).

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<sup>1</sup> Synthesizing refers to combining the sources and the writer's position to form a cohesive, supported argument, and accurately citing source. Failure to accurately cite your sources (per MLA guidelines) will result in a grade deduction!

**Lesson 13:**

Assessment (100 point test grade):

Students will take an in-class essay practicing for the AP Exam. This prompt was chosen because of its subject matter, which deals with the environment and a sense of place.

The rubric that will be used is the same as used by the AP readers. The prompt can be found on [http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/members/repository/ap06\\_englang\\_synthesisessay2.pdf](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/members/repository/ap06_englang_synthesisessay2.pdf).

See **Attachment D** for a copy of the essay (including the accompanying sources) as well as the rubric that will be used for grading.

**Attachment A**

