

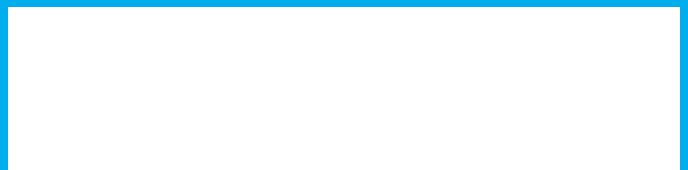


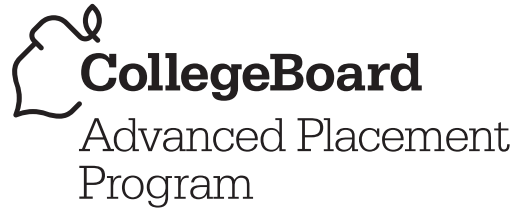
AP[®] English Language and Composition

2006–2007
Professional Development
Workshop Materials

Special Focus:
Writing Persuasively

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Important Note: The following set of materials is organized around a particular theme, or “special focus,” that reflects important topics in the AP English Language course. The materials are intended to provide teachers with resources and classroom ideas relating to these topics. The special focus, as well as the specific content of the materials, cannot and should not be taken as an indication that a particular topic will appear on the AP Exam.

Introduction

Renee H. Shea
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Writing persuasively is not easy. We've known that for years—from reports of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and other standardized tests, perhaps from our personal experience, but most of all from our classrooms. Developing an argument requires a range of critical thinking and communication skills, the imagination to see multiple viewpoints on a single issue, a repertoire of ways to support and illustrate a point, and a keen sense of audience. Yet what is more essential to an informed citizenry than proficiency at persuasion? High school students write persuasively to apply for a job or a scholarship. They write persuasively to win an election or respond to a class assignment. It's a practical skill as well as an intellectual one, and the two converge when students write persuasively on the AP English Language and Composition Exam.

Brent Staples, editorial writer for the *New York Times* and author of *Parallel Lives*, is a master of persuasive writing. Such mastery does not come as a bolt of lightning, he assures interviewer Robin Aufses. "Writing is like bricklaying," he asserts. "You learn from watching or being taught by other people [and] 90 percent of writing is actually rewriting." Continuing the metaphor, he likens words to bricks and sentences to courses of bricks, and he sings the praises of "simple declarative sentences," which are "stretched end to end in an illuminating way to make stories, chapters, and books."

The seasoned teachers who have contributed to this collection offer strategies to analyze and write effective arguments, the ones we are accustomed to seeing on the AP English Language Exam, as well as a new type—the synthesis question. This question will ask students to evaluate texts—including visuals, such as graphic displays, photos, and political cartoons—and integrate those sources in an essay. David Jolliffe, the current Chief Reader, explains the evolution and rationale for the synthesis question, which will debut on the AP English Language Exam in 2007.

One of the challenges of the synthesis question will be for students to use sources to develop their argument without being overwhelmed by them and to select judiciously, not merely summarize. Sylvia Sarrett's students speak for themselves about using sources, drawing a distinction between using them explicitly and implicitly. Mary Jo Potts models a way to use a lower-scoring AP Exam sample as a revision activity. Her AP students

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recognize the strengths and promise of the essay, and they recommend ways to improve and strengthen the argument, which was written in response to the 2004 open question. Larry Scanlon discusses why and how he adapts the theoretical approach of Stephen Toulmin in his classroom, and he offers convincing examples of students' reading and writing using this conceptual lens. Finally, taking a broader view, Denise Hayden describes the work she and a social studies colleague are doing to combine AP English Language and AP U.S. History by team-teaching back-to-back sections.

In "Rhetorical Questions for Two Puritan Writers," Kathleen Puhr reminds us how literary works can be analyzed rhetorically. She examines Jonathan Edwards's sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" via what David Jolliffe has called "a rhetorical transaction" (see "Blending AP English Language and American Literature" on AP Central, apcentral.collegeboard.com). Going further, she analyzes Anne Bradstreet's poetry as argument, written to persuade a specific audience and using such rhetorical strategies as appeals to logos, pathos, and ethos. She points out that "a nonfiction text such as Edwards' sermon lends itself more readily to rhetorical analysis, but poetry and works of fiction are predicated on argument and therefore can be approached rhetorically as well."

In describing the editorial as a form, Brent Staples says it is "short by nature and has to launch an argument—and be inclined toward a conclusion—from the very first word. There is no time to dilly dally." The same could be said of the best responses we see on the AP English Language Exam. The teachers in this collection suggest ways to lay a foundation for such responses as well as for writing persuasively in many other important contexts.

The Simple Declarative Sentence: A Conversation with Brent Staples

Robin D. Aufses
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An editorial writer for the New York Times, Brent Staples is an influential commentator on American politics and culture. He earned a B.A. with honors from Widener University (1973) and received a Danforth Fellowship for graduate study at the University of Chicago, where he earned a Ph.D. in psychology (1982). His essay, “Just Walk on By: Black Men and Public Space,” is frequently anthologized and taught in high schools and colleges. Robin Aufses interviewed Brent Staples in New York City in January 2005.

Robin Aufses: When and how did you begin to see yourself as a writer?

Brent Staples: Writers stand apart from events, making mental notes about them. I realized after writing my memoir, *Parallel Time*, published in 1994, that I had always done this, even as a child. My family moved often while I was growing up; we’d had seven different addresses by the time I reached eighth grade. I arrived in a new neighborhood long after the kids there had established their friendships; my family moved on before I’d had a chance to break into things. This placed me naturally into the posture of the outsider, the posture of the observer. It stood me in good stead when I began to write professionally.

I began to write professionally—selling articles to magazines and newspapers—while I was a doctoral student at the University of Chicago during the 1970s. My research—in the mathematics of decision making—involved modeling human decision making through probability calculus. Arcane stuff. I was steeped in statistics, philosophy, and the history of science. I worked part-time as a psychologist for a consulting firm in downtown Chicago—to pay the rent.

I worked on my dissertation during the mornings and wrote articles for magazines and newspapers in the afternoon. Not surprisingly, the afternoon was more fun. I made the leap to writing when the consulting company went bankrupt—and I received 24 weeks of unemployment compensation. I placed my belongings in a friend’s basement, took a house-sitting job for a doctor I knew—and took the leap. I started writing full-time, mainly for a big weekly newspaper in Chicago called *The Reader*. It didn’t pay a great deal—the typical cover story paid about \$600—but I was young and didn’t really need

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money. My work was noticed around town. I was quickly asked to join one of Chicago's daily newspapers, the *Chicago Sun-Times*. The offer came a couple of months after the unemployment payments ran out. Close call. But I'd made it.

RA: Who were your earliest influences?

BS: The men in my family are monologists by birth. They tell stories all the time. I grew up listening to my father and his brothers weaving long stories—mainly remembrances of family life—for hours on end. My most important influence, of course, was my mother. This was the 1950s, and just about all mothers were stay-at-home mothers. My mother and father married when she was 18, and she had her first child a little over a year later. By the time I was nine, she'd had four children, and we were naturally a handful. Story time at our house was pretty unique. My mother sat us in a circle on the floor and asked those of us who could talk to make up stories—on the spot. I suppose this gave me a natural sense of narrative.

The novelist Saul Bellow was the first writer I'd ever seen in the flesh. He taught at the University of Chicago when I was there. I can still remember the huge headlines and all the celebration when he received the Nobel Prize—just after the novel *Humboldt's Gift*, which was modeled on the life of the poet Delmore Schwartz. The novel hit the street in 1975 when I was going on 24. I was surprised to find that the novel contained a detailed representation of the university and the surrounding neighborhood, the Hyde Park section of Chicago.

Reading it changed the way I thought about fiction. Prior to that time, I'd believed that novels were made up entirely out of the writer's imagination. I saw from watching Saul Bellow, however, that part of the writer's job was to fold reality into books. You can tell from *Parallel Time* how much the discovery startled me.

The longest chapter of my book, entitled "Mr. Bellow's Planet," deals with Saul Bellow's life in the neighborhood, his apartment, his love affairs, and all kinds of things. He was quite upset when *Parallel Time* appeared and got a lot of attention from the critics. He thought of himself as what he once described as "a world-class noticer," a close observer of the world around him. He was in fact a kind of vacuum cleaner for the details of people's lives. He scanned his famous memory and couldn't find me in it. It surprised him to learn that I had studied him—at close range—without being seen by him. That's what upset him.

RA: Who was your best teacher as a young writer? What did that teacher do to inspire you?

BS: I have never taken a writing course. All of the training in my case was practice, beginning in my twenties. I tried to write essays and pieces of reportage that were broad appraisals of the subject at hand. Whenever I speak to young people about writing—and I often do—I say, Don’t let anyone tell you that writing is a mystical activity. I tell them, Writing is like bricklaying. You learn from watching or being taught by other people. Walk down the street in neighborhoods constructed of brick and you see buildings of all shapes and sizes. Some are square. Some have turrets. Some are squat. Some are tall. Each building was built by laying bricks end to end. Words are like bricks, sentences are like courses of bricks. Simple declarative sentences are stretched end-to-end in an illuminating way to make stories, chapters, and books. I also tell young people that writing is work—and that 90 percent of writing is actually rewriting what you have written. The only way to write is to “apply your butt to the seat,” as one of my newspaper editors used to say. Newspaper work was crucial in that it taught me to write quickly.

RA: How do you craft an argument? Do you follow a pattern or a formula?

BS: Everything begins with reporting. Of course, I start with a general impression of what I think about a given subject. But before I establish a firm position on something, I learn all there is to know about the subject—within the context of the allotted time, of course—and then I distill the information. Recently, for example, I’ve been writing about the fact that the United States is the only democracy that actually strips people of the right to vote—often temporarily but sometimes permanently—when they commit felonies. The vast majority of the five million people who are disenfranchised in the United States would be permitted to vote if they lived in, say, Australia, France, Germany, or Britain. I was stunned to learn that. When I encounter differences like that, I try to account for them. I ask, Why? The question moves the essay forward.

Every essay begins with some statement of fact. A statement of fact can be a statement about a feeling, an experience, or a particular state of the world. People who wish to write should look at everything they see around them as a potential subject. The editorial, by the way, is a very strange form. It is short by nature and has to launch an argument—and be inclined toward a conclusion—from the very first word. There is no time to dilly dally in an editorial. When you get the first few sentences right, the editorial—or the column or essay—will drive itself forward, to where you need to go.

I joined the editorial board of the *New York Times* in 1990, in the middle of writing *Parallel Time*. The experience of writing editorials changed my writing dramatically. It made my writing more concise, to say the least.

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RA: You have described your job as “essayist for the world’s most powerful newspaper.” How often do you consider audience when you write for the *New York Times*?

BS: Almost never. I often hear academics talk about that; I generally think of it as a waste of time. I like to think that the essays I have written over the last 20 years or so will be accessible and readable to anyone with a tenth-grade education. I try to render an argument clearly, simply—supporting it with factual material as I move it along. It’s important that the facts in question be verifiable by the reader. There are some basic axioms. For example, never use a dollar when a nickel will do—in other words, avoid excess and use the simplest, most direct form of expression.

RA: Are you more driven by (or conscious of) your responsibility to the newspaper or to the readers or to a particular segment of the readership?

BS: That part makes me grind my teeth. The essays and editorials printed by the *Times* can have an enormous impact; it’s important to make sure that the pieces are fair—and accurate. After I write a piece, I try to disengage from what I have written to see it objectively, while I check every claim for accuracy and the piece as a whole for tone. The editors look over the pieces before they run. Then there’s another layer: my wife, a former journalist, looks over every column carefully before it goes into the paper.

RA: Whose persuasive writing do you admire most?

BS: I have admired many of my colleagues during my 20 years at the *Times*. The columnist Anthony Lewis, who retired a few years ago, was extraordinary when it came to clarity and simplicity of expression. William Safire is very good. I have developed my own style. I tend toward fact-heavy opinion writing. My goal is to give the reader a close sense of the facts underpinning my opinions.

This kind of writing has become all the more crucial over the last 10 years because of the crazed shrillness that has crept into political commentary. We live in an impoverished time in terms of oratory and political rhetoric. We no longer have a political rhetoric that soars or inspires. I have no intention of contributing to the din. My work explains the facts as I see them and draws fairly straightforward conclusions about those facts.

RA: You said, in an exchange of emails with Judith Shulevitz in *Slate* magazine, that a “strong, in-group identity need not be stultifying. In many cases, it provides a cache of muscle that a person would otherwise lack.” I can’t help thinking about that statement in relation to “Walk On By.” In that essay you write about how being a black man alters

public spaces, and how you've learned to smother the rage you felt at "so often being taken for a criminal." Beyond giving you the subject for the essay, how does your in-group identity provide a cache of muscle in your writing?

BS: I was born in 1951 and this is 2005. If you were born black in America at the turn of the 1950s, you were born at a time when black people lived mainly behind the curtain of American apartheid. We were barred from white schools. We couldn't try on clothes in white department stores. We were barred from living in certain neighborhoods. We were barred from many occupations, including mainstream white journalism. Most papers didn't have any black reporters at all until the advent of the riots in the mid-1960s. Many of the reporters could name the riots that got them hired.

Segregation, however, had its benefits. For the first 10 years of my life—the formative years—I grew up in a neighborhood that was classically whole. Segregation forced the auto mechanic, the doctor, the dentist, the truck driver, the teacher, and the unemployed person to all live in the same neighborhood. One had a whole range of role models. The notion that the black community was always a ghetto is a post-sixties notion. As a kid, I ate green fruit every summer and got sick. My mother would inevitably have to send for the doctor, who rolled up in this huge, gleaming Buick. He would take my temperature, calm my mother, and move on. It was very Norman Rockwell—but the brown-skinned version.

I came from a very strong community, and I experienced some of the worst racism that the northern United States had to offer. I saw injustice, but I also saw a great many people who behaved with courage and restraint while demanding respect from the broader society. This gives me a unique vantage point—and a strong basis from which to operate as a writer. My past gives me a tremendous emotional wealth—and tremendous personal stability.

I am descended from slaves on both sides of my family. My paternal great-grandfather, John Wesley Staples, was conceived in the final days of the Confederacy and born just after the close of the Civil War. He fought to preserve his land from racist whites in the Klan-infested South. When there was no school for black children, he and his in-laws built one—at the intersection of their three properties. They hired a teacher who worked at the school in exchange for room and board that was shared among the three households. My great-grandfather, by the way, died 11 years before I was born. Had he lived another decade, I would have gotten to meet him. And he was the son of slaves. That is huge. That is the animating factor in my life. I am the last generation for which that will be true.

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This familial past is an enormous source of personal strength. I had an argument with an editor here over an essay that I'd written. Things got heated, and I said, "We've worked together for years; you think you know what makes me tick, but you don't. My great-grandfather John Wesley Staples missed being a slave by 60 days. I will never write a line or sign my name to a piece that dishonors his memory; I would just as soon quit this job and wash cars." I wasn't being histrionic; I was just being honest. My family's past informs my present.

The Synthesis Essay: An Innovation on the AP English Language and Composition Examination

David A. Jolliffe
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Beginning in 2007, the AP English Language and Composition Examination will include a new kind of free-response (that is, essay) question, one that faithfully represents the way expository and argumentative writing are being taught in college composition courses. The new question will call for a *synthesis essay*. Students will be given an array of brief sources, one or more of which may include graphic or visual data, and be asked to write a composition that develops an expository point or argumentative claim. As they do so, students will be required to synthesize information or perspectives from a specified number of these sources in their own writing.

An additional 15 minutes of reading time will be added to the examination, but that is the only proposed change of timing. Students will still have an hour to complete the multiple-choice questions and two hours to respond to the three essay prompts. One of these, of course, will call for the synthesis essay. The other two will require analytic and argumentative writing, just as the free-response prompts on the examination currently do.

This important change to the examination was recommended to the AP English Development Committee by a wide range of college composition instructors, including members of the Council of Writing Program Administrators, an organization of college and university professors who either direct or are interested in the administration of first-year English, composition, and writing programs. Since the AP English Language and Composition Examination is designed to demonstrate exit-level proficiency from mainstream, first-year college writing courses, it is vital that the Development Committee pay careful attention to recommendations about the scope of the exam from college instructors and administrators.

The new question reflects four important principles operating in the teaching of college composition today. First, since the writing college students must do in courses throughout the curriculum is predominantly about the texts they read, a college writing course must prepare students to read and write about a wide range of genres carefully and critically, determining what is important and significant for their purposes in each text. In other words, college students must read and write about texts constructively,

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not simply reproducing information and ideas in their own compositions, but instead analyzing, interpreting, evaluating, and synthesizing material from the original texts in their own work.

Second, while some writing situations call upon students to generate a central idea and support with evidence from their own reasoning, observation, and experience, a great many situations call upon students to enter into conversation with scholarship on an issue and to develop a position that contributes to this conversation. Personal observations and experiences can still play a role in some college writing assignments, but as students proceed through college, their ability to offer thoughtful, reasoned comments about other people's ideas, represented in published texts, will come into play. Kenneth Burke's famous "parlor" metaphor from *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (University of California Press, 1941) vividly depicts this ability in action:

Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress. (pp. 110-111)

Succeeding as a college writer means, at least in part, being able to enter into and contribute effectively to such discussions.

Third, the texts that students encounter throughout the curriculum are not solely verbal. College students need to be visually literate—to be able to read, carefully and critically, graphs, charts, photographs, cartoons, and so on. As with written texts, students must be able to do more than simply reproduce the information and perspectives they encounter in graphic and visual texts. They must be able to analyze, interpret, evaluate, and synthesize this material in their own writing.

Fourth, while traditional instruction in composition and many standardized testing schemes have drawn distinctions between expository and argumentative writing, in

college writing courses and assignments the dividing line between these two modes of writing is in fact relatively fine. Whether a writer is, for example, explaining an idea, offering an extended definition, comparing and contrasting two entities, or arguing a point, he or she is always taking a position and developing it with evidence, illustrations, details, and reasons.

What are the implications of this new type of question for teachers preparing students to succeed on the AP English Language and Composition Examination? The Development Committee is not, I think it safe to say, recommending that high school courses necessarily teach the traditional research paper. As it has been conceived in the past, this genre too often asks students simply to compile, reproduce, and report what they have discovered by doing research. In addition, the genre has frequently been the site of—some might say an inadvertent invitation to—student plagiarism, both intentional and unintentional. Instead of the traditional research paper, teachers might teach their students how to write the researched explanatory or researched argumentative paper. Assigning such a paper would involve helping students generate and find sources on topics that are engaging and important for them, teaching them to read those sources analytically and critically, and then leading them to produce papers that make and develop a strong point or claim by entering into conversation with their research—by synthesizing information and perspectives from the sources with their own reasoning and ideas.

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Something to Say and a Source or Two to Shape It

Sylvia Sarrett
Hillsborough High School
Tampa, Florida

Nonfiction is a rich resource for teaching and learning. The range of sources—essays, articles, speeches, letters, notices, lists, graphics, and more—cuts across both time and issues. Writing persuasively about one or more such sources begins, of course, with engaged reading. We all cull the best practices to find something, anything that will help students interact with the text. I think that every text we study is fabulously interesting; often they do not. Since there is so little room in the syllabus to exercise personal choice (the best incentive for engaged reading), we all seek meaningful activities that will energize the act of reading. Language circles,* pro and con lists, two- and three-column notes, Venn diagrams, double entries, entry/exit cards, questions, highlighting, color marking—any of these can help the reader both comprehend and interact with the material. Once the student has “something to say,” then she is more interested in learning how to incorporate the sources that generated her ideas.

While the skill of documentation can be taught and learned fairly quickly, the Aristotelian art of invention comes through time and practice. Admittedly, it’s important to understand the mechanics of quotation marks, the order of internal documentation, and the sentences that lead into or out of the quotation. However, the generative learning comes in knowing how to use the source as the basis for one’s own argument. Where does the student’s thinking begin? When does the student’s work demonstrate more than comprehension of the sources? What is “mere” summary, and what is summary-as-evidence? What should be quoted, and when? What about offering no quotations at all?

My students seem to fall naturally into two kinds of thinkers/writers: those who document explicitly (complete with quotations, links, and examples) and those who work implicitly (omitting the quotation marks and playing dangerously close to summary). Having been unable to change either to the other’s camp, I have learned to focus on helping each become better at her preferred method. After some mini-instruction on formats, we use models from current and previous students for discussion of the effectiveness of their choices.

* Language circles: A personal variation on Harvey Daniels’s excellent discussion method of literature circles. For nonfiction we keep the roles of connector, illustrator, questioner, word wizard; we emphasize the role of researcher; and we add the roles of pro and con arguments.

The first examples illustrate the most frequent task: explicit documentation from a single source. Two responses to the same activity show markedly different skill levels in comprehension and documentation. The students were asked to analyze “LBJ Explains His Decision: The Johns Hopkins University Speech, April 7, 1965” for its purpose and success. Maria’s analysis is thoughtful and evidential, and in this paragraph she brings her argument to its close. She cites succinct phrases and ties them into her own argument. She senses that something is going on with the italicized statements even though she cannot determine exactly what. While she falters in her choice of the expression “comes off,” she nevertheless understands—and evaluates—what happens in the speech.

Johnson started with the death of “some 400 young men... [who] ended their lives on Viet-Nam’s soil,” but he quickly left that issue and moved to the emotional appeals of moral values. He talked about “promises to keep” and “strengthening world order,” about the “great stakes in the balance,” but he never returned to the basic issue that Americans were dying. His purpose of validating his decision overtook the issue that made this speech necessary: why are we in this war at all? He sprinkled words like “commitment” and “hope” and “unite” and “done enough” throughout his list of reasons for why the decision is right. (It is interesting that he *italicized* those reasons.) Even though he avoids the real questions by shifting the issues, Johnson comes off as a caring, intelligent, globally concerned president.

Maria is a sophisticated reader and thinker, and a burgeoning writer. Other students need more work on comprehension itself. For the weakest model, I use a paper from several years ago and give the writer a silly name because no one wants to think her work will end up as an example of what-not-to-do. Oh Dear’s analysis of the same speech begins with a repetition of part of the task: “The President’s purpose in this speech is to show that the U.S. is right in going into the war and that he thinks our ‘support is the heartbeat of the war.’ He lists the reasons why we should fight and gives very good examples.” So far, so good. She then lists the lists and ends with this conclusion:

President Johnson was a leader who really cared. In his “Conclusion” he said “I ask myself this question: Have I done everything that I can do to unite this country? And then he asks us if we have done everything we could, and he says “We can do all these things.” and We will choose life.” He met his purpose in this speech, and he united the country in the fight.

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The student probably can be taught the correct use of quotation marks, but her paragraph, with the exception of the first and last sentences, does nothing but reiterate the original speech. And these two sentences reveal fundamental problems in comprehension itself. Back we go to the sources themselves and the models and activities that work through thinking about them.

The next essay shows someone who is a careful reader of an original source but who loses focus. Megan's intended analytical response to Barbara Kingsolver's "Careful What You Let in the Door" (from her collected essays, *High Tide in Tucson*) becomes a personal essay that lists examples she later discusses in more depth. In this developmental paragraph, she gets so caught up in the rush of her own emotions that she trades documentation for listing. With the exception of the first and last quotation, she offers no specific citation, and she loses control of the references for "it." The paper fades into summary and naiveté.

Kingsolver makes a strong case against "violence as entertainment," but many people would disagree with her final conclusion. Her position on making your own choice seems wrong. People should be protected. She says it's not necessary for art, it's actually scary, it has no connection with consequences, and it adds to aggressive behavior in the real world, and she proves it with examples from *Silence of the Lamb*, her own stories, and *Slice and Dice* movies and books. They are really valid. She persuaded me that this kind of entertainment *should* be censored, but then she ends with "I would not argue for censorship, except from the grassroots up; my argument is for making choices about what we consume." (256) I disagree. I don't think people should have to have those experiences.

After discussion of these three examples of using explicit documentation from a single source, we move to the concepts of implicit documentation and multiple sources. Implicit documentation is our term for using evidence without placing quotation marks around it. A favorite activity asks students to collect, document, and examine various materials (articles, photographs, ads, essays, and so on) on a single issue or concept, then select four to six as a basis for an overall argument. This time the concept was culture. The newspaper articles were all slanted, either affirming or expressing alarm at a respective aspect of culture, and Masielle chose those discussing "naked ambition," a "culture clips" column, an LA phenomenon of screening films in a cemetery, a beauty pageant to promote a nation's culture, and a Web site to calculate death dates. She draws conclusions from the individual articles as well as from their conjuncture. She incorporates a brief summary and precise details in her implicit documentation. Her synthesis is strong,

and her own argument for the freedom to indulge our individual and quirky interests effectively incorporates those five sources.

If you are to base your decision on these reports, then culture is a crazy, mixed bag of values. As a larger society we are worried about death, beauty, ambition, and marketing. As individuals, we are just plain weird. Apparently many of us consult the local newspaper for a listing of “arts” events (the old definition of culture), while others of us are really interested in the lives of famous people who have posed nude as a way of advancing their careers. We enjoy “seeing” (literally!) not only the expected Janet Jackson or Sylvester Stallone but the surprising volleyball player from Florida State University and Katarina Witt, the Olympic skater. Some of us say “Hola, way to go” with the argument by the Hispanic columnist that the swimsuit and evening gown competitions will bring the Venezuelan Suncoast community together, while others think “maybe not.” But, among all of us, somewhere out there, in Los Angeles actually (where else?) we thrill to going to a celebrity cemetery filled with deceased movie stars where we living people can now watch old movies and have picnics. Others of us cannot wait to go online, answer some questions (a regular bowel movement?), and get a prediction for our own, personal, projected death date. These last two possibilities stretch most of us into the most advanced definition of “culture.” Weird. Just plain weird. What is wonderful about this overall sense of culture is that it is broad enough to give all of us the room to be ourselves.

A discussion of her choices for documentation included her use of parentheses. Some students felt that the tone this form of punctuation created made the content confusing. The parentheses serve too many different purposes. The first set is necessary to contrast with the ultimate definition, the second emphasizes the pun, the third is sarcastic, and the fourth is unclear as to the source. After playing around with revision, purpose, and audience, they suggested that Masielle keep them all and clarify the last one, which they rewrote to read “(asking for personal responses such as whether or not you have ‘a regular bowel movement’).” When the issue of audience was extended to that of an AP Reader and whether she would find this tone and these parentheses appropriate, they finally decided that the tone fit the sources, and an AP Reader would have the sources in front of her.

Activities such as these seem to facilitate a better understanding about sources and their incorporation. Students understand that they themselves must have “something to say” as well as knowing what makes good evidence and how to include it.

The Morgan Horse Revisited: Using AP Samples for Revisions

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Last October at an AP English Language workshop, the participants and I were examining the sample essays for question 2 of the 2004 AP English Language Examination. The question was a little different from previous argument questions in that the student writers were asked to focus on an issue with which they were familiar, write an essay that considered the opposing positions on the issue, and propose a solution or compromise, a final task that was new to the AP English Language Exam:

Contemporary life is marked by controversy. Choose a controversial local, national, or global issue with which you are familiar. Then, using appropriate evidence, write an essay that carefully considers the opposing positions on this controversy and proposes a solution or compromise.

The workshop materials included a range of responses representing various levels of student writing. But one lower-range example, a focus on impropriety in the Morgan Horse Association, caught the group's attention in a striking way. Though the student writer had failed to address the requirements of the prompt, we were generally impressed by the quality of the student's writing, especially the engaging voice; we were generally saddened by the essay's failure to provide an argument; and we were generally intrigued by the energy and possibilities the essay offered. We talked about the value of using the essay as a teaching device to heighten student awareness of the importance of directly answering a question, but we also thought that the sample essay offered itself as a vehicle for a revision exercise. Here is the essay:

2004 AP English Language Exam, Question 2

Sample Essay P: The Morgan Horse

Eight years ago, a black horse was born. This horse grew up to be a great show horse. FCF Rhythm Nation, as he was named, was a born competitor, and received countless awards, including multiple world championships. Soon after his successful career as a show horse he was put up for stud as a breeding stallion, available to mares all over the country. It must now be pointed out that FCF Rhythm Nation was a registered Morgan horse, and

all the mares he bred to were Morgans as well. The Morgan horse, America's first original breed of horse, is bred to be a great athlete, and bloodlines are carefully analyzed to insure the best possible offspring.

"Nate" sired several foals, all of which went on to be successful show horses themselves and, in some cases, have offspring of their own. It was then discovered that Nate wasn't a Morgan. In fact, he was half Saddlebred, an entirely different breed. As it turned out, the man who bred Nate in the first place knew. He purposely bred a Morgan stallion to a Saddlebred mare and, by changing the mare's name and claiming she was a Morgan, registered Nate as a full-blooded Morgan.

The Morgan Horse Association panicked. Suddenly over 40 horses in the registry were found to be related to Nate, and therefore could not be considered Morgans. Intent on keeping the breed pure, the Association decided to remove the horses from the registry altogether, therefore forbidding them to compete or breed. Furious owners retaliated, and dozens of court hearings and lawsuits took place, eventually leaving the Association with under \$1,000 in its bank account.

Finally, the American Morgan Horse Association won out over the course of two years of controversy. Still, the owners of the expelled horses need somewhere to compete. These horses had cost them thousands of dollars, and they refused to lose that amount of money in horses they couldn't use. The Association discussed the situation and decided to create a special "open breed" competition at Morgan show. Now not only can these talented horses compete, but the Morgan Horse can remain pure.

Recently a class of 17 AP seniors (all of whom had taken the AP English Language Exam in spring 2004) considered this sample as a revision exercise. Their immediate responses after reading the prompt and the essay were—unsurprisingly—confident. They were quick to see the problems of the essay, and enjoying the comfort of retrospection, each was sure that his or her essay written on the question last May had not been beset with such obvious problems. Assigned to groups of three and four, the students were first asked to look at the essay's successes. They were surprised; they had assumed that the focus of the activity would be on the essay's problems and weaknesses. AP students are generally comfortable pointing out errors and problems—a mirrored response of their teachers, I think. Nonetheless, they began to work with the successes of the essay as a way of understanding and revising the problems, and I was struck by how much more

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inventive and insightful the groups were than they had been in the past when I had prefaced revision exercises with instructions to consider the problems and errors. After an analysis of the successes of the unsuccessful essay, they began to note the failures, and they finished the class with attention to suggestions for revision.

The results of their work were exciting. Each group noted the strength and power of the student's voice. Comments such as "I really liked this essay—I was sorry that it didn't work" and "This was so interesting—it's too bad it wasn't an argument" punctuated the discussion. I liked the grace and support that looking for successes had elicited. Included among the successes the groups had noted were:

- Strong, honest writer's voice
- Informative information
- Defines controversy
- Controlled personal voice
- Intriguing, engaging opening
- Smooth transitions and varied syntax
- Clearly written
- Knows facts re: issue
- Writing has definition and control
- Shows both viewpoints

Then the groups looked at the failures. The tone of the class was distinctly different from its earlier smug dismissal of an essay that had been scored as an inadequate attempt; it was at once sympathetic and insightful. One student noted that unfortunately the essay writer had merely taken one wrong turn: the writer had produced an interesting documentary that *should* have been an argument. Other criticisms included:

- The writer doesn't take a position [All groups noted this.]
- Too much exposition
- Presentation needs more detail, more personal reflection, more controversy
- Needs more explanation—why did the guy crossbreed? What was the advantage?

These aspects of the student discussion raised awareness about two very important writing issues. First, one wrong turn in an essay can often be insurmountable. One student noted that once the student missed his chance to set up an argument, there was nowhere for him to go. Another topic of discussion was the potential problems that arise when someone writes about something he or she knows too well, a situation that may prevent the necessary distance needed for clarity of vision or that may lull the writer into a false sense of control based on his or her familiarity with a subject.

The discussion then moved to the topic of revision. Every group generated their longest list of suggestions as conversation about revision ensued. Aside from the usual jokes, the revision suggestions were cogent. While each group noted that the essay needed to focus more on articulating an argument than crafting a story, there were many viable suggestions for redeeming an essay that had missed its mark. Several students noted that the final sentence of the first paragraph—“The Morgan horse, America’s first original breed of horse, is bred to be a great athlete [*sic*], and bloodlines are carefully analyzed [*sic*] to insure the best possible offspring”—actually sets up the issue; it just needs some recrafting. Other suggestions for revisions included:

- Shift the essay to focus on the issue of honesty and the verification of bloodlines (the solution could be a form of sophisticated testing).
- Focus on the issue of owners as victims of false breeding information.
- Because the breeder lied, there is a possibility for developing an argument about ethics.
- The writer could have used this topic/example as a means of exploring the integrity of organized horse racing.
- Whose responsibility is it to know the veracity of the breed? Who is to blame? Should the association be sued?
- Consider this as an example of the greater issue: honor in today’s world.
- Provide more concise and focused background information in the first paragraph.
- Focus more on opposing arguments than on narrative in the introduction.
- Conclude by voicing opinion, compromise, and solution.

As we concluded our discussion of the essay, the sensitivity of the students toward an unfortunate writing sample as well as toward the process of crafting and revising became more evident. One student remarked that he remembered “feeling pretty good about that question” after completing the 2004 AP English Language Examination but now wondered how he really had done. That this exercise in revision ended with thoughtful consideration was affirming. So often exercises in revision that are not one-on-one conferences focused directly on a student’s draft are exercises in frustration—for the teacher who is troubled by her students’ certainty that those obvious problems in someone else’s work would never occur in their own, and for the students who are disengaged from the revisionary processes.

Why *did* the exercise work? AP students are competitive and are generally interested in ways to improve their reading and writing. However, in this instance, ironically the strength of the unsuccessful student’s voice (it did, after all, engage a class of busy,

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somewhat overextended, and sophisticated AP students) and the primary focus on strengths instead of weaknesses created a tone of support and enthusiasm for the writer's efforts and, by extension, their own.

Using the Toulmin Model of Argument in the Classroom

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In his 1958 book, *The Uses of Argument*, British philosopher Stephen Toulmin presented a method for analyzing argument based on what he calls a jurisprudential model. Because this model can help bring to students a clear understanding of rhetoric and argument, we should consider its use in the classroom, since those are crucial subjects in the AP English Language and Composition course.

To begin, students need to understand the words *argument* and *rhetoric* apart from their common associations. Is rhetoric the use of language to mislead or manipulate, as popular use would have it, or is it “the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation,” as Kenneth Burke says? And is argument a conflict in language, a contest between opposing verbal forces, a discussion involving disagreement, a contentious or disputatious quarrel, or is it rather a process of reasoned inquiry, of rational discourse seeking mutual ground? If the latter, then we engage in argument whenever we think clearly about the world.

Students need to engage the audience, encouraging the reader to consider the positions they present as reasonable and perhaps valuable, in a voice felt as reasoned, trustworthy, and honorable, using the classic appeals to logos, pathos, and ethos. Especially important for our students to recognize is that the reasonable voice is usually a qualified one. We would probably agree that nearly all effective arguments are qualified ones. Students need not only to anticipate objections to their positions but also to recognize and respect complexity itself. A reasonable voice sees not two sides to an issue but multiple perspectives, and that voice presents an argument as the conclusion of a logical process. Students quickly discover the features of an immature argument and come to appreciate the dissuasive effect of extreme or one-sided positions and highly dyslogistic language. That “senior year is a complete waste of time” or that “Sontag’s position is stupid” is not likely to be effective with the reader. Students need to discover their own extreme positions and to question the validity of their own warrants.

Types of Argument

Before applying Toulmin’s method, it is good to teach students about the different types of argument. Typically, we speak of three: those of fact, of value, and of policy.

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Arguments of fact state that something is or is not the case. Causal arguments say that one event or condition leads to another or is likely to. For example, we might argue that AP students do better in college, that computers enhance learning in the classroom, that the media is responsible for the shortening of the attention span, or that mercury in the food chain or cigarette smoke in the air causes cancer.

Arguments of value state that something is or is not desirable. They involve evaluations of quality or worth according to accepted criteria. For example, one might assert that this or that novel or film is of significant merit, that preemptive war is or is not a justifiable practice, that Bill Clinton was or was not a good president, that health concerns take precedence over profit.

Arguments of policy state that something should or should not be done. They make recommendations for practice or implementation. For example, that the minimum wage should be increased, that stem cell research should be funded, that *Huck Finn* should or should not be part of the curriculum, that gay marriage should or should not be legalized, that more students should have access to AP, that the designated hitter should be eliminated from baseball (one of the finest arguments I saw at the 2004 AP English Language Reading, by the way), or that smoking should be banned from public places. This kind of argument will naturally contain components—often included as support—of those of fact and value, as my final example in each category illustrates.

The Toulmin Model

Because the Toulmin model for argument analysis is widely recognized for its utility as an analytical tool, it might seem more applicable as a reading than a writing heuristic, since it enables students to understand the nature of sophisticated arguments that they read on account of the logical process it prescribes. But because of that new knowledge, it also serves in the teaching of composition, since students can apply knowledge from one area to another. The model is at work in this paragraph and in the first sentence of this article, as we will see. Its components are as follows:

A **claim** is an assertion. It should seem a “conclusion whose merits we are seeking to establish,” in Toulmin’s words, or “the conclusion you reach after testing the evidence that supports your belief,” as Kathleen Bell puts it in *Developing Arguments*.

The **support** consists of the data used as evidence, reasons, or grounds for the claim.

A **warrant** expresses the assumption necessarily shared by the speaker and the audience.

Similar to the second premise of a syllogism, it serves as a guarantee, linking the claim to the support.

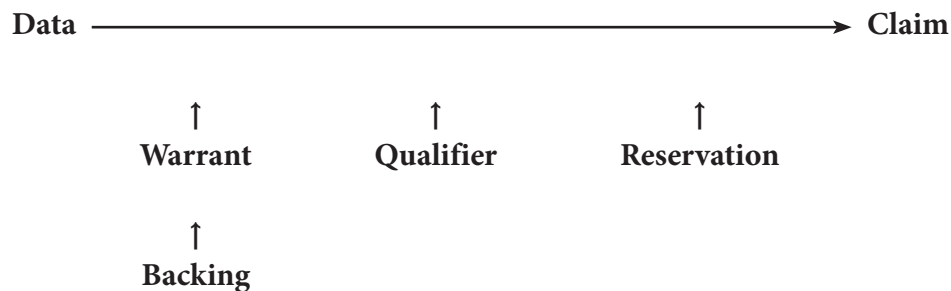
Backing consists of further assurances or data without which the warrant lacks authority.

A **qualifier**, when used (e.g., “usually,” “probably,” “in most cases,” “most likely”), restricts the terms of the claim and limits its range, indicating the degree of strength delivered by the warrant.

A **reservation** explains the terms and conditions necessitated by the qualifier.

A **rebuttal** gives voice to objections, providing the conditions that might refute or rebut the warranted claim.

The following diagram illustrates the Toulmin model:



Toulmin states it this way: *Data*, so (*qualifier*) *claim*, since *warrant*, on account of *backing*, unless *reservation*. A good classroom model is that used by Annette Rottenberg and Kathleen Bell and others: Because (data as support), therefore, or so (qualifier?) (claim), since (warrant), because, or on account of (backing), unless (reservation).

Students find the form to be highly useful once they get it, although it isn't easy at first. It is good practice to begin in class with a simple illustration. For example, at the board the teacher might write, “Because it is raining, I should take my umbrella,” demonstrating support for a claim. The teacher would ask the students to supply the warrant: “since it will keep *me* dry.” Students immediately recognize the tacit assumption given explicit expression in the warrant. They will then provide the backing, “that the material is impervious or waterproof,” and the reservation, “unless there is a hole in it.” The following diagram illustrates this argument—a simple one indeed, but one that demonstrates the process.

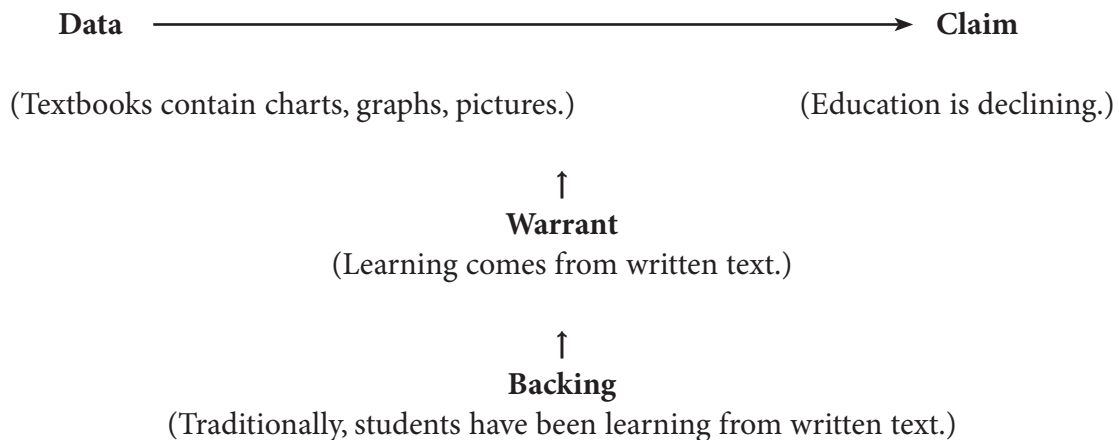
For example, here is one student’s prompt from this year:

Carefully read the following passage from “Against School: How Public Education Cripples Our Kids and Why,” by former New York State Teacher of the Year and author John Taylor Gatto, published in *Harper’s Magazine*. Then write an essay in which you support, refute, or qualify Gatto’s claim that public education trains children to be mass consumer robots and ultimately limits growth potential. Use appropriate evidence to develop your position.

The student developed a thesis and wrote that essay as a draft. Beginning with that draft, each student wrote a documented argument of 3 to 5 pages using his or her own observation, experience, and at least two of the sources that I provided and one additional one from research. The application of Toulmin to the texts read encouraged the critical use of sources. Then, as students drafted their essays, application of the Toulmin model to their own work helped to bring cogence to their positions.

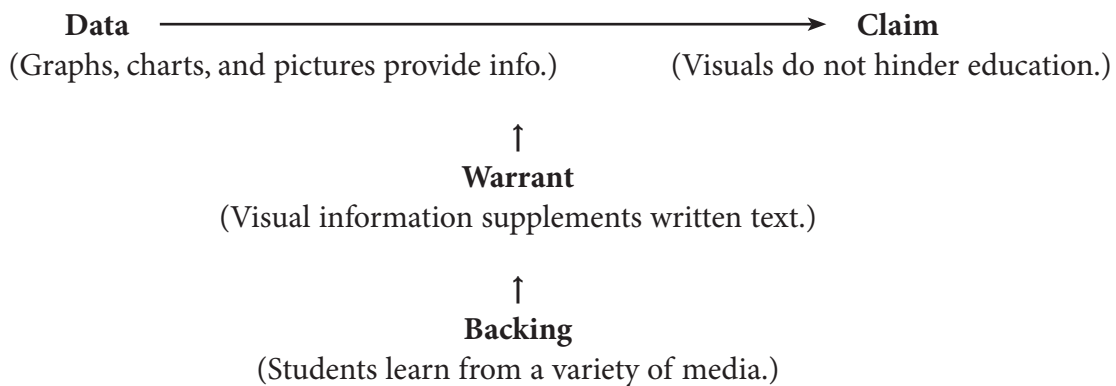
Student Samples

The following example demonstrates the process for a student’s analysis of an argument that he has read—in this case, an essay by Michael Rock about the increased visual nature of our print media, including textbooks. Applying the Toulmin construction, the student’s analysis presents Rock’s argument as follows: “Because textbook authors are filling their books with charts, graphs, and pictures, therefore education is declining in this country, since less written information equals less learning.”



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Studying the argument this way, the student finds that he questions Rock's warrant. Then the student casts his own response into the model as well: "Because graphs, charts, and pictures provide information, they do not hinder the education system, since that information is a supplement to written text." In this case, he does not include a qualifier or reservation.



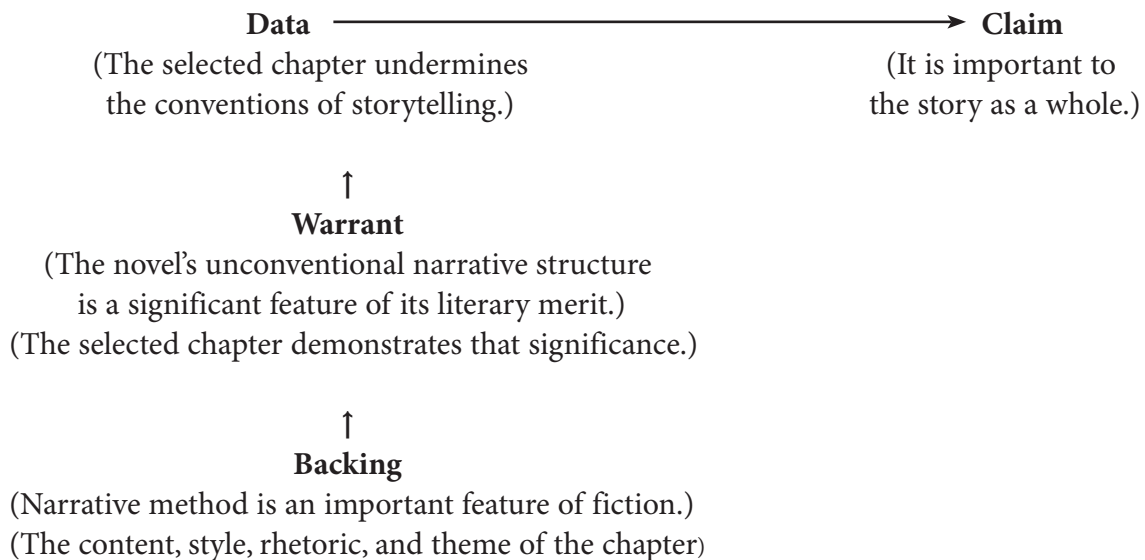
The student then uses that information as he writes his own essay. As he presents his claim, he doesn't argue with Rock's data. He acknowledges its validity, as far as it goes (effecting a reasonable voice through its appeal to logos and pathos), and then zeros in on the warrant with a pair of rhetorical questions: "Much of Rock's argument is indisputable; however, some of it can be interpreted in different ways. Take, for instance, his criticism of textbooks for using too many visuals, particularly of a map replacing a topographical description. Is the map really a bad thing? Are any of the charts and graphs a bad thing?" [*sic*] This student goes on to argue the value of visuals not as replacements for, but as supplements to, written text—developing a qualified and reasoned argument.

(We recognize that the language of the Toulmin model works well as an exercise only. It shouldn't be maintained in the students' writing. In this essay, for example, the student rephrases some of the artificial constructions and awkward phrasings: "because," "therefore," "since.")

Another student addresses a similar issue, that of "teaching to the test" (a favorite target of students), and casts her claim into the model. She reasons that "because teachers are modifying lesson plans to teach only to a specific test, therefore students are losing the ability to think deeply about concepts, since such specialized teaching does not allow a child to learn any more about a topic on a broader or deeper scale, unless teachers are able to teach to the test while still incorporating additional enriching material." The reservation she presents at the end is one that might well appeal to teachers; indeed it is one that can make an effective appeal in the written argument.

Finally, since not only nonfiction and argument but also creative literature effect a rhetorical transaction, the following example from a student essay results from the application of the Toulmin model to a novel. Arguing the case for Tim O'Brien's method, one student writes:

The Things They Carried is not an accurate depiction of the Vietnam War, but rather a portrayal of personal truth—what the war meant to the soldiers and how it changed them. O'Brien is trying to bridge the gap between the soldier and the audience. This chapter (“How to Tell a True War Story”) is important to the story as a whole because it undermines the conventions of storytelling.



In this case, the warrants and their backing indicate what will become the substance of the body of the essay. Arguing that the story, and not the war, is O'Brien's subject, her essay concludes, “It is in this way that true war stories are never about war. They are about love, memories, and sorrow—the heaviest things they had to carry.”

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Conclusion

If we were to apply the Toulmin model to itself, we might see the following:

Data —————→ **Claim** (Teachers should use it with students.)

- The Toulmin model is logical.
- It establishes the connection between data and the claim it supports.
- It reveals assumptions that must be shared with the audience.
- It is easy to apply.
- It helps students to analyze arguments.
- It helps students to write cogent arguments.

↑

Warrant

- Ease of practice is a desirable feature of any effective heuristic method.
- Logical thinking, increased close reading ability, and cogent writing are desirable qualities of learning, especially in the AP English courses.
- Teachers would do well to try a method that engenders these features.

Our students hold adamant opinions; they express strong views. We know that presentation of such opinions can foster either heated dispute or the sort of resigned acceptance suggested by these lines from a song by Bob Dylan: “You are right from your side / I am right from mine / We’re both just one too many mornings / And a thousand miles behind.” We wish to teach our students to engage argument actively and logically, to avoid such dead ends as these and instead find “symbolic means of inducing cooperation,” as Kenneth Burke says. In Stephen Toulmin’s work we find one effective method for doing this. In practice we discover that the Toulmin model is especially useful not only for analysis of text but also for its ability to engender cogent arguments that are both reasoned and reasonable.

Textbooks and Web Resources About the Toulmin Method

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Rhetorical Questions for Two Puritan Writers

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Many AP English Language and Composition courses, especially at the eleventh-grade level, are built around an American literature survey. So if a teacher is teaching American literature chronologically, the early units of the course are heavily weighted toward the study of nonfiction. Therefore, the first question that students will ask, rhetorically or otherwise, is, “Why are we studying these old English writers?” The short answer is that the United States did not begin to create a literature for itself—plays, short stories, novels—until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As for the novel, we know Hemingway’s famous anointing of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, with its distinctly American voice, as the beginning of modern American literature. But Huck did not speak until 1885. The early settlers, especially the Puritans, were speaking from 1620 on primarily—or at least most memorably—in histories, sermons, essays, and political documents. Some, of course, also wrote poems.

One of the first units students encounter in an American literature survey is the Puritan unit, with its cluster of often-taught authors including John Winthrop, Edward Taylor, Cotton Mather, Anne Bradstreet, and Jonathan Edwards. Teachers usually provide some basic context for the beliefs, practices, and works of the Puritans and try to establish the group’s importance in American cultural history by noting the number of Puritan values that are central to America today. Among the most notable is the doctrine of American exceptionalism, giving America its special role as a “city on a hill” and its unique mission, an “errand into the wilderness.” Lost, to a great extent, is the Puritans’ insistence on being “in the world but not of the world”: their acknowledgment of the superiority of the spiritual to the material, the afterlife to this life. The written artifacts that they left behind, rich in both rhetorical and literary features, attest to these values. Since the AP English Language and Composition Exam demands rhetorical analysis, teachers who are preparing students for the exam via an American literature course are challenged to find a way to focus on the rhetorical elements of this body of literature, not its belletristic features. Two ideal choices for such a study are Jonathan Edwards and Anne Bradstreet.

Jonathan Edwards: To Speak Rhetorically of Ultimate Things

Jonathan Edwards was a man of paradox: an Enlightenment thinker with reactionary values, a minister who wanted to turn back the clock to the ideology of the first generation of Puritans, those who stressed, above all, a commitment to the spiritual rather than to the material. Some have called Edwards “our country’s first systematic philosopher.”¹ A product of the Enlightenment, he practiced inductive thinking. As a Puritan, his thinking was rooted in theology and embodied in memoirs and sermons, the most famous being “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” (www.jonathanedwards.com/sermons/Warnings/sinners.htm).

Unless students have attended a revival meeting, they probably have no context for the type of sermon that Edwards was preaching in July of 1741, over a hundred years after the arrival of the *Arabella* in Boston. As a first step, before they have even read the sermon, ask students to discuss the title. What seems to be Edwards’s assumption about the members of his congregation, perhaps indeed of himself? And what seems to be his assumption about the nature of God? Have students read the epigraph from Deuteronomy, “Their foot shall slide in due time.” What associations do they make with these words? What familiar phrases or proverbs speak of “sliding,” and in what ways—metaphorical and moral—can one slide? Students now have a better context for reading the sermon itself.

Begin with a look at its structure. Encourage students to note how Edwards constructs his argument, moving from an explication of the verse from Deuteronomy to an application of it for his contemporaries. The application section is, in fact, the one often excerpted from this sermon: the section containing the famous image of the spider—a human being—suspended by the hand of God over the flames of Hell. Once students have read the sermon, they can work through the well-known exercise, SOAPS, identifying the text’s Subject, Occasion, Audience, Purpose, and Speaker—specifically, the speaker’s role or persona. These steps should, of course, be augmented with follow-up questions that lead students to explore additional layers of the text.

Edwards here is preaching a particular type of sermon—a jeremiad. The term is derived from the prophet Jeremiah and indicates a type of sermon or speech in which the speaker not only rebukes the audience but also challenges them by reminding them of the higher standards to which they should aspire. In Edwards’s case, those standards were embodied

¹ Sculley, Bradley et al., eds., *The American Tradition in Literature*, 4th ed. (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, Inc., 1974), 89.

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in the desire of the first generation of Puritans to be a city on a hill, an example to all nations. Edwards in his jeremiad offers this subtext: that people in Massachusetts have lost sight of the original Puritan mission, that their God isn't pleased, and that God's displeasure with humanity has manifested itself throughout history. In the discussion of "occasion," students should note that the sermon was delivered in July in a hot, crowded church—and the subject is the possibility of spending eternity in Hell. Again, ask students what Edwards assumes about his audience, adding questions about the appeals he uses. Is he appealing primarily to logos? Pathos? Ethos? (Aristotle's three appeals, roughly translated, are "reason," "feeling," and "character.") Based on what we know of the era, would our answer differ if we were living in the eighteenth century? Later in the survey, ask how Jefferson or Madison, other Enlightenment figures, would assess Edwards's argument.

For an analysis of Edwards's purpose, students must be encouraged to go beyond the obvious ("to scare people") and note the concluding section: Edwards wants his congregants to repent. He writes, "How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in danger of this great wrath, and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation, that has not been born again," adding in the last paragraph, "[L]et every one that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come." Inspiring his congregants to be "born again" is Edwards's overarching purpose. Teachers might want to present some background about the Half-Way Covenant to help students understand the theological context of Edwards's remarks. As for "speaker" or persona, research (via numerous Web sites or George Marsden's excellent recent biography) and trot out the fascinating biographical details of Edwards's life to establish why his call to repentance would be particularly effective, noting that he was an erudite, respected individual who even advocated tolerance for Native Americans despite the deaths of family members and friends from raids. As for "literary" elements of this text, one can turn to the patterns of images that Edwards uses both for God and for the people of God. But to focus exclusively on these elements, without establishing a rhetorical context, would result in a limited reading of the text, not the richer one that AP English Language teachers should encourage.

Anne Bradstreet: Argument Wedded to Faith and Passion

The poetry of the Puritan era can be approached rhetorically as well. Anne Bradstreet was America's first great poet, and noting that she was a writer whose life overlapped Shakespeare's helps students to contextualize her work. In a discussion of Bradstreet's poetry, for example, teachers could again walk students through the SOAPS model, supplemented with more nuanced questions—ones that ask students to compare and contrast, to evaluate, and to speculate. Bradstreet's well-known "Verses upon the Burning

of Our House, July 18th, 1666” (<http://eir.library.utoronto.ca/rpo/display/poem218.html>) readily lends itself to such analysis. Like Marvell’s “To His Coy Mistress,” this poem’s three-part argument becomes apparent when one explores the tone in each three-stanza segment. Bradstreet’s speaker moves through three stages: (1) shock tempered by resignation, (2) genuine regret and longing, and (3) sincere acceptance of the notion that in heaven she will be amply rewarded. The speaker first resorts to logic, then to emotion, and finally to faith—a first-generation Puritan pilgrim’s “progress”—concluding (quite unlike Marvell’s speaker!) that although all of her material possessions have been destroyed, she can look forward to her heavenly reward: “The world no longer let me love;/ My hope and Treasure lies above.” Examining structure and tone is the stuff of rhetorical analysis, of analysis of argument. Simply to use the word “argument” in connection with a poem or other work of fiction is the first key step in teaching literature rhetorically.

Another Bradstreet poem was featured in a free-response question on the AP English Literature Exam in 1996: “The Author to Her Book” (<http://eir.library.utoronto.ca/rpo/display/poem208.html>). This poem relies on extended metaphor—the focus of the question on the AP English Literature Exam—but it *also* relies on argument. She essentially offers five reasons for the public to disregard her book. Asking students to identify those reasons, perhaps even to rank them from least to most convincing, would constitute a rhetorical reading of this poem. So too would be a discussion of the ethos of the speaker and, a corollary to that, the tone of the poem.

One of my favorite Bradstreet poems is “A Letter to Her Husband Absent upon Public Employment” (<http://poetry.poetryx.com/poems/8478>). Here, Bradstreet’s erudition and passion truly manifest themselves. The poem’s title conveys its subject: Bradstreet’s speaker is lonesome for her husband, who is away on a business trip. She is eager for his return, so she voices all the reasons that he needs to hustle home. In a side of Puritanism that students rarely experience, Bradstreet’s speaker is unabashedly hot for her guy:

I, like the Earth this season, mourn in black,
My Sun is gone so far in’s zodiac,
Whom whilst I ‘joyed, nor storms, nor frost I felt,
His warmth such fridged colds did cause to melt.

Heat and chill, Cancer and Capricorn, summer and winter constitute the poem’s central conceit—but from a *rhetorical* standpoint, the question is the nature of the arguments that the speaker offers about her relationship with her husband as well as how convincing they are. On what appeals does the speaker rely? Does she use ethos, logos, and pathos, or does she privilege one of them? Students can track the types of arguments and judge

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their effectiveness in a rhetorical analysis of this poem. Any of these questions can serve as a prompt for a writing assignment—an essential way to build students' confidence in rhetorical analysis of literature.

One type of assignment is “quickwrites,” in which students have 10 to 15 minutes to write a response to text-related questions. Quickwrites can function as reading quizzes at the beginning of a class period or as follow-ups to small-group discussions toward the end of class. Simply write a question or two on the board or on an overhead transparency and impose a strict time limit for students to write their responses. One might ask students to write in response to questions such as these: “At what points in Bradstreet’s poem about the burning house does she shift from emotional to spiritual concerns?” or “In Edwards’s sermon, how does he use the appeal of pathos?”

Admittedly, a nonfiction text such as Edwards’s sermon lends itself more readily to rhetorical analysis, but poetry and works of fiction are predicated on argument and therefore can be approached rhetorically as well. And by studying groups like the Puritans, students can see the genuine humanity of people who lived 400 years ago. That is why we read “these Old English writers.” Therefore, in teaching an AP English Language and Composition course that is also an American literature survey, and additionally in preparing students for the AP English Language Exam, a key lies in prompting students to see the text as a complex entity and to examine all of its facets through the light of questions that illuminate its powerful or subtle rhetorical moves. Even the Puritans can dazzle us.

Combining AP English Language with AP U.S. History: One School's Experience

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Description of the Program

In an effort to better prepare students for the demands and challenges of the Advanced Placement Program, a colleague and I at Floral Park Memorial High School in New York have linked AP English Language and AP U.S. History. To develop the curriculum for this interdisciplinary program, we coordinate lessons that give students an opportunity to complete detailed analyses of historical documents that are studied in both courses. Although the emphasis in one is on rhetorical analysis and in the other on historical understanding, we share the goals of improving students' ability to analyze documents and write effective essays using appropriate and persuasive evidence.

The logistics require alignment of both time and concept. Juniors enrolled in the two courses are scheduled in back-to-back periods that allow us as teachers to meet with our classes separately as well as prepare team-taught sessions. In addition, we plan parallel content units, such as ones on the civil rights movement and the Vietnam conflict.

How the Program Began

Several years ago, the Sewanhaka Central High School District implemented an interdisciplinary program in English and social studies for ninth grade to promote students' understanding of connections between literature and history as a way to improve reading comprehension skills and retention. Unfortunately, as a result of scheduling constraints, the program lasted only two years.

About that time, I began conferring with Nick Simone, my colleague in the social studies department, about students enrolled in both of our AP courses. Then, one year, when Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" appeared on the New York State Regents exam, Nick was amazed at how well the students responded to that question. Students who had studied King in my AP English Language class and his social studies class wrote detailed analyses that demonstrated their knowledge of not only the historical period but also the essay's structure and style. That conversation led us to propose formally combining the courses for our juniors during the following year.

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Since nonfiction drives the AP English Language curriculum, it is no surprise that historical documents appear on the exam (e.g., Lincoln’s second inaugural address), and while the AP English Language Exam does not evaluate specific knowledge of history, that content certainly informs analysis. Nick and I identified a series of documents that are linguistically and historically relevant to both courses. When the students are reading, analyzing, and writing, they are interacting with these texts. Thus, they are simultaneously preparing for both exams.

Implementation Issues Faced and Solved

The key component of this interdisciplinary program is scheduling back-to-back periods for the same group of students, a “problem” that could not have been solved without the cooperation of our principal and assistant principal, who recognized the benefits of the program we proposed. Nick’s and my teaching schedules had to be modified so that each of us was available while the other was teaching. In our school, a class period is 43 minutes, so the flexibility of back-to-back periods allows us to utilize additional time when necessary or work together to plan sequential lessons. For instance, if I assign a timed essay during the first period, then in the second class, students can analyze and evaluate the essays.

We have developed ways to connect the learning experiences in the two disciplines. For instance, students spend a social studies period learning about the significance of the Populist Party in American political history. Then, during the English period, they analyze the rhetorical strategies William Jennings Bryan employs in his famous “Cross of Gold” speech. Sometimes we are able to cross historical periods by studying rhetorical similarities. When students study the Reconstruction period, for instance, they examine the Andrew Johnson impeachment proceedings of 1868, including analysis of political cartoons about the contentious and divisive events of the era. Then, in my class, we draw comparisons to the impeachment hearings for former president Bill Clinton. Clinton’s defense statements and speeches are available for us to study, but since Johnson never had the opportunity to deliver a response to the charges levied against him by the Radical Republicans in Congress, one assignment is for our students to write such a response—in the imagined voice of Johnson. They know the content from their AP U.S. History class, the rhetoric from AP English Language.

We decided to begin our combined course with the latter part of the twentieth century, 1945 to the present. Nick feels that he often runs out of time and shortchanges the more modern period if he organizes chronologically. Since my AP English Language class is not a traditional American literature survey, this approach works well for me. In fact, it allows

me to begin with discussions of two compelling works I assign for summer reading: *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien.

Benefits

The success of this combined program depends a great deal on the compatibility of the teachers involved, of course, but generally our collaborative efforts have motivated and inspired students to see the relevance of information and analytical techniques in one course to the other. In the best of circumstances, knowledge gained in one class reinforces and expands that learned in the other. While studying the causes of the American Revolution, students discuss the significance of Thomas Paine's pamphlet entitled "Common Sense." Armed with the knowledge that Paine's audiences consisted of Loyalists and Patriots, students are more likely to recognize the rhetorical strategies Paine used to balance his argument in order to persuade as many colonists as possible.

This schedule allows us to combine forces when we are working with an especially rich and important text. Nick and I team-teach several times a month by planning a double period of related activities. Students might read Lincoln's Gettysburg Address for both classes, focusing on the historical context in one, the rhetorical techniques in the other. We then follow this discussion by asking students to write a piece emulating Lincoln's style and strategies, taking into account how the history of the time period informs the piece. Nick and I jointly evaluate such an activity.

Improved grades on the AP Exams measure the most tangible benefit of this interdisciplinary approach. At Floral Park High School, exam grades have improved in both AP English Language and AP U.S. History; last year, we had more students earn a 5 than in any previous year. On the more qualitative side of evaluation, we see students' motivation improving. Apparently, word is spreading, since enrollment in the AP courses is growing. Nick and I now teach three sections, which means six of the eight periods in our school day are combined AP English Language and AP U.S. History sections. Our success and enthusiasm is leading to more collaborative efforts. Our tenth-grade advanced English class is now linked to AP World History, and our superintendent is exploring ways to (re)establish similar linkages in the ninth grade throughout the district.

Finally, this may be anecdotal, but we are hearing reports from students who have gone on to college that the synergy of our combined program has contributed to their success by making them better and more confident readers, writers, and analysts who see the broader picture when approaching written texts.

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Texts Analyzed in Both AP English Language and AP U.S. History (a Partial List)

The Autobiography of Malcolm X
Chief Joseph's Lament
"City upon a Hill" by John Winthrop
"Cross of Gold" by William Jennings Bryan
Declaration of Independence
Emancipation Proclamation
Excerpts from literary works, including *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Crucible*,
The Things They Carried, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
"Gospel of Wealth" by Andrew Carnegie
"Letter from Birmingham Jail" by Martin Luther King, Jr.
Lillian Hellman's letter to the House Un-American Activities Committee
"MacArthur Calls for Victory," letter by General Douglas MacArthur
"Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" by Jonathan Edwards
"To March on Washington for Jobs and Equal Participation in National Defense"
by A. Philip Randolph

Several of these primary sources can be found in *The American Spirit: Since 1865*, edited by Thomas A. Bailey and David M. Kennedy, or *Enduring Voices: Document Sets to Accompany "The Enduring Vision,"* by James J. Lorence. Both books are published by Houghton Mifflin.

Sample Lesson from Unit on the 1980s and President Ronald Reagan

Note: This lesson was conducted as part of a double period (86 minutes); the culminating student text is a result of a group effort and not intended as a typical AP essay.

Aim (U.S. History): Is there justification for identifying Ronald Reagan as the greatest president of the modern era?

Aim (English Language): How do we write an argument defending or challenging the idea that Reagan was the greatest president of the modern era?

Motivation: The students discuss the 1980s and review Reagan's presidency. We also give the students jelly beans, Reagan's favorite treat.

Activities

1. Students identify Reagan's domestic and foreign policies as well as his leadership, personal life, and personality traits.
2. Students identify rhetorical strategies and appeals we have analyzed and discussed in arguments read in prior class periods. These are listed on the board.
3. In groups, students write an argument either defending or challenging the claim that Reagan was the greatest president of the modern era. They employ some of the rhetorical strategies and appeals listed on the board.

Summary: Each group reads its argument to the class. Other students note rhetorical strategies and appeals employed by each group.

Sample Group Response

Who would have thought that a humble radio announcer from California would become one of the greatest presidents of the modern era and arguably of all time? His "Reaganomics" boosted a crippled economy and, even more importantly, a crippled American mindset. Former President Nixon had shown weakness in the face of communism by relaxing the tension of the Cold War. Reagan showed the Soviet Union that the United States of America would not submit to foreign pressures in Grenada and Nicaragua, thus boosting Americans' confidence in their government and in their country. The strategic defense initiation would provide an impalpable sense of security that would destroy the Evil Empire, their "red death star," and Lord "Gorbachev" Vader. His policy of intolerance towards hostile groups and threats to American security guaranteed the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union during the presidency of his own vice president, George Bush. Any president who gets re-elected by a landslide was a successful and well-liked president. Ronald Reagan won by 525 to 13 electoral votes. Thus, Ronald Reagan was a successful president.

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Rhetorical Strategies Used in Sample Response

- Opening with a rhetorical question
- Appeal to logos with factual evidence
- Allusion (to Star Wars)
- Appeal to pathos (emotionally charged language, description of “humble radio announcer”)
- Parallel structure (sentence two)
- Syllogistic logic (last three sentences)

Contributors

Information current as of original publish date of September 2005.

About the Editor

Renee H. Shea is a professor of English at Bowie State University in Maryland, where she directed the freshman composition program for five years. She teaches courses in rhetoric, women's studies, and world literature as well as freshman composition. A former high school AP English teacher as well as Reader and Question Leader for both the AP English Language and Literature Exams, she is currently the content advisor for AP English Language. In conjunction with the College Board's online events program, Dr. Shea has interviewed a number of writers, including Rita Dove and Eavan Boland, and in February 2005, she conducted the first all-day online AP English Language workshop. She's written many features for *Poets and Writers Magazine*, including profiles of Edwidge Danticat, Sandra Cisneros, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Rita Dove. She publishes in literary and academic journals, including *Callaloo*, *The Caribbean Writer*, and *Women in the Arts*. Her most recent publication is *Marcia Myers: Twenty Years* (Hudson Hills Press, 2004), a study of a contemporary painter. With her high school colleague Deborah Wilchek, she will publish *The Art of Invisible Strength: Amy Tan in the Classroom* (2005) as part of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) High School Literature Series. Dr. Shea is a member of the NCTE Commission on Literature.

Robin Aufses is the English department chair at John F. Kennedy High School in Bellmore, New York. She taught high school English for many years to students at all levels, and she has been an AP English teacher for the last seven years. As department chair, she has the pleasure of training young teachers, many of whom will have the chance to teach AP early in their careers.

Denise Hayden has been teaching at Floral Park Memorial High School since 1988. She has taught all levels of English grades 7 through 12 as well as electives in public speaking, dramatics, and journalism. She has been teaching AP English Language and Composition since 1997. In 1992 she was named the Teacher of the Year from Floral Park Memorial High School by the Sewanhaka Central High School District. In 2002 she was named an Educator of Excellence by the New York State English Council. She advises the senior high school drama club and is currently the facilitator at Floral Park Memorial for the Lincoln Center Institute, a performing arts education program. She is also the membership chairperson of the Long Island Language Arts Council.

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David Jolliffe is a professor of English at DePaul University and Chief Reader for the AP English Language and Composition Examination. In fall 2005, he will become the inaugural Brown Chair in English Literacy at the University of Arkansas. With Hephzibah Roskelly, he is coauthor of *Everyday Use: Rhetoric at Work in Reading and Writing* (Pearson/Longman, 2005).

Mary Jo Potts is a member of the faculty of the Webb School of Knoxville, Tennessee, where she serves as dean of faculty, head of the English department, and most significantly, an AP English teacher. Since 1977 she has been teaching AP English, and since 1981 she has been associated with various aspects of the AP English program: as an AP Reader, Table Leader, and Question Leader; a College Board AP and English Vertical Teams® consultant; the primary author of the *Teacher's Guide: AP English Language and Composition* (1998), and a member of the AP English Development Committee (1998–2002). A recipient of the Tennessee Association of Independent Schools' Smothers Award for Excellence in Teaching, she currently serves as a member of the College Board English Academic Advisory Committee.

Kathleen Puhr has taught English for 28 years in Illinois and Missouri. She has been an AP English Language Reader since 1991 and has served as Table Leader and Question Leader. She is a member of the AP English Development Committee as well. Among her publications have been articles in *Modern Fiction Studies*, *English Journal*, *Twentieth-Century Literature*, and *English Leadership Quarterly*.

Sylvia Sarrett teaches English at Hillsborough High School, Tampa, Florida. She is an AP English Language and Composition Table Leader, a former chair of the College Board English Academic Advisory Committee, and a consultant in AP English Language, AP English Literature, and SAT workshops. On occasion she has been known to write a poem or two, even to have them published.

Lawrence Scanlon has taught AP English Language and AP English Literature for the last 15 years at Brewster High School in New York. A Reader and Table Leader for the AP English Language and Composition Exam since 1995, this year he is a Question Leader. He works as a consultant for the College Board for both English Language and Literature, for the Pre-AP: Interdisciplinary Strategies for English and Social Studies workshop, and as an AP mentor. He has taught the AP English Language and Literature courses at numerous AP institutes and currently does so in New York, in Philadelphia, and in Bellevue, Washington. He has received the State University of New York Dean's Award for Excellence in Teaching, the New York State Council for the Humanities



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Mentor Award, and the National Scholastic Writing Outstanding Educator Award. He has published on the teaching of writing and on technology in *The English Record* and is coauthor, with Renee Shea, of *Teaching Nonfiction in AP English: A Teachers' Guide*, from Bedford/St. Martin's.

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