

# First Chapters:

## Passage Analysis and Book Promotion



Authors make a concerted effort to seduce the reader within the first chapter, so those are often the most entertaining and revealing pages of a text. Using the first chapter of AP level novels for AP style multiple-choice questions and writing prompts can help prepare students for the exam and encourage independent reading. Samples will be distributed and teachers will use question stems and previous prompts to construct a new set of multiple-choice questions and writing prompts.

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# Why First Chapters?



The beginning – a road map, a formal introduction, a lecture, a promise, a hook as if you were fishing – but my favorite metaphor for that first chapter is seduction. Yes, seduction. Think about all that suggests, and suggestion is such an important part of that first flirty chapter where the reader is attracted to the writer and wants more. Ah, temptation!

## **My Favorite AP Open Response Prompt (1972)**

In retrospect, the reader often discovers that the first chapter of a novel or the opening scene of a drama introduces some of the major themes of the work. Write an essay about the opening scene of a drama or the first chapter of a novel in which you explain how it functions in this way.

Sites where you can cut-and-paste the first chapters of fiction and non-fiction – for free. Fall in love with new titles.

**Chapter One** – a regular feature allows you to read the first chapter of selected books, all reviewed in *The Washington Post*.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/style/books/chapterone.htm>

**Take a Peek** – *USA Today's* offering presents a virtual library of more than a hundred first chapter excerpts, with brief descriptors.

<http://www.usatoday.com/life/books/excerpts/index.htm>

**Books of the Times** – The venerable *New York Times* makes finding first chapters a bit harder, because you must scroll through a list for titles that include an excerpt. Beware distractions into other bookish adventures.

<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/books/index.html>

**First Chapters** – The Guardian puts a British twist on its choices, sometimes offering several chapters from a book. Another good site to be distracted into Poetry Workshops, Literary Quizzes, and Why I Write interviews.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/series/firstchapters>

**Beginnings** – CNN maintains an extensive archive of first chapters, but rarely adds new ones and the graphics are often broken. Even so, the “I want to read it” button in the archive window at the bottom consistently delivers the desired chapters. Each chapter comes with a brief introduction.

<http://www.cnn.com/books/beginnings/>

**Book Excerpts** – The Denver Post has its offerings, some linked to reviews.

<http://www.denverpost.com/excerpts>

**Book Excerpts and First Chapters** -- Readers Read even includes children's books, and organizes all excerpts by genre.

<http://www.readersread.com/excerpts/>

**First Chapter Plus** promotes books for authors and publishers, organized by genre may be mature, but they offer a download .pdf file of each first chapter.

<http://firstchapterplus.com/mystery/>

Or renew a love affair with the classics at online book sites such as Bartleby, Project Gutenberg, the eServer, or the Internet Classics Archive.

**Directions:** This part consists of selections from *To Kill a Mockingbird* and questions on their content, form, and style. After reading a passage, choose the best answer to each question.

Note: Pay particular attention to the requirement of questions that contain the words NOT, LEAST, or EXCEPT.

**Passage 1, Questions 1-7.** Read the passage from Chapter 1 which begins "Maycomb was an old town" and ends "Mrs. Dubose was plain hell" (pages 5-6) carefully before you choose your answers.

Maycomb was an old town, but it was a tired old town when I first knew it. In rainy weather the streets turned to red slop; grass grew on the sidewalks, the courthouse sagged in the square. Somehow, it was hotter then: a black dog suffered on a summer's day; bony mules hitched to Hoover carts flicked flies in the sweltering shade of the live oaks on the square. Men's stiff collars wilted by nine in the morning. Ladies bathed before noon, after their three-o'clock naps, and by nightfall were like soft teacakes with frostings of sweat and sweet talcum.

People moved slowly then. They ambled across the square, shuffled in and out of the stores around it, took their time about everything. A day was twenty-four hours long but seemed longer. There was no hurry, for there was nowhere to go, nothing to buy and no money to buy it with, nothing to see outside the boundaries of Maycomb County. But it was a time of vague optimism for some of the people: Maycomb County had recently been told that it had nothing to fear but fear itself.

We lived on the main residential street in town—Atticus, Jem and I, plus Calpurnia our cook. Jem and I found our father satisfactory: he played with us, read to us, and treated us with courteous detachment.

Calpurnia was something else again. She was all angles and bones; she was nearsighted; she squinted; her hand was wide as a bed slat and twice as hard. She was always ordering me out of the kitchen, asking me why I couldn't behave as well as Jem when she knew he was older, and calling me home when I wasn't ready to come. Our battles were epic and one-sided. Calpurnia always won, mainly because Atticus always took her side. She had been with us ever since Jem was born, and I had felt her tyrannical presence as long as I could remember.

Our mother died when I was two, so I never felt her absence. She was a Graham from Montgomery; Atticus met her when he was first elected to the state legislature. He was middle-aged then, she was fifteen years his junior. Jem was the product of their first year of marriage; four years later I was born, and two years later our mother died from a sudden heart attack. They said it ran in her family. I did not miss her, but I think Jem did. He remembered her clearly, and sometimes in the middle of a game he would sigh at length, then go off and play by himself behind the car-house. When he was like that, I knew better than to bother him.

When I was almost six and Jem was nearly ten, our summertime boundaries (within calling distance of Calpurnia) were Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose's house two doors to the north of us, and the Radley Place three doors to the south. We were never tempted to break them. The Radley Place was inhabited by an unknown entity the mere description of whom was enough to make us behave for days on end; Mrs. Dubose was plain hell.

1. The style of the passage is best characterized as
  - (A) pedantic
  - (B) effusive
  - (C) complex
  - (D) informal
  - (E) eclectic
2. The tone of the first two paragraphs is
  - (A) prosaic
  - (B) satirical
  - (C) critical
  - (D) didactic
  - (E) humorous
3. The narrator creates a mood for Maycomb primarily through the use of
  - (A) allusions
  - (B) similes
  - (C) concrete details
  - (D) hyperbole
  - (E) litotes
4. From the passage, the reader can infer that the dominant influence in the narrator's life is
  - (A) Maycomb
  - (B) her father
  - (C) her mother
  - (D) Jem
  - (E) Calpurnia
5. The sentence "Calpurnia was something else again" which begins the fourth paragraph serves to
  - (A) emphasize Calpurnia's cruelty in comparison to the father
  - (B) highlight Calpurnia's uniqueness as a person
  - (C) contrast Calpurnia's behavior to the father's
  - (D) contradict the narrator's description of Calpurnia
  - (E) focus the reader on Calpurnia's importance to the narrator
6. The reader can infer that the narrator's view of her mother's death is
  - (A) dispassionate
  - (B) maudlin
  - (C) unsympathetic
  - (D) surrealistic
  - (E) pathetic
7. The narrator creates a child's point of view through her
  - I. simplistic diction
  - II. choice of details
  - III. explanation of events
  - (A) I only
  - (B) II only
  - (C) III only
  - (D) I and II only
  - (E) I, II, and III

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**Directions:** This part consists of selections from *Lord of the Flies* and questions on their content, form, and style. After reading a passage, choose the best answer to each question.

Note: Pay particular attention to the requirement of questions that contain the words NOT, LEAST, or EXCEPT.

They assented. Piggy opened his mouth to speak, caught Jack's eye and shut it again. Jack held out his hands for the conch and stood up, holding the delicate thing carefully in his sooty hands.

"I agree with Ralph. We've got to have rules and obey them. After all, we're not savages. We're English, and the English are best at everything. So we've got to do the right things."

He turned to Ralph.

"Ralph, I'll split up the choir—my hunters, that is—into groups, and we'll be responsible for keeping the fire going—"

This generosity brought a spatter of applause from the boys, so that Jack grinned at them, then waved the conch for silence.

"We'll let the fire burn out now. Who would see smoke at night-time, anyway? And we can start the fire again whenever we like. Altos, you can keep the fire going this week, and trebles the next—"

The assembly assented gravely.

"And we'll be responsible for keeping a lookout too. If we see a ship out there—they followed the direction of his bony arm with their eyes—"we'll put green branches on. Then there'll be more smoke."

They gazed intently at the dense blue of the horizon, as if a little silhouette might appear there at any moment.

The sun in the west was a drop of burning gold that slid nearer and nearer the sill of the world. All at once they were aware of the evening as the end of light and warmth.

Roger took the conch and looked round at them gloomily.

"I've been watching the sea. There hasn't been the trace of a ship. Perhaps we'll never be rescued."

A murmur rose and swept away. Ralph took back the conch.

"I said before we'll be rescued sometime. We've just got to wait, that's all."

Daring, indignant, Piggy took the conch.

"That's what I said! I said about our meetings and things and then you said shut up—"

His voice lifted into the whine of virtuous recrimination. They stirred and began to shout him down.

"You said you wanted a small fire and you been and built a pile like a hayrick. If I say anything," cried Piggy, with bitter realism, "you say shut up; but if Jack or Maurice or Simon—"

He paused in the tumult, standing, looking beyond them and down the unfriendly side of the mountain to the great patch where they had found dead wood. Then he laughed so strangely that they were hushed, looking at the flash of his spectacles in astonishment. They followed his gaze to find the sour joke.

"You got your small fire all right."

Smoke was rising here and there among the creepers that festooned the dead or dying trees. As they watched, a flash of fire appeared at the root of one wisp, and then the smoke thickened. Small flames stirred at the trunk of a tree and crawled away through leaves and brushwood, dividing and increasing. One patch touched a tree trunk and scrambled up like a bright squirrel. The smoke increased, sifted, rolled outwards. The squirrel leapt on the wings of the wind and clung to another standing tree, eating downwards. Beneath the dark canopy of leaves and smoke the fire laid hold on the forest and began to gnaw. Acres of black and yellow smoke rolled steadily toward the sea. At the sight of the flames and the irresistible course of the fire, the boys broke into shrill, excited cheering. The flames, as though they were a kind of wild life, crept as a jaguar creeps on its belly toward a line of birch-like saplings that fledged an outcrop of the pink rock. They flapped at the first of the trees, and the branches grew a brief foliage of fire. The heart of flame leapt nimbly across the gap between the trees and then went swinging and flaring along the whole row of them. Beneath the capering boys a quarter of a mile square of forest was savage with smoke and flame. The separate noises of the fire merged into a drum-roll that seemed to shake the mountain.

"You got your small fire all right."

Startled, Ralph realized that the boys were falling still and silent, feeling the beginnings of awe at the power set free below them. The knowledge and the awe made him savage.

"Oh, shut up!"

"I got the conch," said Piggy, in a hurt voice. "I got a right to speak."

They looked at him with eyes that lacked interest in what they saw, and cocked ears at the drum-roll of the fire. Piggy glanced nervously into hell and cradled the conch.

1. The wording of the phrase "holding the delicate thing carefully in his sooty hands" (paragraph 1) provides an image of
  - (A) heroism
  - (B) contrasts
  - (C) similarities
  - (D) duality
  - (E) indifference
2. The author implies that the boys applaud Jack's statements (beginning "Ralph, I'll split up . . ." and ending "Then there'll be more smoke") because
  - (A) they are moved by his eloquence
  - (B) his offer frees them of work and responsibility
  - (C) his generosity to Ralph is noble and impressive
  - (D) the boys applaud everyone who speaks, regardless of what is said
  - (E) Ralph implicitly urged them to do so
3. "The little silhouette" mentioned after Jack's statements refers to
  - (A) Jack's shadow cast by the fire
  - (B) the memories the boys have of their families
  - (C) the coastline of their faraway homeland
  - (D) the outline of a ship at sea
  - (E) the sun setting on the sea's horizon
4. According to this passage, Piggy is all of the following EXCEPT
  - (A) whiny
  - (B) ungrammatical in speech
  - (C) logical
  - (D) reticent
  - (E) unpopular
5. The primary form of figurative language used extensively to describe the fire in the long paragraph beginning "Smoke was rising . . ." is
  - (A) metaphor
  - (B) simile
  - (C) personification
  - (D) metonymy
  - (E) hyperbole
6. The tone of Piggy's repetition of "You got your small fire all right" before and after the long paragraph is one of
  - (A) virtuous recrimination
  - (B) subtle humor
  - (C) raucous humor
  - (D) bitter sarcasm
  - (E) nervous awe
7. It can be inferred from the context that the author uses the word "drum-roll" in connection with the fire (in the long paragraph and the final paragraph) because of the word's association with
  - (A) musical bands
  - (B) executions
  - (C) marching parades
  - (D) official announcements
  - (E) celebrations

# To Kill a Mockingbird Answers

## ANSWER EXPLANATIONS PASSAGE 1

1. (D) **informal.** With the narrator being a preteen girl, the passage's diction is primarily simple, and the details discussed are those of daily life in a Southern town as seen through a child's eyes.
2. (A) **prosaic.** The prosaic (commonplace and daily) tone is achieved through the use of such wording as "tired old town," "bony mules," "calling distance," and the details of common, daily life.
3. (C) **concrete details.** The easygoing mood of a small town is created through the presentation of details: "streets turned to slop," "bony mules . . . flicked flies," "she squinted," "he played with us," "three doors to the south."
4. (E) **Calpurnia.** In the passage, the father is mentioned only briefly, but the narrator discusses Calpurnia in an entire paragraph which clearly depicts her as the "mother figure" in the narrator's life— "ordering," "asking," "calling," and disciplining—since the mother died when the narrator was two.
5. (C) **contrast Calpurnia's behavior to the father's.** The phrase "something else again" comes directly after the sentence describing the father's behavior with his children, so the "something else" sets up the contrast between the previous description of the father and the description of Calpurnia which follows.
6. (A) **dispassionate.** The details of the mother's death are simply reported, and the narrator clearly states "I never felt her absence" and "I did not miss her." This is understandable since the narrator was only two years old when her mother died.
7. (E) **I, II, and III.** Simplistic diction is evident throughout the passage with very few complicated words ("mainly," "clearly," "lived," "satisfactory"). The very few complex words, such as "inhabited" and "entity" stand out because of their rarity. The choice of details is clearly what a child would focus on: muddy streets, animals ("mule," "black dog"), and matters of discipline and behavior. The explanation of why Calpurnia "always won," why Jem would stop playing "in the middle of the game," and "summertime boundaries" all reflect a child's thinking.



## **Lord of the Flies Answers**

1. (B) contrasts. That the "delicate thing" must be held "carefully" implies the boy's hands are less than delicate, while "sooty" hints at dirt, which contrasts with something "delicate," or dainty, and prized and known to be "white."

2. (B) his offer frees them of work and responsibility. Jack twice says "we'll be responsible." Children/people often wish to avoid responsibility. In addition, Jack mentions the task of putting "green branches" on the fire to create smoke. It is understood that gathering firewood, tending a fire, and gazing out to sea looking for a ship are time-consuming work. C is not the best choice since Ralph would not have been doing these tasks alone; the tasks would have fallen on the shoulders of the boys as a whole.

3. (D) the outline of a ship at sea. The phrase clearly refers to a ship since the purpose of the fire was to signal passing ships, and "ship" is referred to before and after the phrase is used.

4. (D) reticent. Piggy's voice is described as "the whine." "Shut up," "Shout down," and "eyes that lacked interest" all imply that Piggy and his opinions are less than popular. "You been and built" is non-standard grammar, and Piggy presents his grievances in a logical manner ("I got the conch . . . I got a right to speak."). If he were reticent, he would have stopped after the boys tried to shout him down.

5. (C) personification. Although there are two similes ("as a jaguar" and "like a bright squirrel"), personification dominates the paragraph: "stirred," "crawled," "touched," "scrambled," "laid hold," "crept," "flapped," "heart of the flame leapt."

6. (D) bitter sarcasm. Using "small" to describe the firestorm is obvious sarcasm, and the emphasis on "you" and "all right" shows Piggy's bitterness that they did not listen to what he had to say. It is no virtue to laugh at people when things go wrong. There is nothing subtle about his repetition, nor is it particularly loud. Using "small" also precludes a sense of awe. Also, the previous line refers to a "sour joke."

7. (B) executions. All reference to the fire is ominous in nature--"unfriendly," the described destruction (death) of the jungle, "savage," "hell."

# AP Multiple-Choice Test Strategies

**Major Goal:** Answer as many questions correctly, as possible

1. Preview the test.
2. Number the passages. Circle the number of questions per passage.
3. Answer questions you know in each passage.
4. Get to the end of the test! This is not the PSAT. Questions are not ordered *Easy, Medium, Hard*. There are easy questions in each passage and at the end of the exam.

## Control the Exam

1. After previewing the test, You decide where you want to begin.
2. Begin with a passage that is easy for you. It is a confidence-builder.
3. Read the passage and answer questions according to the sections of the test.  
*Example:* If you see that three questions deal with a paragraph, read that paragraph; answer those questions, then move to the next section.
4. This is not a homework assignment. You are not trying to remember anything for future reference. You are surfing for answers.
5. As you read the passages, anticipate questions.
6. As you read the questions, try to determine an answer before you read the choices.
7. Write the answers on the test -- **in big letters**. Then, bubble the answer sheet a passage at a time.
8. Skip Questions. If you do not know, and cannot eliminate one, preferably two, answer choices, skip it. No penalty. Penalty is  $-\frac{1}{4}$  point for each incorrect answer. Some students get minus scores because they insist on answering every question -- and get more wrong than right.

## Time Yourself

1. Write the time at the top of the first page, for instance, 8:45 - 9:45. That way you do not have to keep adding and subtracting.
2. Divide the number of questions into 60 minutes. You have about one minute per question. Some you will answer in seconds! Do not spend too much time celebrating. Bank the time for harder ones~ Save those mind-boggling questions (I and II only, I, II and III...) until last, if you cannot answer them immediately. They eat time.
3. Even if you only have seconds left, do not leave the short, specific, line-referenced questions unanswered.

From: Advanced Placement Strategies, Inc.

## **General Guidelines**

- Annotate the prose selection used for the questions.
- Do not spend too much time on any one question.
- Do not be misled by the length or appearance of a prose selection. There is no correlation between this and the difficulty of the questions.
- Do not fight the question or the passage. You may know other information about the subject of the text or a question. It is irrelevant. Work within the given context.
- Consider all the choices in a given question. This will guard against your jumping to a false conclusion. It helps you to slow down and to look closely at each possibility. You may find that your first choice was not the best or most appropriate one.
- Maintain an open mind as you answer subsequent questions in a series. Sometimes a later question will contradict an answer to a previous one. Reconsider both. Likewise, even the phrasing of a question may point to an answer in a previous question.
- Remember that all parts of an answer must be correct.
- When in doubt, go back to the text.

Now do the same thing for the poetry selection and so on for each...

## **Close Reading Techniques**

- Underline, circle, and highlight the text.
- Read closely, paying attention to punctuation, syntax, diction, pacing, and organization.
- Read as if you were reading the passage aloud to an audience, emphasis meaning and intent.
- Use all the information given to you about the passage, such as title, author, date of publication, and footnotes.
- Be aware of organizational and rhetorical devices and techniques.
- Be aware of thematic lines and be sensitive to details that will obviously be material for the multiple-choice questions.

## **Guessing Strategies**

*After reading the five choices carefully:*

- Eliminate any that are obviously wrong.
- Eliminate those choices that are too narrow or too broad.
- Eliminate illogical choices.
- Eliminate answers that are synonymous.
- Eliminate answers that cancel each other out

From *5 Steps to a 5*



## AP Language Terms - Learning to Talk the Talk

**Primary Terms** - Once you learn to intelligently and perceptively discuss the impact these elements have on a piece of writing, you will successfully be able to write an analytical essay. (Notice the terms I haven't included - plot, theme, characterization, setting - that's AP Literature - but terms *do* crossover.)

Diction	Detail
Syntax	Pacing
Tone	Shift
Imagery	Connotation
Figurative Language	Denotation
Point of View	Theme

---

**Secondary Terms** - Some of these terms fall into subcategories of the terms listed above. Most of these terms you'll never see on the AP exam but are still important to prose analysis.

Abstract	Hyperbole
Ad hominum	Invective
Allegory	Inversion
Allusion	Irony
Alliteration	Litotes
Apostrophe	Logos
Aphorism	Metaphor
Analogy	Metonymy
Anaphora	Motif
Anastrophe	Non sequitur
Anecdote	Onomatopoeia
Antithesis	Oxymoron
Aphorism	Parallelism
Argument	Parody
Asyndeton	Paradox
Cacophony	Pathos
Chiasmus	Pedantic
Colloquialism	Periodic sentence
Conceit	Personification
Concession	Persuasion
Concrete	Polysyndeton
Cumulative sentence	Repetition
Didactic	Sarcasm
Digression	Satire
Ellipsis	Simile
Epiphany	Syllepsis
Ethos	Syllogism
Euphemism	Symbol
Euphony	Synecdoche
Fallacies	Style
Genre	Tautology
Homily	Understatement

## AP Literature Terms - Learning to Talk the Talk

**Primary Terms** - Once you learn to intelligently and perceptively discuss the impact these elements have on a piece of writing, you will successfully be able to write an analytical essay. (Notice the terms I haven't included - rhetoric, logical fallacy, pathos, chiasmus - that's AP Language - but terms *do* crossover.)

Diction	Detail
Syntax	Pacing
Tone	Shift
Imagery	Connotation
Figurative Language	Denotation
Point of View	Theme

---

**Secondary Terms** - These terms are much more specific to literature. Most of these you'll never see on the AP exam but many are still important to literary analysis.

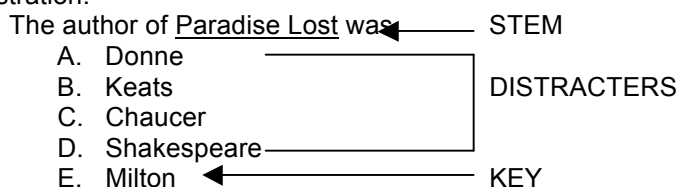
Allegory	Metaphor
Allusion	Metonymy
Alliteration	Mood
Ambiguity	Motif
Antagonist	Objective
Apostrophe	Onomatopoeia
Analogy	Omniscient
Anecdote	Oxymoron
Aside	Parallelism
Assonance	Parody
Atmosphere	Paradox
Attitude	Personification
Bildungsroman	Plot Elements
Cacophony	Point of View
Caesura	Protagonist
Characterization	Reliability
Climax	Repetition
Colloquialism	Sarcasm
Conceit	Satire
Conflict	Scansion
Consonance	Setting
Enjambment	Simile
Epiphany	Stereotype
Euphony	Subjective
Flashback	Symbol
Foil	Synaesthesia
Foreshadowing	Synecdoche
Genre	Style
Hyperbole	Turning Point
Irony	Understatement
Juxtaposition	Verse Forms
Litotes	

# Instructions for Writing AP M/C Questions

## IMPORTANT TERMS:

1. **Multiple-choice item** - a test question in which a number of response choices are given from which the correct answer is to be selected; should have 4-5 options (A-D or A-E)
2. **Stem** - the initial part of the item in which the task is delineated—it may be a question, directions, or an incomplete statement
3. **Options** - all the choices in an item
4. **Key** - the correct answer
5. **Distracters** - the incorrect options

Illustration:



## ITEM WRITING:

- ☞ The material to be tested should be significant. It is easy to write questions about trivia. Resist the temptation.
- ☞ Use a vocabulary level appropriate for the population being tested (AP students).
- ☞ Word items clearly and concisely
- ☞ Choose a cognitive level as a target for your work on a question. (Bloom's taxonomy)
- ☞ Trickiness (usually subtle but unimportant distinctions) is never productive in questions.
- ☞ Options should be uniform and logically ordered
- ☞ Use "None of the above" rarely, and never use "All of the above"
- ☞ Use the Roman numeral format only when necessary
- ☞ Avoid options that logically overlap
- ☞ Distracters should be plausible
- ☞ Have a single clear key (answer)



## **STEM:**

- ☞ Must be long enough to make the question clear, but should not try to teach a lesson. Provide no more information in the stem than necessary.
- ☞ May be either a question or an incomplete statement to be completed by the options
- ☞ Avoid using “of the following” when the answer is obviously one of the options
- ☞ If an uncertainty may exist about a universal answer to the question, then use the phrase “of the following”
- ☞ Use the positive approach for asking the questions (avoid using “not”)
- ☞ If you must use a negative approach, type the negative word in all caps (NOT, EXCEPT, LEAST, etc.)

## **OPTIONS:**

- ☞ Seek to provide one best response, one that any individual well-informed of the topic will select and accept
- ☞ Prepare distracters with desired difficulty (advanced wording)
- ☞ Use common errors or misconceptions associated with the material as distracters
- ☞ Use a Roman numeral format instead of the option “All of the above”

Ex. Which of the following did the United States fight against during the Second World War?

- I. Germany
- II. Italy
- III. Japan

- A. I only
- B. II only
- C. I and III only
- D. I, II, and III

- ☞ Numerical options should be placed in ascending or descending order
- ☞ Other options should be put in alphabetical order
- ☞ Answer options should be written in a similar syntactic format
- ☞ Only rarely use the option “None of the above” and never to avoid developing another distracter
- ☞ All of the options should be about the same length and level of complexity
- ☞ Distribute the position of the key randomly (avoid the tendency to always make it C)

From J Heermans

## Rhetorical Analysis / Close Reading: Multiple-Choice Stems

### From the AP Literature and Composition exam:

1. What is the author's attitude toward the subject of the essay?
2. What is this passage about?
3. What does the phrase, \_\_\_\_\_, mean?
4. How would you characterize the style of the passage?
5. Which of the following best summarizes the main point in lines \_\_\_\_\_?
6. What is the main point in \_\_\_\_\_? (the passage, the second paragraph, etc.)
7. How would you restate the meaning of \_\_\_\_\_?
8. How would you define the phrase \_\_\_\_\_?
9. What is the speaker's purpose in \_\_\_\_\_?
10. What thought is reflected in the allusion \_\_\_\_\_?
11. What is the tone of the passage?
12. How would you define the word \_\_\_\_\_?
13. How would you describe the diction and style of the passage?
14. In lines \_\_\_\_\_, what is the speaker asserting?
15. Why is \_\_\_\_\_ described as \_\_\_\_\_?
16. What is significant about the structure of sentence #\_\_\_\_\_ in lines \_\_\_\_\_?
17. In sentences \_\_\_\_\_, what contrasts are developed or implied?
18. In lines \_\_\_\_\_, why does the author pair quotations?
19. In lines \_\_\_\_\_, what is the effect of pairing quotations?
20. What is the dominant technique used in lines \_\_\_\_\_?
21. In lines \_\_\_\_\_, what is the effect of using a metaphor?
22. In lines \_\_\_\_\_, juxtaposing \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ serves the purpose of \_\_\_\_\_.
23. What does the speaker accomplish in using \_\_\_\_\_?
24. By using the words \_\_\_\_\_, the speaker shows the belief that \_\_\_\_\_.
25. In lines \_\_\_\_\_, how is the speaker portrayed?
26. The shift in point of view from...has the effect of...
27. What is the theme of the \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., second paragraph, whole piece)?
28. In lines \_\_\_\_\_, the passage shifts from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
29. Why does the author represent \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_ in lines \_\_\_\_\_?
30. What is the purpose of the syntax in sentence \_\_\_\_\_?
31. What does \_\_\_\_\_ symbolize in lines \_\_\_\_\_?
32. The speaker's attitude toward \_\_\_\_\_ is best described as one of \_\_\_\_\_.
33. In \_\_\_\_\_, the author is asserting that \_\_\_\_\_.
34. The term \_\_\_\_\_ conveys the speaker's belief that \_\_\_\_\_.
35. The speaker assumes that the audience's attitude toward \_\_\_\_\_ will be one of \_\_\_\_\_.
36. In the \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., first, second, last) paragraph, the speaker seeks to interest us in the subjects of the discussion by stressing the \_\_\_\_\_.
37. It can be inferred by \_\_\_\_\_ that \_\_\_\_\_.

38. The \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., first, second) sentence is unified by metaphorical references pertaining to \_\_\_\_\_.
39. The speaker's mention of \_\_\_\_\_ is appropriate to the development of the argument as an illustration of \_\_\_\_\_.
40. As the sentence in lines \_\_\_\_\_ is constructed, \_\_\_\_\_ is parallel to \_\_\_\_\_.
41. It can be inferred from the description of \_\_\_\_\_ that the qualities of \_\_\_\_\_ are valued by the speaker.
42. According to the passage, \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.
43. In the context of the passage, \_\_\_\_\_ is best interpreted as \_\_\_\_\_.
44. Sentence \_\_\_\_\_ is best described as \_\_\_\_\_.
45. The antecedent for \_\_\_\_\_ in line \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_.
46. What type of argument does the writer employ in lines \_\_\_\_\_?
47. Why does the speaker use the sequence of ideas in lines \_\_\_\_\_?
48. We can infer from \_\_\_\_\_ that \_\_\_\_\_.
49. What pattern of exposition does the writer use in this passage?
50. What is the point of view in this passage/poem?
51. What is the purpose of the statement in lines \_\_\_\_\_?
52. What atmosphere or mood is established in lines \_\_\_\_\_?
53. The \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., first, fourth) sentence is coherent because of its use of \_\_\_\_\_.
54. What qualities are present in the scene described in lines \_\_\_\_\_?
55. What words and details suggest a \_\_\_\_\_ (adjective) attitude on the part of the author?
56. In line \_\_\_\_\_, the use of \_\_\_\_\_ instead of \_\_\_\_\_ accomplishes \_\_\_\_\_.
57. In line \_\_\_\_\_, the author emphasizes \_\_\_\_\_ because he/she \_\_\_\_\_.
58. The use of \_\_\_\_\_ suggests that \_\_\_\_\_.
59. What is the function of the \_\_\_\_\_ (sentence, detail, clause, phrase, and so on) in lines \_\_\_\_\_?
60. The subject of the sentence in lines \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_.
61. What assertions does the author make in the passage, and what is his/her purpose in doing this?
62. By \_\_\_\_\_, the author most probably means \_\_\_\_\_.
63. What meanings are contained in the word \_\_\_\_\_ in line \_\_\_\_\_?
64. What can we infer from the passage about \_\_\_\_\_?
65. The author apparently believes that \_\_\_\_\_.
66. In lines \_\_\_\_\_, the phrase \_\_\_\_\_ is used to refer to \_\_\_\_\_.
67. The author believes that we should \_\_\_\_\_.
68. The \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., first, last, third) sentence of the passage is chiefly remarkable for its \_\_\_\_\_.
69. What does the author want to encourage in a person?
70. What is the function of \_\_\_\_\_ in relation to \_\_\_\_\_?



## Rhetorical Analysis / Close Reading: Multiple-Choice Stems

### From the AP Language and Composition exam:

1. What is the author's attitude toward the subject?
2. The word \_\_\_\_\_ in context (line \_\_\_\_ ) is best interpreted to mean . . .
3. What does the phrase \_\_\_\_\_ mean?
4. The phrase \_\_\_\_\_ functions primarily as . . .
5. The word/phrase \_\_\_\_\_ in line \_\_\_\_ refers to which of the following?
6. How would you characterize the style of the passage?
7. The style of the passage as a whole is most accurately characterized as . . .
8. What is the main point of the passage?
9. Restate the phrase, \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Define the phrase, \_\_\_\_\_.
11. What does the speaker accomplish in this passage?
12. What is the speaker's purpose in writing this passage?
13. What is the speaker's purpose in lines \_\_\_\_\_.
14. The speaker's reference to \_\_\_\_\_ serves primarily to . . .
15. Lines \_\_\_\_ can be interpreted to mean . . .
16. In lines \_\_\_\_, the speaker employs which of the following rhetorical strategies?
17. In the sentence beginning \_\_\_\_\_, the speaker employs all of the following EXCEPT . . .
18. The type of argument employed by the speaker is most similar to which of the following?
19. The speaker describes \_\_\_\_\_ in an order best described as from the . . .
20. Why does the writer use the allusion to \_\_\_\_\_?
21. Which of the following best summarizes the main topic of the passage?
22. The attitude of the entire passage (or parts of the passage) is one of . . .
23. What is the tone of the passage?
24. How would you characterize the diction and style of the passage?
25. What is the speaker asserting in lines \_\_\_\_\_?
26. In relation to the passage as a whole, the statement in the first sentence presents . . .  
[syntax]
27. The second sentence (line \_\_\_\_ ) is unified by metaphorical references pertaining to . . .
28. The sentence \_\_\_\_\_ in lines \_\_\_\_ contains which of the following?
29. Describe the structure of the sentence in lines \_\_\_\_\_.
30. What contrast does the speaker develop in lines \_\_\_\_\_?
31. What effect is achieved by the speaker's using the phrases \_\_\_\_\_?
32. What dominant technique is the speaker using in lines \_\_\_\_\_?
33. In lines \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ is a metaphorical way of saying \_\_\_\_\_.
34. What does the author achieve by juxtaposing \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_?

35. What does the choice of words show about the speaker's beliefs?
36. Where is there a shift of tone in the passage?
37. The reason for the shift in tone is due to . . .
38. The tone of the passage shifts from one of \_\_\_\_\_ to one of \_\_\_\_\_.
39. The syntax in lines \_\_\_\_\_ serves to \_\_\_\_\_.
40. What is the speaker's attitude toward the subject?
41. What assumptions does the speaker make about the audience?
42. It can be inferred by the description of \_\_\_\_\_ that which of the following qualities are valued by the speaker?
43. How does the author seek to interest us in the first paragraph?
44. What method does the author use to develop the argument?
45. Line \_\_\_\_\_ is parallel to what other line in the passage?
46. What can you infer about the author's attitudes toward the subject?
47. What is the antecedent for \_\_\_\_\_?
48. What type of argument is the author using in this passage?
49. What pattern of exposition is the author using in this passage?
50. What is the atmosphere established in lines \_\_\_\_\_?
51. Why is the sentence in lines \_\_\_\_\_ coherent, despite its length?
52. In line \_\_\_\_\_, the use of \_\_\_\_\_ instead of \_\_\_\_\_ accomplishes what?
53. What is the function of \_\_\_\_\_ in the passage?
54. What is the subject of the sentence in lines \_\_\_\_\_?
55. The primary rhetorical function of lines \_\_\_\_\_ is to . . .
56. The main rhetorical strategy of the \_\_\_\_\_ paragraph is for the purpose of . . .
57. What does the author apparently believe about the subject?
58. What does the author believe we should do in response to this passage?
59. The author uses this (certain image) for the purpose of . . .
60. The principal contrast employed by the author in the passage/paragraph is between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
61. Why is the sentence in lines \_\_\_\_\_ remarkable?
62. The antecedent for \_\_\_\_\_ in the clause \_\_\_\_\_ is . . .
63. The pattern of exposition exemplified in the passage is best described as . . .
64. The point of view indicated in the phrase \_\_\_\_\_ in line \_\_\_\_\_ is that of . . .
65. The atmosphere established in the \_\_\_\_\_ sentence of paragraph \_\_\_\_\_ is mainly one of . . .
66. The function of the clauses introduced by \_\_\_\_\_) in lines \_\_\_\_\_ is to. . .
67. What is the function of paragraph \_\_\_\_\_? of line \_\_\_\_\_?
68. In the passage, the speaker makes all of the following assumptions about his/her readers EXCEPT
69. The diction in the passage is best described as
70. One prominent stylistic characteristic of the \_\_\_\_\_ paragraph is the use of \_\_\_\_\_

From Jane Schaffer on the AP ListServ <JaneCSchaffer@cs.com>

# Terms to Describe Language

(different from tone, language describes the force or quality of the diction, images, details, etc.)

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academic	flat	particular
allusive	folksy	pedantic
antiquated	formal	picturesque
archaic	grotesque	plain
artificial	hackneyed	poetic
bombastic	homely	pompous
bookish	homespun	practical
casual	idiomatic	precise
charming	imprecise	pretentious
clear	incisive	provincial
coarse	incongruous	quaint
colloquial	inflated	reasoned
commonplace	informal	refined
concrete	informative	relaxed
connotative	insipid	righteous
conventional	intellectual	rustic
conversational	ironic	satiric
convoluted	jargon	scholarly
crude	learned	sensuous
cultivated	literal	showy
cultured	lyrical	simple
deflated	manipulative	slang
denotative	mature	sophisticated
detached	melodious	specific
dialect	metaphorical	straightforward
didactic	moralistic	subjective
educated	mundane	suggestive
emotional	narrow	symbolic
erudite	objective	tasteless
esoteric	obscure	transparent
euphemistic	obtuse	trite
exact	orderly	unpolished
factual	ordinary	unsophisticated
fanciful	ostentatious	vague
fantastic	overblown	vernacular
figurative	overused	vulgar



## Thirty years of AP Open Questions! (condensed)

- \*IMPORTANT** -- ALL of the questions below ask you to
- Show HOW what you're discussing relates to the work's over-all significance
  - Choose a work of literary merit on or off the list provided
  - Avoid plot summary!

### General:

1. Significance of a title
2. The author's manipulation of time
3. A predominant allusion in a work
4. Particular social attitudes or traditions that the author apparently wishes to change
5. Opening scene of a work
6. Conflict between a parent (or a parental figure) and a son or daughter
7. How contrasting places (for example, two countries, two houses) represent opposed forces or ideas
8. Arguments for or against the work's relevance in today's world
9. Similarities and differences in a sequence of parallel or recurring events in a work
10. Implausible or unrealistic incident or character - how it relates to the realistic elements in the work
11. Character who confronts a mystery - identify the mystery and its investigation
12. Internal events (mental/psychological) - how they impact external action in a work

### Scene:

1. A scene or scenes of violence
2. A scene of social occasion (wedding, funeral, party...) – how it shows the values of the character /society
4. A line or passage in a work and the reasons for its significance and effectiveness
5. How and why an ending appropriately or inappropriately concludes the work

### Based on quotes about literature:

1. "Spiritual reassessment or moral reconciliation" evident in the ending of a work
2. A work which you initially considered conventional, but now see as "uncivilized free and wild thinking"
3. Explain the "pleasure and disquietude" experienced by the readers of a particular work
4. A scene or character which awakens "thoughtful laughter" in the reader
5. How and why important elements of a work are "distorted"

### Character:

1. How and why a particular immoral character in a work makes us react sympathetically
2. Characters alienated from society because of gender, race, class, or creed - how that alienation reveals society's assumptions or moral values
3. Character whose mind is pulled in conflicting directions by two compelling desires or influences
4. Character who appears briefly, or does not appear at all, but has a significant presence
5. The nature of a character's villainy
6. Character's conflict between a private passion and a social responsibility
7. A conventional or stereotyped character's function in achieving the author's purpose
8. A rebel's conflict and its ethical implications for the individual and society
9. The function of a confidant/e in a work

from Claudia Felske felske@netwurx.net

# AP Literature Open-ended Prompts (1970-2009)

1970. Choose a character from a novel or play or recognized literary merit and write an essay in which you (a) briefly describe the standards of the fictional society in which the character exists and (b) show how the character is affected by and responds to those standards. In your essay do not merely summarize the plot.

1971. The significance of a title such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is so easy to discover. However, in other works (for example, *Measure for Measure*) the full significance of the title becomes apparent to the reader only gradually. Choose two works and show how the significance of their respective titles is developed through the authors' use of devices such as contrast, repetition, allusion, and point of view.

1972. In retrospect, the reader often discovers that the first chapter of a novel or the opening scene of a drama introduces some of the major themes of the work. Write an essay about the opening scene of a drama or the first chapter of a novel in which you explain how it functions in this way.

1973. An effective literary work does not merely stop or cease; it concludes. In the view of some critics, a work that does not provide the pleasure of significant closure has terminated with an artistic fault. A satisfactory ending is not, however, always conclusive in every sense; significant closure may require the reader to abide with or adjust to ambiguity and uncertainty. In an essay, discuss the ending of a novel or play of acknowledged literary merit. Explain precisely how and why the ending appropriately or inappropriately concludes the work. Do not merely summarize the plot.

1974. Choose a work of literature written before 1900. Write an essay in which you present arguments for and against the work's relevance for a person in 1974. Your own position should emerge in the course of your essay. You may refer to works of literature written after 1900 for the purpose of contrast or comparison.

1975. Although literary critics have tended to praise the unique in literary characterizations, many authors have employed the stereotyped character successfully. Select one work of acknowledged literary merit and in a well-written essay, show how the conventional or stereotyped character or characters function to achieve the author's purpose.

1975, #2. Unlike the novelist, the writer of a play does not use his own voice and only rarely uses a narrator's voice to guide the audience's responses to character and action. Select a play you have read and write an essay in which you explain the techniques the playwright uses to guide his audience's responses to the central characters and the action. You might consider the effect on the audience of things like setting, the use of comparable and contrasting characters, and the characters' responses to each other. Support your argument with specific references to the play. Do not give a plot summary.

1976. The conflict created when the will of an individual opposes the will of the majority is the recurring theme of many novels, plays, and essays. Select the work of an essayist who is in opposition to his or her society; or from a work of recognized literary merit, select a fictional character who is in opposition to his or her society. In a critical essay, analyze the conflict and discuss the moral and ethical implications for both the individual and the society. Do not summarize the plot or action of the work you choose.

1977. A character's attempt to recapture the past is important in many plays, novels, and poems. Choose a literary work in which a character views the past with such feelings as reverence, bitterness, or longing. Show with clear evidence from the work how the character's view of the past is used to develop a theme in the work. You may base your essay on a work by one of the following authors, or you may choose a work of another author of comparable literary excellence:

1977, #2. In some novels and plays certain parallel or recurring events prove to be significant. In an essay, describe the major similarities and differences in a sequence of parallel or recurring events in a novel or play and discuss the significance of such events. Do not merely summarize the plot.

1978. Choose an implausible or strikingly unrealistic incident or character in a work of fiction or drama of recognized literary merit. Write an essay that explains how the incident or character is related to the more realistic or plausible elements in the rest of the work. Avoid plot summary.

1979. Choose a complex and important character in a novel or a play of recognized literary merit who might on the basis of the character's actions alone be considered evil or immoral. In a well-organized essay, explain both how and why the full presentation of the character in the work makes us react more sympathetically than we otherwise might. Avoid plot summary.

1980. A recurring theme in literature is the classic war between a passion and responsibility. For instance, a personal cause, a love, a desire for revenge, a determination to redress a wrong, or some other emotion or drive may conflict with moral duty. Choose a literary work in which a character confronts the demands of a private passion that conflicts with his or her responsibilities. In a well-written essay show clearly the nature of the conflict, its effects upon the character, and its significance to the work.

1981. The meaning of some literary works is often enhanced by sustained allusion to myths, the Bible, or other works of literature. Select a literary work that makes use of such a sustained reference. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain the allusion that predominates in the work and analyze how it enhances the work's meaning.

1982. In great literature, no scene of violence exists for its own sake. Choose a work of literary merit that confronts the reader or audience with a scene or scenes of violence. In a well-organized essay, explain how the scene or scenes contribute to the meaning of the complete work. Avoid plot summary.

1982 Bulletin #1. "The struggle to achieve dominance over others frequently appears in fiction." Choose a novel in which such a struggle for dominance occurs, and write an essay showing for what purposes the author uses the struggle. Do not merely retell the story.

1982 Bulletin #2. "In many plays a character has a misconception of himself or his world. Destroying or perpetuating this illusion contributes to a central theme of the play." Choose a play with a major character to whom this statement applies, and write an essay in which you consider the following:

- (1) What the character's illusion is and how it differs from reality as presented in the play.
- (2) How the destruction or perpetuation of the illusion develops a theme of the play.

Do not merely retell the story.

1983. From a novel or play of literary merit, select an important character who is a villain. Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze the nature of the character's villainy and show how it enhances meaning in the work. Do not merely summarize the plot.

1984. Select a line or so of poetry, or a moment or scene in a novel, epic poem, or play that you find especially memorable. Write an essay in which you identify the line or the passage, explain its relationship to the work in which it is found, and analyze the reasons for its effectiveness.

1985. A critic has said that one important measure of a superior work of literature is its ability to produce in the reader a healthy confusion of pleasure and disquietude. Select a literary work that produces this "healthy confusion." Write an essay in which you explain the sources of the "pleasure and disquietude" experienced by the readers of the work.

1986. Some works of literature use the element of time in a distinct way. The chronological sequence of events may be altered, or time may be suspended or accelerated. Choose a novel, an epic, or a play of recognized literary merit and show how the author's manipulation of time contributes to the effectiveness of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

1987. Some novels and plays seem to advocate changes in social or political attitudes or in traditions. Choose such a novel or play and note briefly the particular attitudes or traditions that the author apparently wishes to modify. Then analyze the techniques the author uses to influence the reader's or audience's views. Avoid plot summary.

1988. Choose a distinguished novel or play in which some of the most significant events are mental or psychological; for example, awakenings, discoveries, changes in consciousness. In a well-organized essay, describe how the author manages to give these internal events the sense of excitement, suspense, and climax usually associated with external action. Do not merely summarize the plot.

1989. In questioning the value of literary realism, Flannery O'Connor has written, "I am interested in making a good case for distortion because I am coming to believe that it is the only way to make people see." Write an essay in which you "make a good case for distortion," as distinct from literary realism. Analyze how important elements of the work you choose are "distorted" and explain how these distortions contribute to the effectiveness of the work. Avoid plot summary.

1990. Choose a novel or play that depicts a conflict between a parent (or a parental figure) and a son or daughter. Write an essay in which you analyze the sources of the conflict and explain how the conflict contributes to the meaning of the work. Avoid plot summary.



1991. Many plays and novels use contrasting places (for example, two countries, two cities or towns, two houses, or the land and the sea) to represent opposed forces or ideas that are central to the meaning of the work. Choose a novel or play that contrasts two such places. Write an essay explaining how the places differ, what each place represents, and how their contrast contributes to the meaning of the work.

1992. In a novel or play, a confidant (male) or a confidante (female) is a character, often a friend or relative of the hero or heroine, whose role is to be present when the hero or heroine needs a sympathetic listener to confide in. Frequently the result is, as Henry James remarked, that the confidant or confidante can be as much “the reader’s friend as the protagonist’s.” However, the author sometimes uses this character for other purposes as well. Choose a confidant or confidante from a novel or play of recognized literary merit and write an essay in which you discuss the various ways this character functions in the work. You may write your essay on one of the following novels or plays or on another of comparable quality. Do not write on a poem or short story.

1993. “The true test of comedy is that it shall awaken thoughtful laughter.” Choose a novel, play, or long poem in which a scene or character awakens “thoughtful laughter” in the reader. Write an essay in which you show why this laughter is “thoughtful” and how it contributes to the meaning of the work.

1994. In some works of literature, a character who appears briefly, or does not appear at all, is a significant presence. Choose a novel or play of literary merit and write an essay in which you show how such a character functions in the work. You may wish to discuss how the character affects action, theme, or the development of other characters. Avoid plot summary.

1995. Writers often highlight the values of a culture or a society by using characters who are alienated from that culture or society because of gender, race, class, or creed. Choose a novel or a play in which such a character plays a significant role and show how that character’s alienation reveals the surrounding society’s assumptions or moral values.

1996. The British novelist Fay Weldon offers this observation about happy endings. “The writers, I do believe, who get the best and most lasting response from their readers are the writers who offer a happy ending through moral development. By a happy ending, I do not mean mere fortunate events—a marriage or a last minute rescue from death—but some kind of spiritual reassessment or moral reconciliation, even with the self, even at death.” Choose a novel or play that has the kind of ending Weldon describes. In a well-written essay, identify the “spiritual reassessment or moral reconciliation” evident in the ending and explain its significance in the work as a whole.

1997. Novels and plays often include scenes of weddings, funerals, parties, and other social occasions. Such scenes may reveal the values of the characters and the society in which they live. Select a novel or play that includes such a scene and, in a focused essay, discuss the contribution the scene makes to the meaning of the work as a whole. You may choose a work from the list below or another novel or play of literary merit.

1998. In his essay “Walking,” Henry David Thoreau offers the following assessment of literature:

In literature it is only the wild that attracts us. Dullness is but another name for tameness. It is the uncivilized free and wild thinking in *Hamlet* and *The Iliad*, in all scriptures and mythologies, not learned in schools, that delights us.

From the works that you have studied in school, choose a novel, play, or epic poem that you may initially have thought was conventional and tame but that you now value for its “uncivilized free and wild thinking.” Write an essay in which you explain what constitutes its “uncivilized free and wild thinking” and how that thinking is central to the value of the work as a whole. Support your ideas with specific references to the work you choose.

1999. The eighteenth-century British novelist Laurence Sterne wrote, “No body, but he who has felt it, can conceive what a plaguing thing it is to have a man’s mind torn asunder by two projects of equal strength, both obstinately pulling in a contrary direction at the same time.”

From a novel or play choose a character (not necessarily the protagonist) whose mind is pulled in conflicting directions by two compelling desires, ambitions, obligations, or influences. Then, in a well-organized essay, identify each of the two conflicting forces and explain how this conflict with one character illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. You may use one of the novels or plays listed below or another novel or work of similar literary quality.

2000. Many works of literature not readily identified with the mystery or detective story genre nonetheless involve the investigation of a mystery. In these works, the solution to the mystery may be less important than the knowledge gained in the process of its investigation. Choose a novel or play in which one or more of the characters confront a mystery. Then write an essay in which you identify the mystery and explain how the investigation illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

2001. One definition of madness is “mental delusion or the eccentric behavior arising from it.” But Emily Dickinson wrote

Much madness is divinest Sense—  
To a discerning Eye—

Novelists and playwrights have often seen madness with a “discerning Eye.” Select a novel or play in which a character’s apparent madness or irrational behavior plays an important role. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain what this delusion or eccentric behavior consists of and how it might be judged reasonable. Explain the significance of the “madness” to the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

2002. Morally ambiguous characters – characters whose behavior discourages readers from identifying them as purely evil or purely good – are at the heart of many works of literature. Choose a novel or play in which a morally ambiguous character plays a pivotal role. Then write an essay in which you explain how the character can be viewed as morally ambiguous and why his or her moral ambiguity is significant to the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

2002, Form B. Often in literature, a character’s success in achieving goals depends on keeping a secret and divulging it only at the right moment, if at all. Choose a novel or play of literary merit that requires a character to keep a secret. In a well-organized essay, briefly explain the necessity for secrecy and how the character’s choice to reveal or keep the secret affects the plot and contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole. You may select a work from the list below, or you may choose another work of recognized literary merit suitable to the topic. Do NOT write about a short story, poem, or film.

2003. According to critic Northrop Frye, “Tragic heroes are so much the highest points in their human landscape that they seem the inevitable conductors of the power about them, great trees more likely to be struck by lightning than a clump of grass. Conductors may of course be instruments as well as victims of the divisive lightning.” Select a novel or play in which a tragic figure functions as an instrument of the suffering of others. Then write an essay in which you explain how the suffering brought upon others by that figure contributes to the tragic vision of the work as a whole.

2003, Form B. Novels and plays often depict characters caught between colliding cultures -- national, regional, ethnic, religious, institutional. Such collisions can call a character’s sense of identity into question. Select a novel or play in which a character responds to such a cultural collision. Then write a well-organized essay in which you describe the character’s response and explain its relevance to the work as a whole.

2004. Critic Roland Barthes has said, “Literature is the question minus the answer.” Choose a novel, or play, and, considering Barthes’ observation, write an essay in which you analyze a central question the work raises and the extent to which it offers answers. Explain how the author’s treatment of this question affects your understanding of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

2004, Form B. The most important themes in literature are sometimes developed in scenes in which a death or deaths take place. Choose a novel or play and write a well-organized essay in which you show how a specific death scene helps to illuminate the meaning of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

2005. In Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening* (1899), protagonist Edna Pontellier is said to possess “That outward existence which conforms, the inward life that questions.” In a novel or play that you have studied, identify a character who outwardly conforms while questioning inwardly. Then write an essay in which you analyze how this tension between outward conformity and inward questioning contributes to the meaning of the work. Avoid mere plot summary.

2005, Form B. One of the strongest human drives seems to be a desire for power. Write an essay in which you discuss how a character in a novel or a drama struggles to free himself or herself from the power of others or seeks to gain power over others. Be sure to demonstrate in your essay how the author uses this power struggle to enhance the meaning of the work.

2006. Many writers use a country setting to establish values within a work of literature. For example, the country may be a place of virtue and peace or one of primitivism and ignorance. Choose a novel or play in which such a setting plays a significant role. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the country setting functions in the work as a whole.

2006, Form B. In many works of literature, a physical journey – the literal movement from one place to another – plays a central role. Choose a novel, play, or epic poem in which a physical journey is an important element and discuss how the journey adds to the meaning of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

2007. In many works of literature, past events can affect, positively or negatively, the present activities, attitudes, or values of a character. Choose a novel or play in which a character must contend with some aspect of the past, either personal or societal. Then write an essay in which you show how the character’s relationship to the past contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

2007, Form B. Works of literature often depict acts of betrayal. Friends and even family may betray a protagonist; main characters may likewise be guilty of treachery or may betray their own values. Select a novel or play that includes such acts of betrayal. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze the nature of the betrayal and show how it contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

2008. In a literary work, a minor character, often known as a foil, possesses traits that emphasize, by contrast or comparison, the distinctive characteristics and qualities of the main character. For example, the ideas or behavior of a minor character might be used to highlight the weaknesses or strengths of the main character. Choose a novel or play in which a minor character serves as a foil for the main character. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the relation between the minor character and the major character illuminates the meaning of the work.

2008, Form B. In some works of literature, childhood and adolescence are portrayed as times graced by innocence and a sense of wonder; in other works, they are depicted as times of tribulation and terror. Focusing on a single novel or play, explain how its representation of childhood or adolescence shapes the meaning of the work as a whole.

2009. A symbol is an object, action, or event that represents something or that creates a range of associations beyond itself. In literary works a symbol can express an idea, clarify meaning, or enlarge literal meaning. Select a novel or play and, focusing on one symbol, write an essay analyzing how that symbol functions in the work and what it reveals about the characters or themes of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

2009, Form B. Many works of literature deal with political or social issues. Choose a novel or play that focuses on a political or social issue. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the author uses literary elements to explore this issue and explain how the issue contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

2010. Palestinian American literary theorist and cultural critic Edward Said has written that “Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted.” Yet Said has also said that exile can become “a potent, even enriching” experience. Select a novel, play, or epic in which a character experiences such a rift and becomes cut off from “home,” whether that home is the character’s birthplace, family, homeland, or other special place. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the character’s experience with exile is both alienating and enriching, and how this experience illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

2010, Form B. “You can leave home all you want, but home will never leave you.” —Sonsyrea Tate  
Sonsyrea Tate’s statement suggests that “home” may be conceived of as a dwelling, a place, or a state of mind. It may have positive or negative associations, but in either case, it may have a considerable influence on an individual. Choose a novel or play in which a central character leaves home yet finds that home remains significant. Write a well-developed essay in which you analyze the importance of “home” to this character and the reasons for its continuing influence. Explain how the character’s idea of home illuminates the larger meaning of the work. Do not merely summarize the plot.

# Literary Analysis Scoring Guide

- 9-8** With apt and specific references to the story, these well-organized and well-written essays clearly analyze how \_\_\_\_\_ uses literary techniques to \_\_\_\_\_. The best of these essays will acknowledge the complexity of this \_\_\_\_\_. While not without flaws, these papers will demonstrate an understanding of the text as well as consistent control over the elements of effective composition. These writers read with perception and express their ideas with clarity and skill.
- 7-6** These papers also analyze how \_\_\_\_\_ uses literary techniques to \_\_\_\_\_, but they are less incisive, developed, or aptly supported than papers in the highest ranges. They deal accurately with technique as the means by which a writer \_\_\_\_\_, but they are less effective or less thorough in their analysis than are the 9-8 essays. These essays demonstrate the writer's ability to express ideas clearly, but they do so with less maturity and precision than the best papers. Generally, 7 papers present a more developed analysis and a more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than do essays scored 6.
- 5** These essays are superficial. They respond to the assignment without important errors in composition, but they may miss the complexity of \_\_\_\_\_'s use of literary techniques and offer a perfunctory analysis of how those techniques are used to \_\_\_\_\_. Often, the analysis is vague, mechanical, or overly generalized. While the writing is adequate to convey the writer's thoughts, these essays are typically pedestrian, not as well conceived, organized, or developed as upper-half papers. Usually, they reveal simplistic thinking and/or immature writing.
- 4-3** These lower-half papers reflect an incomplete understanding of the \_\_\_\_\_ (story, passage, essay, poem, etc.) and fail to respond adequately to the question. The discussion of how \_\_\_\_\_ uses literary techniques to \_\_\_\_\_ may be inaccurate or unclear, misguided or undeveloped; these papers may paraphrase rather than analyze. The analysis of technique will likely be meager and unconvincing. Generally, the writing demonstrates weak control of such elements as diction, organization, syntax, or grammar. These essays typically contain recurrent stylistic flaws and/or misreadings and lack of persuasive evidence from the text.
- 2-1** These essays compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4-3 range. They seriously misunderstand the \_\_\_\_\_ or fail to respond to the question. Frequently, they are unacceptably brief. Often poorly written on several counts, they may contain many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics. Although some attempt may have been made to answer the question, the writer's views typically are presented with little clarity, organization, coherence, or supporting evidence. Essays that are especially inexact, vacuous, and/or mechanically unsound should be scored 1.
- 0** This is a response with no more than a reference to the task or no response at all.

FROM  
**CRY, THE BELOVED COUNTRY**  
by ALAN PATON

- 1**            THERE is a lovely road that runs from Ixopo into the hills. These hills are grass-covered and rolling, and they are lovely beyond any singing of it. The road climbs seven miles into them, to Carisbrooke; and from there, if there is no mist, you look down on one of the fairest valleys of Africa. About you there is grass and bracken and you may hear the forlorn crying of the titihoya, one of the birds of the veld. Below you is the valley of the Umzimkulu, on its journey from the Drakensberg to the sea; and beyond and behind the river, great hill after great hill; and beyond and behind them, the mountains of Ingeli and East Griqualand.
- 2**            The grass is rich and matted, you cannot see the soil. It holds the rain and the mist, and they seep into the ground, feeding the streams in every kloof. It is well-tended, and not too many cattle feed upon it; not too many fires burn it, laying bare the soil. Stand unshod upon it, for the ground is holy, being even as it came from the Creator. Keep it, guard it, care for it, for it keeps men, guards men, cares for men. Destroy it and man is destroyed.
- 3**            Where you stand the grass is rich and matted, you cannot see the soil. But the rich green hills break down. They fall to the valley below, and falling, change their nature. For they grow red and bare; they cannot hold the rain and mist, and the streams are dry in the kloofs. Too many cattle feed upon the grass, and too many fires have burned it. Stand shod upon it, for it is coarse and sharp, and the stones cut under the feet. It is not kept, or guarded, or cared for, it no longer keeps men, guards men, cares for men. The titihoya does not cry here any more.
- 4**            The great red hills stand desolate, and the earth has torn away like flesh. The lightning flashes over them, the clouds pour down upon them, the dead streams come to life, full of the red blood of the earth. Down in the valleys women scratch the soil that is left, and the maize hardly reaches the height of a man. They are valleys of old men and old women, of mothers and children. The men are away, the young men and the girls are away. The soil cannot keep them any more.



## *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens

<sup>1</sup> It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way -- in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

<sup>2</sup> There were a king with a large jaw and a queen with a plain face, on the throne of England; there were a king with a large jaw and a queen with a fair face, on the throne of France. In both countries it was clearer than crystal to the lords of the State preserves of loaves and fishes, that things in general were settled for ever.

<sup>3</sup> It was the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five. Spiritual revelations were conceded to England at that favoured period, as at this. Mrs. Southcott had recently attained her five-and-twentieth blessed birthday, of whom a prophetic private in the Life Guards had heralded the sublime appearance by announcing that arrangements were made for the swallowing up of London and Westminster. Even the Cock-lane ghost had been laid only a round dozen of years, after rapping out its messages, as the spirits of this very year last past (supernaturally deficient in originality) rapped out theirs. Mere messages in the earthly order of events had lately come to the English Crown and People, from a congress of British subjects in America: which, strange to relate, have proved more important to the human race than any communications yet received through any of the chickens of the Cock-lane brood.

<sup>4</sup> France, less favoured on the whole as to matters spiritual than her sister of the shield and trident, rolled with exceeding smoothness down hill, making paper money and spending it. Under the guidance of her Christian pastors, she entertained herself, besides, with such humane achievements as sentencing a youth to have his hands cut off, his tongue torn out with pincers, and his body burned alive, because he had not kneeled down in the rain to do honour to a dirty procession of monks which passed within his view, at a distance of some fifty or sixty yards. It is likely enough that, rooted in the woods of France and Norway, there were growing trees, when that sufferer was put to death, already marked by the Woodman, Fate, to come down and be sawn into boards, to make a certain movable framework with a sack and a knife in it, terrible in history. It is likely enough that in the rough outhouses of some tillers of the heavy lands adjacent to Paris, there were sheltered from the weather that very day, rude carts, bespattered with rustic mire, snuffed about

by pigs, and roosted in by poultry, which the Farmer, Death, had already set apart to be his tumbrels of the Revolution. But that Woodman and that Farmer, though they work unceasingly, work silently, and no one heard them as they went about with muffled tread: the rather, forasmuch as to entertain any suspicion that they were awake, was to be atheistical and traitorous.

<sup>5</sup> In England, there was scarcely an amount of order and protection to justify much national boasting. Daring burglaries by armed men, and highway robberies, took place in the capital itself every night; families were publicly cautioned not to go out of town without removing their furniture to upholsterers' warehouses for security; the highwayman in the dark was a City tradesman in the light, and, being recognised and challenged by his fellow-tradesman whom he stopped in his character of "the Captain," gallantly shot him through the head and rode away; the mall was waylaid by seven robbers, and the guard shot three dead, and then got shot dead himself by the other four, "in consequence of the failure of his ammunition:" after which the mall was robbed in peace; that magnificent potentate, the Lord Mayor of London, was made to stand and deliver on Turnham Green, by one highwayman, who despoiled the illustrious creature in sight of all his retinue; prisoners in London gaols fought battles with their turnkeys, and the majesty of the law fired blunderbusses in among them, loaded with rounds of shot and ball; thieves snipped off diamond crosses from the necks of noble lords at Court drawing-rooms; musketeers went into St. Giles's, to search for contraband goods, and the mob fired on the musketeers, and the musketeers fired on the mob, and nobody thought any of these occurrences much out of the common way. In the midst of them, the hangman, ever busy and ever worse than useless, was in constant requisition; now, stringing up long rows of miscellaneous criminals; now, hanging a housebreaker on Saturday who had been taken on Tuesday; now, burning people in the hand at Newgate by the dozen, and now burning pamphlets at the door of Westminster Hall; to-day, taking the life of an atrocious murderer, and to-morrow of a wretched pilferer who had robbed a farmer's boy of sixpence.

<sup>6</sup> All these things, and a thousand like them, came to pass in and close upon the dear old year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five. Environed by them, while the Woodman and the Farmer worked unheeded, those two of the large jaws, and those other two of the plain and the fair faces, trod with stir enough, and carried their divine rights with a high hand. Thus did the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five conduct their Greatnesses, and myriads of small creatures -- the creatures of this chronicle among the rest -- along the roads that lay before them.

## *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

<sup>1</sup> Maycomb was an old town, but it was a tired old town when I first knew it. In rainy weather the streets turned to red slop; grass grew on the sidewalks, the courthouse sagged in the square. Somehow, it was hotter then: a black dog suffered on a summer's day; bony mules hitched to Hoover carts flicked flies in the sweltering shade of the live oaks on the square. Men's stiff collars wilted by nine in the morning. Ladies bathed before noon, after their three-o'clock naps, and by nightfall were like soft teacakes with frostings of sweat and sweet talcum.

<sup>2</sup> People moved slowly then. They ambled across the square, shuffled in and out of the stores around it, took their time about everything. A day was twenty-four hours long but seemed longer. There was no hurry, for there was nowhere to go, nothing to buy and no money to buy it with, nothing to see outside the boundaries of Maycomb County. But it was a time of vague optimism for some of the people: Maycomb County had recently been told that it had nothing to fear but fear itself.

<sup>3</sup> We lived on the main residential street in town— Atticus, Jem and I, plus Calpurnia our cook. Jem and I found our father satisfactory: he played with us, read to us, and treated us with courteous detachment.

<sup>4</sup> Calpurnia was something else again. She was all angles and bones; she was nearsighted; she squinted; her hand was wide as a bed slat and twice as hard. She was always ordering me out of the kitchen, asking me why I couldn't behave as well as Jem when she knew he was older, and calling me home when I wasn't ready to come. Our battles were epic and one-sided. Calpurnia always won, mainly because Atticus always took her side. She had been with us ever since Jem was born, and I had felt her tyrannical presence as long as I could remember.

<sup>5</sup> Our mother died when I was two, so I never felt her absence. She was a Graham from Montgomery; Atticus met her when he was first elected to the state legislature. He was middle-aged then, she was fifteen years his junior. Jem was the product of their first year of marriage; four years later I was born, and two years later our mother died from a sudden heart attack. They said it ran in her family. I did not miss her, but I think Jem did. He remembered her clearly, and sometimes in the middle of a game he would sigh at length, then go off and play by himself behind the car-house. When he was like that, I knew better than to bother him.

<sup>6</sup> When I was almost six and Jem was nearly ten, our summertime boundaries (within calling distance of Calpurnia) were Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose's house two doors to the north of us, and the Radley Place three doors to the south. We were never tempted to break them. The Radley Place was inhabited by an unknown entity the mere description of whom was enough to make us behave for days on end; Mrs. Dubose was plain hell.

# *Pride and Prejudice*

by Jane Austen

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.

"My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?"

Mr. Bennet replied that he had not.

"But it is," returned she; "for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it."

Mr. Bennet made no answer.

"Do not you want to know who has taken it?" cried his wife impatiently.

"You want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it."

This was invitation enough.

"Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four to see the place, and was so much delighted with it, that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately; that he is to take possession before Michaelmas, and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week."

"What is his name?"

"Bingley."

"Is he married or single?"

"Oh! single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!"

"How so? how can it affect them?"

"My dear Mr. Bennet," replied his wife, "how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them."

"Is that his design in settling here?"

"Design! nonsense, how can you talk so! But it is very likely that he *may* fall in love with one of them, and therefore you must visit him as soon as he comes."

"I see no occasion for that. You and the girls may go, or you may send them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better, for as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley might like you the best of the party."

"My dear, you flatter me. I certainly *have* had my share of beauty, but I do not pretend to be anything extraordinary now. When a woman has five grown-

up daughters she ought to give over thinking of her own beauty."

"In such cases a woman has not often much beauty to think of."

"But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighbourhood."

"It is more than I engage for, I assure you."

"But consider your daughters. Only think what an establishment it would be for one of them. Sir William and Lady Lucas are determined to go, merely on that account, for in general, you know, they visit no new-comers. Indeed you must go, for it will be impossible for us to visit him if you do not."

"You are over-scrupulous surely. I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying whichever he chuses of the girls: though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy."

"I desire you will do no such thing. Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good-humoured as Lydia. But you are always giving *her* the preference."

"They have none of them much to recommend them," replied he; "they are all silly and ignorant, like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters."

"Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way! You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves."

"You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least."

"Ah! you do not know what I suffer."

"But I hope you will get over it, and live to see many young men of four thousand a year come into the neighbourhood."

"It will be no use to us if twenty such should come, since you will not visit them."

"Depend upon it, my dear, that when there are twenty, I will visit them all."

Mr. Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three-and-twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character. *Her* mind was less difficult to develope. She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news.

## The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams

Far out in the uncharted backwaters of the unfashionable end of the western spiral arm of the Galaxy lies a small unregarded yellow sun.

Orbiting this at a distance of roughly ninety-two million miles is an utterly insignificant little blue green planet whose ape-descended life forms are so amazingly primitive that they still think digital watches are a pretty neat idea.

This planet has — or rather had — a problem, which was this: most of the people on it were unhappy for pretty much of the time. Many solutions were suggested for this problem, but most of these were largely concerned with the movements of small green pieces of paper, which is odd because on the whole it wasn't the small green pieces of paper that were unhappy.

And so the problem remained; lots of the people were mean, and most of them were miserable, even the ones with digital watches.

Many were increasingly of the opinion that they'd all made a big mistake in coming down from the trees in the first place. And some said that even the trees had been a bad move, and that no one should ever have left the oceans.

And then, one Thursday, nearly two thousand years after one man had been nailed to a tree for saying how great it would be to be nice to people for a change, one girl sitting on her own in a small cafe in Rickmansworth suddenly realized what it was that had been going wrong all this time, and she finally knew how the world could be made a good and happy place. This time it was right, it would work, and no one would have to get nailed to anything.

Sadly, however, before she could get to a phone to tell anyone about it, a terribly stupid catastrophe occurred, and the idea was lost forever.

This is not her story.

But it is the story of that terrible stupid catastrophe and some of its consequences.

It is also the story of a book, a book called *The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* — not an Earth book, never published on Earth, and until the terrible catastrophe occurred, never seen or heard of by any Earthman.

Nevertheless, a wholly remarkable book.

in fact it was probably the most remarkable book ever to come out of the great publishing houses of Ursa Minor — of which no Earthman had ever heard either.

Not only is it a wholly remarkable book, it is also a highly successful one — more popular than the Celestial Home Care Omnibus, better selling than Fifty More Things to do in Zero Gravity, and more controversial than Oolon Colluphid's trilogy of philosophical blockbusters *Where God Went Wrong*, *Some More of God's Greatest Mistakes* and *Who is this God Person Anyway?*

In many of the more relaxed civilizations on the Outer Eastern Rim of the Galaxy, the *Hitch Hiker's Guide* has already supplanted the great *Encyclopedia Galactica* as the standard repository of all knowledge and wisdom, for though it has many omissions and contains much that is apocryphal, or at least wildly inaccurate, it scores over the older, more pedestrian work in two important respects.

First, it is slightly cheaper; and secondly it has the words "Don't Panic" inscribed in large friendly letters on its cover.

But the story of this terrible, stupid Thursday, the story of its extraordinary consequences, and the story of how these consequences are inextricably intertwined with this remarkable book begins very simply.

It begins with a house.

## ***The Gunslinger*** by Stephen King

The man in black fled across the desert, and the gunslinger followed.

The desert was the apotheosis of all deserts, huge, standing to the sky for what looked like eternity in all directions. It was white and blinding and waterless and without feature save for the faint, cloudy haze of the mountains which sketched themselves on the horizon and the devil-grass which brought sweet dreams, nightmares, death. An occasional tombstone sign pointed the way, for once the drifted track that cut its way through the thick crust of alkali had been a highway. Coaches and buckas had followed it. The world had moved on since then. The world had emptied.

The gunslinger had been struck by a momentary dizziness, a kind of yawing sensation that made the entire world seem ephemeral, almost a thing that could be looked through. It passed and, like the world upon whose hide he walked, he moved on. He passed the miles stolidly, not hurrying, not loafing. A hide waterbag was slung around his middle like a bloated sausage. It was almost full. He had progressed through the khaf over many years, and had reached perhaps the fifth level. Had he been a Manni holy man, he might not have even been thirsty; he could have watched his own body dehydrate with clinical, detached attention, watering its crevices and dark inner hollows only when his logic told him it must be done. He was not a Manni, however, nor a follower of the Man Jesus, and considered himself in no way holy. He was just an ordinary pilgrim, in other words, and all he could say with real certainty was that he was thirsty. And even so, he had no particular urge to drink. In a vague way, all this pleased him. It was what the country required, it was a thirsty country, and he had in his long life been nothing if not adaptable.

Below the waterbag were his guns, carefully weighted to his hands; a plate had been added to each when they had come to him from his father, who had been lighter

and not so tall. The two belts crisscrossed above his crotch. The holsters were oiled too deeply for even this Philistine sun to crack. The stocks of the guns were sandalwood, yellow and finely grained. Rawhide tiedowns held the holsters loosely to his thighs, and they swung a bit with his step; they had rubbed away the bluing of his jeans (and thinned the cloth) in a pair of arcs that looked almost like smiles. The brass casings of the cartridges looped into the gunbelts heliographed in the sun. There were fewer now. The leather made subtle creaking noises.

His shirt, the no-color of rain or dust, was open at the throat, with a rawhide thong dangling loosely in hand-punched eyelets. His hat was gone. So was the horn he had once carried; gone for years, that horn, spilled from the hand of a dying friend, and he missed them both.

He breasted a gently rising dune (although there was no sand here; the desert was hardpan, and even the harsh winds that blew when dark came raised only an aggravating harsh dust like scouring powder) and saw the kicked remains of a tiny campfire on the lee side, the side the sun would quit earliest. Small signs like this, once more affirming the man in black's possible humanity, never failed to please him. His lips stretched in the pitted, flaked remains of his face. The grin was gruesome, painful. He squatted.

His quarry had burned the devil-grass, of course. It was the only thing out here that would burn. It burned with a greasy, flat light, and it burned slow. Border dwellers had told him that devils lived even in the flames. They burned it but would not look into the light. They said the devils hypnotized, beckoned, would eventually draw the one who looked into the fires. And the next man foolish enough to look into the fire might see you.