

MsEffie’s List of Advanced Placement® Language and Composition Prompts (1981 to 2025)*

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| YEAR | Question 1 | Question 2 | Question 3 |
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| 1981 | “The Rattler”- analyze effect on reader – consider organization, point of view, language, detail. | George Bernard Shaw letter – describe writer’s attitude toward mother & her cremation – diction and detail | Thomas Szasz – argue for or against his position on the struggle for definition. Use readings, study, or experience. |
| 1982 | A reading on happiness – summarize his reasons for his opinion and explain why you agree or not with his opinion | Analyze the strategies or devices (organization, diction, tone, detail) that make Gov. Stevenson’s Cat Veto argument effective. | Describe a place, conveying feeling through concrete and specific detail. |
| 1983 | A quote on change - Select a change for the better that has occurred or that you want to occur; analyze its desirable and undesirable effects | Excerpt from Thomas Carlyle’s <i>Past and Present</i> – define Carlyle’s attitude toward work and analyze how he uses language to convince.... | Agree or disagree with the position in the passage on living in an era of language inflation by considering the ethical and social consequences of language inflation. |
| 1984 | Explain the nature and importance of two or three means by which you keep track of time and discuss how these means reveal your person. (Hint given about “inner clocks.”) | Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Milton – two very short quotes on freedom – describe the concept of freedom in each; discuss the differences. | A passage on a boxing match between Benny Paret, a Cuban, and Emile Griffith – Analyze how diction, syntax, imagery, and tone produce an effect on the reader. |
| 1985 | Contrast stylistic and rhetorical differences between two passages on the Soviet Launch of the first space satellite | Discuss the probable reasons for an anonymous writer’s additions and deletions and the ways in which those revisions change the effect of the paragraph. Two drafts that record the writer’s thoughts on how the experience of war affected his attitude toward language. | Defend a position or one or more issues raised in the passage about the state of television in the United States. |
| 1986 | Explain how two passages by N. Scott Momaday and Dee Brown, which describe similar landscapes, reveal the differences in the authors’ purposes. Consider diction, syntax, imagery, and tone. | Choose one or more pairs of words from a list and discuss and elaborate on the distinctions between the paired words. Consider how, when, why, and by whom each word might be used. | Evaluate the truth of the assertion in the quotation that human nature wants patterns, standards, and structures of behavior. |
| 1987 | Agree or disagree with E. M. Forster’s view that personal relations are more important than causes or patriotism. | Analyze how Zora Neale Hurston enriches our sense of her childhood world through her diction and manipulation of point of view. | Describe some major features of the language used in one specific group – occupational, ethnic, social, or age, etc. Indicate the purpose these features serve or what influences they reflect. |
| 1988 | Evaluate Alexis De Tocqueville’s assertions about democracy and aristocracy and his assertion that democracy “throws [man] back forever upon himself alone.” | Analyze Frederick Douglass’ language, especially the figures of speech and syntax, to convey his states of mind upon escaping slavery and arriving in New York in 1838. | Pretend to contribute to a magazine or newspaper; write an article describing a place you know well that might be of interest to readers. Define the significance, use descriptive detail to make attitude clear. |
| 1989 | Argue for or against the validity of the implied criticism of a church bulletin [text given] reprinted without other comment in a magazine under the heading “The Religious Life.” | Describe the rhetorical purpose of Martin Luther King’s <i>Why We Can’t Wait</i> . Analyze its stylistic, narrative, and persuasive devices. | Missing |
| 1990 | From an autobiography of a professional woman pilot in Africa, analyze how the author’s juxtaposition of ideas, choice of details, and other aspects of style reveal her personality. | Analyze stylistic and rhetorical differences between two nineteenth century descriptions of the Galapagos Islands | Vividly and concretely describe one person seen at two different times or in two different situations so readers understand the difference in your attitude, thus proving perceptions of people differ according to people’s attitudes and circumstances |
| 1991 | Analyze the language and rhetorical devices Igor Stravinsky uses to convey his point of view about orchestra conductors. | Analyze how Richard Rodriguez’s presentation of the events in the passage suggests his attitude toward his family and himself. Consider narrative structure, detail, manipulation of language, and tone. | Write a persuasive essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies the assertion that “For in much wisdom is much grief, and increase of knowledge is increase of sorrow” (Ecclesiastes). |

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| 1992 | Analyze Queen Elizabeth I's diction, imagery, and sentence structure to achieve her purpose in her speech to her troops at Tilbury, 1588. | Using your observation, experience, or reading, defend, challenge, or qualify Joseph Addison's assertion that men use ridicule to "laugh men out of virtue and good sense." | Considering the choice of the word "cripple" and other rhetorical features, such as tone, word choice, and rhetorical structure, analyze how Nancy Mairs, who has multiple sclerosis, presents herself. |
| 1993 | Compare the rhetorical strategies – such as arguments, assumptions, attitudes, diction – used by characters from Jane Austen (1813) and Charles Dickens (1865). Comment on both intended and probable effects of the proposals on the women being addressed | Defend, challenge, or qualify H. L. Mencken's views about the artist's relation to society. Refer to particular writers, composers, or other artists. | Read the paragraph for E. M. Forster's 1936 essay "My Wood." Define Forster's attitude toward the experience of owning property and analyze that attitude; consider Forster's word choice, manipulation of sentences, and use of Biblical Allusions |
| 1994 | From an excerpt of Sir George Savile's essay about King Charles II (1630 – 1685), define the attitude Savile would like us to adopt about Charles II and analyze the rhetorical strategies employed to promote that attitude. | Defend, challenge, or qualify Barbara Tuchman's claim that "wooden-headedness plays a remarkably large role ... in human affairs." Use evidence and/or your observations. (From <i>The March of Folly</i>) | Characterize and analyze Joan Didion's view of the Santa Ana winds. Consider her stylistic elements, such as diction, imagery, syntax, structure, tone, and selection of detail. |
| 1995 | In 1860, John Ruskin argued for giving precedence to the soldier rather than to the merchant or manufacturer. Evaluate his argument. (Excerpt included) | Analyze the rhetorical techniques Ellen Goodman uses to convey her attitude toward Phil, the subject of her piece, "The Company Man." | After reading his paragraph, defend, challenge, or qualify James Baldwin's ideas about the importance of language as a "key to identity" and social acceptance. Use your observation, experience, or readings. |
| 1996 | Read the passage from Lady Mary Wortley Montague's letter to her daughter. Analyze how Lady Mary (1689 – 1762) uses rhetorical strategies and stylistic devices to convey her views about the role knowledge played in the lives of women of her time. | Read the passage from <i>A Summer Life</i> and analyze some of the ways in which Gary Soto recreates the experience of his guilty six-year old self. Consider such devices as contrast, reputation, pacing, diction, and imagery. | Using your own knowledge and experience, defend, challenge, or qualify Lewis Lapham's view of "the American faith in money" from <i>Money and Class in America</i> . (25 line excerpt included.) |
| 1997 | Read the passage from Meena Alexander's <i>Fault Lines</i> and analyze how Alexander uses language to explore and represent her fractured identity. | Read the passage from the 1845 <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave</i> , noting such elements as syntax, figurative language, and selection of detail. Write an essay in which you identify stylistic elements that distinguish third paragraph from the rest of the passage and discuss how that difference is significant | Using your own critical understanding of contemporary society, agree or disagree with Neil Postman's assertion that Aldous Huxley's vision of society in <i>Brave New World</i> is more relevant today than is George Orwell's in 1984. |
| 1998 | Paying particular attention to tone, analyze the techniques Charles Lamb uses to decline William Wordsworth's invitation to visit him in the country. | From Henry James's novel <i>The Portrait of a Lady</i> , read the conversation between Madame Merle and Isabel Archer, noting their conflicting views about what constitutes the self. In a persuasive essay, demonstrate which of the two conceptions of the self has greater validity. Use specific evidence from your observation, experience or reading. | After reading the two letters between an executive of the Coca-Cola company and a representative of Grove Press, analyze the rhetorical strategies each writer uses to achieve his purpose and explain which letter offers the more persuasive case. |
| 1999 | After reading two passages about Florida's Okefenokee Swamp, analyze how the distinctive style of each reveals the purpose of its writer. | After reading the [3 columns long] opening from Jamaica Kincaid's essay, "On Seeing England for the First Time," analyze the rhetorical strategies Kincaid employs to convey her attitude toward England. | After thinking about the implications of the excerpt from <i>Antigone</i> , explore the validity of the assertion that "The only / Crime is pride." Use examples from your reading, observation, or experience. |
| 2000 | Eudora Welty recalls reading and books that influenced her craft as a writer. Analyze how Welty's language conveys intensity and value of reading. | George Orwell uses Gandhi to argue for choosing human imperfection over sainthood. Analyze how Orwell criticizes Gandhi's position & how Orwell develops his own position. | Paraphrase King Lear's comment that wealth covers sin and injustice. Defend, challenge, or qualify his view of the relationship between wealth and justice. |
| 2001 | George Eliot's letter to an American woman M. F. Peirce. Analyze the rhetorical strategies Eliot uses to establish her position about the development of a writer. | Analyze how Mary Oliver's style about owls conveys the complexity of her response to nature. | Support, refute, qualify Susan Sontag's claim that photography limits understanding of the world. Use appropriate evidence. |
| 2002 | Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address was a short speech in which he contemplated the effects of the Civil War and offered his vision for the future. Analyze the rhetorical strategies Lincoln used to achieve his purpose. | Analyze how Virginia Woolf uses language to convey the lasting significance of moments she recalls from her childhood spent in a seaside village in Cornwall, England. | Support, refute, or qualify Czech writer Milan Kundera's claims as expressed in an excerpt from <i>Testaments Betrayed</i> . Use appropriate evidence. |

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| 2003 | Defend, challenge, qualify Neal Gabler's assertion that entertainment has the capacity to ruin society. | Analyze the methods of Alfred Green's 1861 speech to persuade his fellow African Americans to join the Union forces. | Compare and contrast how John James Audubon and Annie Dillard each describe a flock of birds in flight and how they convey the birds' effect on the writer as observer. |
| 2004 | Analyze how the rhetorical strategies used by Lord Chesterfield in his letter to his son reveal his own values. | Choose a controversial local, national, or global issue with which you are familiar and use appropriate evidence in an essay that carefully considers the opposing positions on this controversy and proposes a solution or compromise. | Analyze how Richard Rodriguez uses contrasts between central Mexico and California to convey and explore his conflicting feelings in an excerpt from <i>Days of Obligation</i> . |
| 2005 | Passage from "Training for Statesmanship" by George Kennan. Select his most compelling observation and consider the extent to which that observation holds true. | A mock press release from <i>The Onion</i> . Analyze the strategies used in the article to satirize how products are marketed to consumers. | Peter Singer argues that prosperous people should donate to overseas aid organizations all money not needed for the basic requirements of life. Evaluate the pros and cons of his argument and indicate which position you find more persuasive. |
| 2005 Form B | Lecture delivered in Boston in 1832 by Maria Stewart, African American educator and writer. Analyze the rhetorical strategies Stewart uses to convey her position. | John Barry describes the complex mechanics of the <i>Mississippi River in Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How It Changed America</i> . Analyze how Barry communicates his fascination with the river to his readers. | Passage from <i>The Medusa and the Snail</i> by Lewis Thomas. Drawing on your own reading and experience, write an essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies Thomas's claims. |
| 2006 | Jennifer Price's essay examines the popularity of the pink plastic flamingo in the 1950s. Analyze how Price crafts the text to reveal her view of U. S. culture. | William Hazlitt's "On the Want of Money." Analyze the rhetorical strategies he uses to develop his position about money. | From talk radio to television, to popular magazines to Web blogs ordinary citizens, political figures, and entertainers express their opinions on a wide range of topics. Take a position on the value of such public statements of opinion. |
| 2006 Form B | In a well-written essay that draws upon your reading, experience, or observations for support, take a position on the issue of compulsory voting. | Passage from George Bernard Shaw's <i>Saint Joan</i> . Analyze the rhetorical strategies the Inquisitor uses to argue his case against Joan. | Passage by philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer. Write an essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies one of Schopenhauer's claims. |
| 2007 | First Synthesis – based on six sources, all about advertising. Develop a position on the effects of advertising and synthesize at least three of the sources for support. | In <i>Staying Put: Making a Home in a Restless World</i> , Scott Russell Sanders responds to an essay by Salman Rushdie, both of which discuss the effect of mass migrations. Analyze the strategies Sanders uses to develop his perspective about moving. | Develop a position on the ethics of offering incentives for charitable acts and support your position with evidence from your reading, observation, and/or experience. |
| 2007 Form B | Based on six sources concerning museum artifacts and decisions made to include a particular piece of art or an artifact. Develop a position on the most important considerations facing the person responsible for securing a new work of art or an artifact for a museum. Synthesize at least three of the sources for support. | In the <i>Introduction to Poison Penmanship: The Gentle Art of Muckraking</i> , Jessica Mitford says that it is an honor to be considered a muckraker. Do you agree or do you think that journalists who search out and expose real or apparent misconduct go too far in the pursuit of their stories. Explain your position. | Speech delivered by Wendell Phillips, a prominent white American abolitionist, praising Toussaint L'Ouverture, Haitian liberator. Analyze the strategies the speaker uses to praise his subject and move his audience. |
| 2008 | Based on seven sources concerning the elimination of the penny as the smallest American denomination. Develop a position on whether or not the penny should be eliminated and synthesize at least three of the sources for support. | Passage from John M. Barry's <i>The Great Influenza</i> . Analyze how Barry uses rhetorical strategies to characterize scientific research. | Some people argue that corporate partnerships are a necessity for cash-strapped schools. Others argue that schools should provide an environment free from ads and corporate influence. Using appropriate evidence, write an essay in which you evaluate the pros and cons of corporate sponsorship for schools and indicate why you find one position more persuasive than the other. |
| 2008 Form B | Based on six sources concerning a defined national school curriculum. Develop a position on whether or not there should be specific texts that all students of high school English should read. Synthesize at least three of the sources for support. | Passage from "America Needs Its Nerds" by Leonid Fridman. Analyze how Fridman develops his argument. | Read an excerpt from <i>The Decline of Radicalism</i> by Daniel Boorstin and consider the implications of the distinction Boorstin makes between dissent and disagreement. Defend, challenge, or qualify Boorstin's distinction. |

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| 2009 | Based on eight sources concerning space exploration. Develop a position about what issues should be considered most important in making decisions about space exploration and synthesize at least three of the sources for support. | Two passages from Edwin Wilson’s <i>The Future of Life</i> satirizing the language of two groups that hold opposing attitudes about environmentalism. Analyze how Wilson’s satire illustrates the unproductive nature of such discussions. | Write an essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies Horace’s assertion that the role of adversity (financial or political hardship, danger, misfortune, etc.) plays in developing a person’s character. Support your argument with evidence from your reading, observation, or experience |
| 2009 Form B | Based on seven sources concerning public education. Choose an issue related to the tension in schools between individuality and conformity. Write an essay in which you use this issue to argue the extent to which schools should support individuality or conformity. Synthesize at least three of the sources for support. | Passage from “The Indispensable Opposition” by Walter Lippmann. Analyze the strategies Lippmann uses to develop his argument. | Passage from <i>The Worst Years of Our Lives</i> by Barbara Ehrenreich, about life in the 1980s. Support, refute, or qualify Ehrenreich’s assertions about television. |
| 2010 | Based on six sources concerning information technology. Our daily lives seem to be saturated with television, computers, cell phones, personal digital assistants (PDAs), and MP3 players, etc. In an essay that synthesizes at least three of the sources for support, evaluate the most important factors that a school should consider before using particular technologies in curriculum and instruction. | Excerpt from letter from Benjamin Banneker, former slave, to Thomas Jefferson (1791). Write an essay that analyzes how Banneker uses rhetorical strategies to argue against slavery. | In his 2004 book, <i>Status Anxiety</i> , Alain de Botton argues that the chief aim of humorists is not merely to entertain but “to convey with impunity messages that might be dangerous or impossible to state directly.” Think about the implications of de Botton’s view of the role of humorists (cartoonists, stand-up comics, satirical writers, hosts of television programs, etc.). Then write an essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies de Botton’s claim. |
| 2010 Form B | Based on six sources concerning daylight savings time. Synthesize at least three of the sources into an essay that evaluates daylight saving time and offers a recommendation about its continued use. | Passage from <i>The Horizontal World</i> , Debra Marquart’s 2006 memoir about growing up in North Dakota. Analyze the strategies Marquart uses to characterize the upper Midwest. | The first Buy Nothing Day—a day on which people are urged to purchase no goods—was organized in Canada in 1992 as a way to increase awareness of excessive consumerism. Consider the implications of a day on which no goods are purchased. Then write an essay in which you develop a position on the establishment of an annual Buy Nothing Day. |
| 2011 | Based on seven sources concerning locavores, people who have decided to eat locally grown or produced products as much as possible, for sustainability and nutrition. Imagine that a community is considering organizing a locavore movement. In an essay that synthesizes at least three of the sources identify the key issues associated with the locavore movement and examine their implications for the community. | Speech by Florence Kelley (1859-1932), a United States social worker and reformer who fought successfully for child labor laws and improved conditions for working women, delivered before the convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association in Philadelphia on July 22, 1905. Analyze the rhetorical strategies Kelley uses to convey her message about child labor to her audience. | Passage from <i>Rights of Man</i> , a book written by the pamphleteer Thomas Paine in 1791. Born in England, Paine was an intellectual, a revolutionary, and a supporter of American independence from England. Write an essay that examines the extent to which Paine’s characterization of America holds true today. |
| 2011 Form B | Based on six sources concerning green living (practices that promote the conservation and wise use of natural resources). Synthesize at least three of the sources into an essay that develops a position on the extent to which government should be responsible for fostering green practices. | Letter written by Samuel Johnson in response to a woman who had asked him to obtain the archbishop of Canterbury’s patronage to have her son sent to the university. Write an essay in which you analyze how Johnson crafts his denial of the woman’s request. | American essayist and social critic H. L. Mencken (1880–1956) wrote, “The average man does not want to be free. He simply wants to be safe.” Examine the extent to which Mencken’s observation applies to contemporary society, supporting your position with appropriate evidence. |

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| <p>2012</p> | <p>Based on eight sources concerning the US Postal Service. Synthesize information from at least three of the sources and incorporate it into a coherent, well-developed essay that argues a clear position on whether the USPS should be restructured to meet the needs of a changing world, and if so, how.</p> | <p>On April 10, 1962, as the United States was emerging from a recession, the nation’s largest steel companies raised steel prices by 3.5 percent. President John F. Kennedy, who had repeatedly called for stable prices and wages as part of a program of national sacrifice during a period of economic distress, held a news conference on April 11, 1962, which he opened with the following commentary regarding the hike in steel prices. Write an essay in which you analyze the rhetorical strategies President Kennedy uses to achieve his purpose.</p> | <p>Consider the distinct perspectives expressed in the following statements.</p> <p>“If you develop the absolute sense of certainty that powerful beliefs provide, then you can get yourself to accomplish virtually anything, including those things that other people are certain are impossible.” --<i>William Lyon Phelps, American educator, journalist, and professor (1865–1943)</i></p> <p>“I think we ought always to entertain our opinions with some measure of doubt. I shouldn’t wish people dogmatically to believe any philosophy, not even mine.” --<i>Bertrand Russell, British author, mathematician, and philosopher (1872–1970)</i></p> <p>In a well-organized essay, take a position on the relationship between certainty and doubt. Support your argument with appropriate evidence and examples.</p> |
| <p>2013</p> | <p>The need to memorialize events or people is complex; in some cases, monuments honor moments of great achievement, while in other cases, monuments pay homage to deep sacrifice. A monument’s size, location, and materials are all considerations in planning and creating a memorial to the past.</p> <p>Based on seven sources concerning memorialization. Synthesize information from at least three of the sources and incorporate into an essay that examines the factors a group or agency should consider in memorializing an event or person and in creating a monument.</p> | <p>Passage from <i>Last Child in the Woods</i> by Richard Louv. Write an essay in which you analyze the rhetorical strategies Louv uses to develop his argument about the separation between people and nature.</p> | <p>For centuries, prominent thinkers have pondered the relationship between ownership and the development of self (identity), ultimately asking the question, “What does it mean to own something?”</p> <p>Plato argues that owning objects is detrimental to a person’s character. Aristotle claims that ownership of tangible goods helps to develop moral character. Twentieth-century philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre proposes that ownership extends beyond objects to include intangible things as well. In Sartre’s view, becoming proficient in some skill and knowing something thoroughly means that we “own” it.</p> <p>Think about the differing views of ownership. Then write an essay in which you explain your position on the relationship between ownership and sense of self. Use appropriate evidence from your reading, experience, or observations to support your argument.</p> |

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| <p>2014</p> | <p>Many recent college graduates have faced record levels of unemployment. This situation has led people to question what they value about higher education. Some high school students and their parents are wondering if a college education is worth the cost. Others, however, believe that a college education prepares students for more than just a job or career.</p> <p>Based on six sources concerning the value of a college education. Synthesize information from at least three of the sources and incorporate it into a coherent, well-developed essay that evaluates whether college is worth its cost.</p> | <p>In a letter, Abigail Adams writes to her son John Quincy Adams, who is traveling abroad with his father, John Adams, a United States diplomat and later the country’s second president. In a well-developed essay, analyze the rhetorical strategies Adams uses to advise her son.</p> | <p>Authors Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman published “The Creativity Crisis” in Newsweek.com in July 2010. They reported that the Torrance Test, a test of creativity that has been administered to millions of people worldwide in 50 languages, indicates that the public’s “creativity quotient” has steadily crept downward since 1990. In their article, Bronson and Merryman cite the claim of Professor Kyung Hee Kim at the College of William and Mary: “It’s very clear, and the decrease is very significant.” Kim reports that it is the scores of younger children in America—from kindergarten through sixth grade—for whom the decline is “most serious.”</p> <p>Bronson and Merryman state that “[t]he potential consequences are sweeping. The necessity of human ingenuity is undisputed. A recent IBM poll of 1,500 CEOs identified creativity as the No. 1 ‘leadership competency’ of the future. Yet it’s not just about sustaining our nation’s economic growth. All around us are matters of national and international importance that are crying out for creative solutions, from saving the Gulf of Mexico to bringing peace to Afghanistan to delivering health care. Such solutions emerge from a healthy marketplace of ideas, sustained by a populace constantly contributing original ideas and receptive to the ideas of others.”</p> <p>One possible approach to this reputed decline in creativity is to explicitly teach creative thinking in school. Write to your school board explaining what you mean by creativity and arguing for or against the creation of a class in creativity.</p> |
| <p>2015</p> | <p>Many high schools, colleges, and universities have honor codes or honor systems: sets of rules or principles that are intended to cultivate integrity. These rules or principles often take the form of written positions on practices like cheating, stealing, and plagiarizing as well as on the consequences of violating the established codes.</p> <p>Based on six sources, synthesize information from at least three of the sources and incorporate it into a coherent, well-developed argument for your own position on whether your school should establish, maintain, revise, or eliminate an honor code or honor system.</p> | <p>On the tenth anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., labor union organizer and civil rights leader Cesar Chavez published an article in the magazine of a religious organization devoted to helping those in need.</p> <p>Read the following excerpt from the article carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze the rhetorical choices Chavez makes to develop his argument about nonviolent resistance.</p> | <p>An anthropologist studying first-year students at a university in the United States writes that friendly phrases like “How are you?,” “Nice to meet you,” and “Let’s get in touch” communicate politeness rather than literal intent. What, if anything, is the value or function of such polite speech?</p> <p>In a well-written essay, develop your position on the value or function of polite speech in a culture or community with which you are familiar. Use appropriate evidence from your reading, experience, or observations to support your argument.</p> |
| <p>2016</p> | <p>Over the past several decades, the English language has become increasingly globalized, and it now seen by many as the dominant language in international finance, science, and politics. Concurrent with the worldwide spread of English is the decline of foreign-language learning in English-speaking countries, where monolingual English speakers are at a disadvantage today.</p> <p>Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Then synthesize information from at least three of the sources and incorporate it into a coherent, well-developed essay that argues a clear position on whether monolingual English speakers are at a disadvantage today.</p> | <p>On June 11, 2004, Margaret Thatcher, the former prime minister of Great Britain, delivered the following eulogy to the American people in honor of the former United States president Ronald Reagan, with whom she had worked closely.</p> <p>Read the eulogy carefully. Then, in a well-developed essay, analyze the rhetorical strategies that Thatcher uses to convey her message.</p> | <p>In 1891, Irish Oscar Wilde observed, “Disobedience, in the eyes of anyone who has read history, is man’s original virtue. It is through disobedience that progress has been made, through disobedience and through rebellion.”</p> <p>Wilde claims that disobedience is a valuable human trait and that it promotes social progress. Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Wilde’s claims are valid. Use appropriate examples from your reading, experience, or observations to support your argument.</p> |

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| <p>2017</p> | <p>As the Internet changes what and how people read, there has been considerable debate about the future of public libraries. While some commentators question whether libraries can stay relevant, others see new possibilities for libraries in the changing dynamics of today’s society.</p> <p>Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Then synthesize information from at least three of the sources and incorporate it into a coherent, well-developed essay in which you develop a position on the role, if any, that public libraries should serve in the future.</p> | <p>The passage below is the opening to a speech made in 1960 by American journalist and politician Clare Boothe Luce to journalists at the Women’s National Press Club. In this speech, Luce went on to criticize the tendency of the American press to sacrifice journalistic integrity in favor of the perceived public demand for sensationalist stories.</p> <p>Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-developed essay, analyze <i>how</i> Luce uses this introduction to prepare the audience for her message. Support your analysis of her rhetoric with specific references to the text.</p> | <p>The passage below is an excerpt from <i>Empire of Illusion</i> by Chris Hedges. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you develop a position on Hedges’ argument that “the most essential skill... is artifice.” Use appropriate, specific evidence to illustrate and develop your position.</p> <p>The most essential skill in political theater and a consumer culture is artifice. Political leaders, who use the tools of mass propaganda to create a sense of faux intimacy with citizens no longer need to be competent, sincere, or honest. They need only to appear to have these qualities. Most of all they need a story, a personal narrative. The reality of the narrative is irrelevant. It can be completely at odds with the facts. The consistency and emotional appeal of the story are paramount. Those who are best at deception succeed. Those who have not mastered the art of entertainment, who fail to create a narrative or do not have one fashioned.”</p> <p>An image-based culture communicates through narratives, pictures, and pseudo-drama.</p> |
| <p>2018</p> | <p>Eminent domain is the power governments have to acquire property from private owners for public use. The rationale behind eminent domain is that governments have greater legal authority over lands with their dominion than do private owners. Eminent domain has been instituted in one way or another throughout the world for hundreds of years.</p> <p>Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Then synthesize materials from at least three of the sources and incorporate it into a coherent, well-developed essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies the notion that eminent domain is productive and beneficial.</p> | <p>In 1997, then United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright gave the commencement speech to the graduating class at Mount Holyoke College, a women’s college in Massachusetts.</p> <p>Read the following excerpt from her speech carefully. Then write a well-developed essay in which you analyze the choices Albright makes to convey her message to her audience.</p> | <p>In her book <i>Gift from the Sea</i>, author and aviator Anne Morrow Lindbergh (1906-2001) writes, “We tend not to choose the unknown which might be a shock or disappointment or simply a little difficult to cope with. And yet it is the unknown with all its disappointments and surprises that is the most enriching.”</p> <p>Consider the value Lindbergh places on the unknown. Then write an essay in which you develop your own position on the value of exploring the unknown. Use appropriate, specific evidence to illustrate and develop your position.</p> |
| <p>2019</p> | <p>In response to our society’s increasing demand for energy, large-scale wind power has drawn attention from governments and consumers as potential alternative to traditional materials that fuel our power grids, such as coal, oil, natural gas, water, or even newer sources such as nuclear or solar power. Yet the establishment of large-scale, commercial-grade wind farms is often the subject of controversy for a variety of reasons.</p> <p>Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Then synthesize material from at least three of the sources and incorporate it into a coherent, well-written essay in which you develop your position on the most important factors that an individual or agency should consider when deciding whether to establish a wind farm.</p> | <p>In 1930 Mohandas “Mahatma” Gandhi led a nonviolent march in India protesting Britain’s colonial monopoly on and taxation of an essential resource: salt. The Salt March, as it came to be known, was a triggering moment for the larger civil disobedience movement that eventually won India independence from Britain in 1947. Shortly before the Salt March, Gandhi had written to Viceroy Lord Irwin, the representative of the British crown in India. The passage below is the conclusion of that letter.</p> <p>Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze the rhetorical choices Gandhi makes to present his case to Lord Irwin.</p> | <p>The term “overrated” is often used to diminish concepts, places, roles, etc. that the speaker believes do not deserve the prestige they commonly enjoy; for example, many writers have argued that success is overrated, a character in a novel by Anthony Burgess famously describes Rome as a “vastly overrated city,” and Queen Rania of Jordan herself has asserted that “[b]eing queen is overrated.”</p> <p>Select a concept, place, role, etc. to which you believe that the term “overrated” should be applied. Then, write a well-developed essay in which you explain your judgment. Use appropriate evidence from your reading, experience, or observations to support your argument.</p> |

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| <p>2021</p> | <p>In the nineteenth and most of the twentieth centuries, handwriting instruction (print and cursive) was virtually universal in schools in the United States. By contrast, little if any time is devoted to such lessons today. While some argue that handwriting instruction should still have a place in schooling, others maintain that digital technologies have rendered such instruction unnecessary.</p> <p>Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the sources and develops your position on the place, if any, of handwriting instruction in today’s schools.</p> | <p>On February 27, 2013, while in office, former president Barack Obama delivered the following address dedicating the Rosa Parks statue in the National Statuary Hall of the United States Capitol building. Rosa Parks was an African American civil rights activist who was arrested in 1955 for refusing to give up her seat on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama.</p> <p>Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Obama makes to convey his message.</p> | <p>Many people spend long hours trying to achieve perfection in their personal or professional lives. Similarly, people often demand perfection from others, creating expectations that may be challenging to live up to. In contrast, some people think perfection is not attainable or desirable.</p> <p>Write an essay that argues your position on the value of striving for perfection.</p> |
| <p>2022</p> | <p>Since the early 2000s, the United States government and a number of corporations have sponsored initiatives to improve education in the STEM disciplines: science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The emphasis on STEM subjects in elementary, secondary, and higher education reflects concerns that United States students are less proficient in these areas than are students in other countries. Additionally, there is a belief that mastery in STEM fields is now essential in order to join a highly technical and specialized workforce. However, not everyone is convinced that a STEM-focused curriculum is necessary and/or effective.</p> <p>Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the sources and develops your position on the value, if any, of initiatives to improve STEM education and increase the number of students interested in the STEM disciplines.</p> | <p>Born in New York City to Puerto Rican parents, Sonia Sotomayor was appointed a United States Supreme Court Justice in 2009, becoming the first Latina justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. She delivered the speech “A Latina Judge’s Voice” at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law in 2001 when she was an appeals-court judge. The following passage is an excerpt from that speech.</p> <p>Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Sotomayor makes to convey her message about her identity.</p> | <p>Colin Powell, a four-star general and former United States secretary of state, wrote in his 1995 autobiography: “[W]e do not have the luxury of collecting information indefinitely. At some point, before we can have every possible fact in hand, we have to decide. The key is not to make quick decisions, but to make timely decisions.”</p> <p>Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Powell’s claim about making decisions is valid.</p> |
| <p>2023 Set 1</p> | <p>Urban rewilding is an effort to restore natural ecological processes and habitats in city environments. Many cities around the world have embraced rewilding as part of larger movements to promote ecological conservation and environmentally friendly design. Now, a movement to promote urban rewilding is beginning to take shape in the United States as well.</p> <p>Carefully read the six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the sources and develops your position on the extent to which rewilding initiatives are worthwhile for urban communities to pursue.</p> | <p>On May 21, 2016, the poet Rita Dove delivered a commencement address to graduating students at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, where she was a professor of English at the time. Dove received a Pulitzer Prize for her poetry and served as the United States poet laureate from 1993 to 1995. She also writes in a variety of genres including fiction and drama. The following is an excerpt from her speech.</p> <p>Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Dove makes to convey her message about what she wishes for her audience of graduating students.</p> | <p>In a 2016 interview published in the <i>Los Angeles Review of Books</i>, Maxine Hong Kingston, an award-winning writer famous for her novels depicting the experiences of Chinese immigrants in the United States, stated: “I think that individual voices are not as strong as a community of voices. If we can make a community of voices, then we can speak more truth.”</p> <p>Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Kingston’s claim about the importance of creating a community of voices is valid.</p> |

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| <p>2023 Set 2</p> | <p>Vertical farms are indoor agricultural facilities in which plants are grown, often in a hydroponic (soilless) environment, on tall stacks of shelves. Plants are given water, nutrients, and light mostly through automated processes. Advocates say that vertical farms are key to providing food for the future, yielding high-quality produce while making efficient use of land and water. Critics warn about the energy consumption associated with vertical farms’ automated processes as well as problems related to cost and nutritional value.</p> <p>Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the sources and develops your position on the value, if any, of vertical farms to the future of agriculture</p> | <p>Michelle Obama was the First Lady of the United States during the presidential administration of her husband, Barack Obama (2009–2017). During that administration, she led programs including the Reach Higher Initiative, which encourages students to continue their education after high school. One way it does so is by supporting high school counselors’ efforts to get students into college. On January 6, 2017, Obama gave her final speech as First Lady at an event honoring outstanding school counselors. The following passage is an excerpt from that speech.</p> <p>Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Obama makes to convey her message about her expectations and hope for young people in the United States.</p> | <p>In a 2018 interview about the importance of collaboration, then United States Representative Carlos Curbelo stated: “If you’re trying to convince someone that they need to get involved in an issue or perhaps change their thinking on an issue, trying to scare them is not always effective and can actually sow resentment.”</p> <p>Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Curbelo’s claim about persuading others is valid.</p> |
| <p>2024 Set 1</p> | <p>Historic preservation laws are intended to protect buildings deemed to be of historic, cultural, or architectural value. The laws affect both government buildings and private property, putting constraints on how and to what extent the structures can be altered, renovated, or replaced. Proponents of these laws claim they are necessary for the preservation of history and culture and the architectural integrity of a neighborhood. Opponents of the laws argue that such laws prevent progress and negatively impact real estate development, building renovation, and building design.</p> <p>Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the sources and develops your position on the value, if any, of laws designed to preserve buildings deemed to be of historic importance.</p> | <p>Reshma Saujani is an attorney, author, and activist who founded Girls Who Code, an organization that works to advance opportunities for girls and women to find careers in the technology sector. The following passage is excerpted from Saujani’s contribution to <i>American Like Me: Reflections on Life Between Cultures</i>, a 2018 anthology of essays by prominent Americans with backgrounds in multiple cultures. The excerpt begins after Saujani discusses founding a multicultural student organization at her high school.</p> <p>Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Saujani makes to convey her message about the nature of bravery.</p> | <p>In a 2013 New York Times article on the practice of taking selfies, writer, editor, and podcast host J Wortham wrote: “Rather than dismissing the trend as a side effect of digital culture or a sad form of exhibitionism,1 maybe we’re better off seeing selfies for what they are at their best—a kind of visual diary, a way to mark our short existence and hold it up to others as proof that we were here.”</p> <p>Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Wortham’s claim about the value of documenting one’s life with selfies is valid.</p> |
| <p>2024 Set 2</p> | <p>Mobile food service establishments, such as food trucks and food carts, have become increasingly trendy in recent years, offering customers appealing and often innovative dining options out of vehicles that can easily be located near workplaces and leisure activities. These businesses have sometimes been held back from expanding because of local regulations that restrict their activities and require operators to obtain licenses and certifications. Proponents of these regulations say that laws are needed to ensure that the meals offered by mobile food services are safe and that these businesses do not have an unfair advantage over traditional restaurants.</p> <p>Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the sources and develops your position on what are the most important factors for cities to consider when regulating mobile food service establishments.</p> | <p>Simu Liu is an actor who has starred in television shows and movies, including <i>Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings</i>. His 2022 memoir, <i>We Were Dreamers: An Immigrant Superhero Origin Story</i>, describes his experiences as a Chinese immigrant in Canada. Liu’s parents emigrated to Canada from China when Liu was a baby, leaving him with his grandparents. In the following excerpt from Liu’s memoir, the family is getting the four-year-old Liu ready to reunite with his father and travel to Canada himself.</p> <p>Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Liu makes to convey his message about the experience of preparing to emigrate from China.</p> | <p>In a 2019 interview, award-winning poet and memoirist Jimmy Santiago Baca asserted: “In America we value possessions. We would much rather talk about a new car than talk about a story that happened between grandfather and me. We’d much rather get on the computer and play video games and enact some cataclysmic1 epic 2 than to talk about the epics in our own lives.”</p> <p>Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Baca’s claim about the value of possessions is valid.</p> |

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| <p>2025 Set 1</p> | <p>As nations and space agencies have sent spacecraft and satellites into space, human-created debris—or “space junk”—has accumulated in orbit around Earth. Space debris may range in size from small parts and flecks of paint to whole defunct satellites, but all of it poses a potential risk if it collides with a spacecraft. Many countries have agreed that the management of space debris is a priority because it poses a threat to space exploration and satellites. However, removing it is difficult and costly.</p> <p>Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the sources and develops your position on the most important factors that space agencies and nations should consider when dealing with the problem of space debris.</p> | <p>The following is a passage from the introduction to David Treuer’s 2012 nonfiction book <i>Rez Life: An Indian’s Journey Through Reservation Life</i>. Treuer is a member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, a tribal nation in Minnesota. In <i>Rez Life</i>, Treuer draws on research and personal experience to explore the history of reservations and the issues that affect Native Americans who live on them today. A reservation is an area of land governed by a tribal nation in what is now the United States.</p> <p>Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Treuer makes to develop his argument about the contributions that Native Americans and their communities have made to the United States.</p> | <p>In a 2022 interview with <i>People</i> magazine promoting her program to empower young girls through sport, professional tennis player and mental health advocate Naomi Osaka said: “For me, the biggest lesson I’ve learned is to try to be present in each moment. It’s easy to lose sight of how far you’ve come, but I’ve been prioritizing trying to live in the moment and enjoy the journey.”</p> <p>Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Osaka’s claim about embracing the present moment is valid.</p> |
| <p>2025 Set 2</p> | <p>Mapping software and Global Positioning System (GPS) devices are used regularly by travelers and commuters. Since these devices and apps are updated in real time with user-supplied information, they have become associated with a number of problems. While commuters attempt to avoid traffic on highways, they often create traffic on smaller, local roads that are less able to handle this new burden. Users also lose a sense of their geographical surroundings as they rely more on mapping software or GPS devices for navigation.</p> <p>Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the sources and develops your position on the value, if any, of mapping software and devices.</p> | <p>Raquel Vasquez Gilliland is a Mexican American poet, novelist, and painter whose works focus on myths, folklore, motherhood, and plants. In 2023 she published an opinion article in <i>The New York Times</i> titled “Go Outside, Sink Your Feet Into the Dirt and Engage With the World.” The following is an excerpt from that opinion article.</p> <p>Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Vasquez Gilliland makes to develop her argument about the value of engaging with nature.</p> | <p>Amanda Gorman is the first National Youth Poet Laureate of the United States, an honor given to a young person for exceptional artistic expression, civic engagement, and social impact. In a 2021 interview in <i>Time</i> magazine, when asked how to maintain optimism¹ in challenging times, Gorman stated: “Optimism shouldn’t be seen as opposed to pessimism,² but in conversation with it. Your optimism will never be as powerful as it is in that exact moment when you want to give it up.”</p> <p>Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Gorman’s claim about the relationship between optimism and pessimism is valid.</p> <p>1: a tendency to view things in a positive light 2: a tendency to view things in a negative light</p> |
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