

AP LANGUAGE/ COMPOSITION
AP EXAM PROMPT PRACTICE

This packet has sample prompts from old AP exams. I have included several persuasive prompts and a few style analyses that you can use to practice for the AP exam. You will prepare each prompt according to these instructions.

Prompts 1 and 2: Read and annotate both prompts. Write a thesis statement and an outline for each prompt. Your outline should include introduction and conclusion and focus on big ideas and evidence (similar to what we have done in class in groups).

Prompts 3 and 4: Read and annotate the prompts. Then, write TWO thesis statements. When you are doing Prompt 3, write two different sides (one refute and one defend). When you are doing Prompt 4, you should write one thesis that shows that his ideas are valid for our time, and one that says they are not.

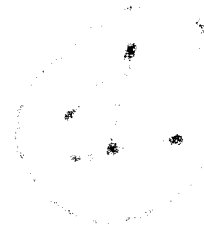
Prompt 5: Read and annotate the prompt. Then, write an introductory paragraph and create a chart that shows the opposing positions. Make sure your chart shows how you would address the arguments.

Prompt 6: Read and annotate the prompt. Then write a thesis statement and outline that shows how would you set up the comparison of the two pieces.

Prompt 7: Read and annotate the prompt. Then, respond to it. Do not take more than 40 minutes to do so. Please handwrite your response.

THIS ASSIGNMENT IS DUE ON
Monday, April 26.

**2005 AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS**



Question 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts one-third of the total essay section score.)

The following article is a mock press release from *The Onion*, a publication devoted to humor and satire. Read the article carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the strategies used in the article to satirize how products are marketed to consumers.

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MASSILLON, OH—Stressed and sore-footed Americans everywhere are clamoring for the exciting new MagnaSoles shoe inserts, which stimulate and soothe the wearer’s feet using no fewer than five forms of pseudoscience.

“What makes MagnaSoles different from other insoles is the way it harnesses the power of magnetism to properly align the biomagnetic field around your foot,” said Dr. Arthur Bluni, the pseudoscientist who developed the product for Massillon-based Integrated Products. “Its patented Magna-Grid design, which features more than 200 isometrically aligned Contour Points™, actually soothes while it heals, restoring the foot’s natural bio-flow.”

“MagnaSoles is not just a shoe insert,” Bluni continued, “it’s a total foot-rejuvenation system.”

According to scientific-sounding literature trumpeting the new insoles, the Contour Points™ also take advantage of the semi-plausible medical technique known as reflexology. Practiced in the Occident for over eleven years, reflexology, the literature explains, establishes a correspondence between every point on the human foot and another part of the body, enabling your soles to heal your entire body as you walk.

But while other insoles have used magnets and reflexology as keys to their appearance of usefulness, MagnaSoles go several steps further. According to the product’s Web site, “Only MagnaSoles utilize the healing power of crystals to restimulate dead foot cells with vibrational biofeedback . . . a process similar to that by which medicine makes people better.”

In addition, MagnaSoles employ a brand-new, cutting-edge form of pseudoscience known as Terranometry, developed specially for Integrated

Products by some of the nation’s top pseudoscientists.

“The principles of Terranometry state that the Earth resonates on a very precise frequency, which it imparts to the surfaces it touches,” said Dr. Wayne Frankel, the California State University biotrician who discovered Terranometry. “If the frequency of one’s foot is out of alignment with the Earth, the entire body will suffer. Special resonator nodules implanted at key spots in MagnaSoles convert the wearer’s own energy to match the Earth’s natural vibrational rate of 32.805 kilofrankels. The resultant harmonic energy field rearranges the foot’s naturally occurring atoms, converting the pain-nuclei into pleasing comfortrons.”

Released less than a week ago, the \$19.95 insoles are already proving popular among consumers, who are hailing them as a welcome alternative to expensive, effective forms of traditional medicine.

“I twisted my ankle something awful a few months ago, and the pain was so bad, I could barely walk a single step,” said Helene Kuhn of Edison, NJ. “But after wearing MagnaSoles for seven weeks, I’ve noticed a significant decrease in pain and can now walk comfortably. Just try to prove that MagnaSoles didn’t heal me!”

Equally impressed was chronic back-pain sufferer Geoff DeAngelis of Tacoma, WA.

“Why should I pay thousands of dollars to have my spine realigned with physical therapy when I can pay \$20 for insoles clearly endorsed by an intelligent-looking man in a white lab coat?” DeAngelis asked. “MagnaSoles really seem like they’re working.”

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1998 ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Question 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts one-third of the total essay section score.)

The following passage, from Henry James's novel *The Portrait of a Lady*, is a conversation between two characters, Madame Merle and Isabel Archer. Read the passage attentively, noting the conflicting views about what constitutes the self. Then write a carefully reasoned, persuasive essay that demonstrates which of these two conceptions of the self has greater validity. Use specific evidence from your observation, experience, or reading to develop your position.

Line
(5) “When you’ve lived as long as I you’ll see that every human being has his shell and that you must take the shell into account. By the shell I mean the whole envelope of circumstances. There’s no such thing as an isolated man or woman; we’re each of us made up of some cluster of appurtenances. What shall we call our ‘self’? Where does it begin? Where does it end? It overflows into everything that belongs to us—and then it flows back again. I know a large part of myself is in the clothes I choose to wear. I’ve a great respect for *things*! One’s self—for other people—is one’s expression of one’s self; and one’s house, one’s furniture, one’s garments, the books one reads, the company one keeps—these things are all expressive.”

(10) This was very metaphysical; not more so, however, than several observations Madame Merle had already made. Isabel was fond of metaphysics, but was unable to accompany her friend into this bold analysis of the human personality. “I don’t agree with you. I think just the other way. I don’t know whether I succeed in expressing myself, but I know that nothing else expresses me. Nothing that belongs to me is any measure of me; everything’s on the contrary a limit, a barrier, and a perfectly arbitrary one. Certainly the clothes which, as you say, I choose to wear, don’t express me; and heaven forbid they
(15) should!”

“You dress very well,” Madame Merle lightly interposed.

“Possibly; but I don’t care to be judged by that. My clothes may express the dressmaker, but they don’t express me. To begin with it’s not my own choice that I wear them; they’re imposed upon me by society.”

(20) “Should you prefer to go without them?” Madame Merle enquired in a tone which virtually terminated the discussion.

(1881)

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2002 AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE
QUESTIONS (Form B)

Question 3

(Suggested time —40 minutes. This question counts one-third of the total essay section score.)

The passage below is an excerpt from *What Are People For?* by Wendell Berry. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you support, refute, or qualify Berry's argument. Use appropriate evidence to develop your position.

To ask a still more obvious question, what is the purpose of this technological progress? What higher aim do we think it is serving? Surely the aim cannot be the integrity or happiness of our families, which we have made subordinate to the education
5 system, the television industry, and the consumer economy. Surely it cannot be the integrity or health of our communities, which we esteem even less than we esteem our families. Surely it cannot be love of our country, for we are far more concerned about the desecration of the flag than we are about the desecration
10 of our land. Surely it cannot be the love of God, which counts for at least as little in the daily order of business as the love of family, community, and country.

The higher aims of "technological progress" are money and ease. And this exalted greed for money and ease is disguised and justified by an obscure, cultish faith in "the future." We do as we
15 do, we say, "for the sake of the future" or "to make a better future for our children." How we can hope to make a good future by doing badly in the present, we do not say. We cannot think about the future, of course, for the future does not exist: the existence of
20 the future is an article of faith. We can be assured only that, if there is to be a future, the good of it is already implicit in the good things of the present. We do not need to plan or devise a "world of the future"; if we take care of the world of the present, the future will have received full justice from us. A good future is implicit in
25 the soils, forests, grasslands, marshes, deserts, mountains, rivers, lakes, and oceans that we have now, and in the good things of human culture that we have now: the only valid "futurology" available to us is to take care of those things. We have no need to contrive and dabble at "the future of the human race"; we have
30 the same pressing need that we have always had—to love, care for, and teach our children.

And so the question of the desirability of adopting any technological innovation is a question with two possible answers—not one, as has been commonly assumed. If one's motives are
35 money, ease, and haste to arrive in a technologically determined future, then the answer is foregone, and there is, in fact, no question, and no thought. If one's motive is the love of family, community, country, and God, then one will have to think, and one may have to decide that the proposed innovation is undesirable.

(1990)

END OF EXAMINATION

2004 AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)

4

Question 2

(Suggested time — 40 minutes. This question counts one-third of the total essay section score.)

More than one hundred years ago, a writer for *The Atlantic Monthly* confronted an issue that is still timely. Read the following essay carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the nature of the writer's arguments and evaluate their validity for our own time.

Line From time to time the question arises whether
5 certain nude statues shall be exhibited in the
6 museums of art where they are to be seen by the
7 general public,—by children from the schools as well
8 as by scholars from the universities. And from time to
9 time the answer to the question is hotly debated,
10 usually without agreement. Those who are concerned
11 about the morals of the public maintain that grave
12 harm is done by such exhibitions. Those who believe
13 that beauty is its own excuse for being have scornful
14 words for spectators who find evil where, most
15 certainly, no evil was intended. Such controversies
16 usually start from *a priori*¹ assumptions, and seldom
17 lead to any useful end.

18 The question is capable of a practical solution that
19 will be accepted by everyone. It is universally
20 admitted that public libraries must reserve certain
21 books from general circulation. In the same way, it is
22 reasonable to affirm that a public museum of art may
23 be justified in excluding certain statues. There need be
24 no discussion of the first principles of morals or of
25 beauty. The solution reached must rest on practical
26 grounds. Moralists will justify it for one set of
27 reasons; artists will accede to it for another.

28 Every librarian knows what books to reserve for
29 the exclusive use of persons of mature age; and every
30 curator of a museum is likewise bound to admit that
31 his public must be considered. The general principle
32 is entirely clear. There is no great difficulty in
33 carrying it out in its details. The analogy between
34 public libraries and public museums helps us to
35 decide as to special points.

36 If a certain book offends any considerable number
37 of persons, it should be placed on the reserved list,
38 even though a considerable number of other persons
39 may find no harm in it. No librarian would seek to
40 enforce his private judgment in such a matter against
41 the protests of a large group of respectable persons of
42 a different opinion. The same procedure should be
43 followed in arranging the statues in a museum open to
44 the general public.

45 I, personally, find no harm in the statue of —
from Pompeii. It interests me in itself, as a thing of
beauty, and as an index of the feeling of the people
who produced it. It was, in Pompeii, so placed that
only adults saw it, probably. If the citizen of a modern

American town, two thousand years later, finds
offense in it, for himself or for his children, I will not
blame him. His point of view is essentially different
50 from that of the Roman of that earlier day. His child's
point of view is utterly different. He, as a citizen, pays
the taxes that support his museum.

51 His opinion, therefore, deserves respect, even
52 though he may be, from my point of view,
53 uncultivated, intolerant, and unreasonable. If any
54 considerable number of such citizens are offended, for
55 themselves or for their children, I, for one, will not
object if their opinions are respected by the public
officer who is their servant as well as mine. Let the
60 offending statue go to a reserved room, just as an
offending book in the public library goes to a reserved
shelf. Any one who has a right to see the statue will
be admitted to do so by the curator. The general
public is, on the whole, better off without access to
65 the book, and, on the whole, the general public will be
better off without access to the statue.

66 I can remember when Balzac's novels were kept on
67 the top shelf, though now they are freely given out in
68 many public libraries. It was, in my opinion, a loss
69 that they were so long reserved. I acquiesced in the
70 reservation, however, since it was demanded by a
considerable number of intelligent people. I do not
think they are good food for children, even now. The
same principle can be, and should be, applied in
75 public museums of art. If the public demands that the
*Discobolus*² should be relegated to an attic because it
is unclothed, very well, let it go there. Let me have
the key to the attic when I wish it. If the statue is
really good and pure, as thousands of good people
80 believe, it will, by and by, be brought down to the
main hall.

81 In the meantime, let us wait. There is no hurry. Do
82 not let us oppose our canon of taste, however
83 cultivated, to a canon of morals held by a
84 considerable number of sincere persons, however
85 mistaken.

The Atlantic Monthly, August 1901

¹ without examination or analysis

² a statue of a discus-thrower by the Greek sculptor Myron, dating from about 450 B.C.

2004 AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

5

Question 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts one-third of the total essay section score.)

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

2003 AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

6

Question 3

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts one-third of the total essay section score.)

The two passages below, one by John James Audubon and the other by Annie Dillard, describe large flocks of birds in flight. Read the passages carefully. Then write an essay in which you compare and contrast how each writer describes the birds and conveys their effect on the writer as observer.

Passage 1

In the autumn of 1813, I left my house at Henderson, on the banks of the Ohio, on my way to Louisville. In passing over the Barrens a few miles beyond Hardensburgh, I observed the pigeons flying from north-east to south-west, in greater numbers than I thought I had ever seen them before, and feeling an inclination to count the flocks that might pass within the reach of my eye in one hour, I dismounted, seated myself on an eminence, and began to mark with my pencil, making a dot for every flock that passed. In a short time finding the task which I had undertaken impracticable, as the birds poured in in countless multitudes, I rose, and counting the dots then put down, found that 163 had been made in twenty-one minutes. I travelled on, and still met more the farther I proceeded. The air was literally filled with Pigeons; the light of noon-day was obscured as by an eclipse; the dung fell in spots, not unlike melting flakes of snow; and the continued buzz of wings had a tendency to lull my senses to repose.

Whilst waiting for dinner at YOUNG's inn, at the confluence of Salt-River with the Ohio, I saw, at my leisure, immense legions still going by, with a front reaching far beyond the Ohio on the west, and the beech-wood forests directly on the east of me. Not a single bird alighted; for not a nut or acorn was that year to be seen in the neighbourhood. They consequently flew so high, that different trials to reach them with a capital rifle proved ineffectual; nor did the reports disturb them in the least. I cannot describe to you the extreme beauty of their aerial evolutions, when a Hawk chanced to press upon the rear of a flock. At once, like a torrent, and with a noise like thunder, they rushed into a compact mass, pressing upon each other towards the centre. In these almost solid masses, they darted forward in undulating and angular lines, descended and swept close over the earth with inconceivable velocity, mounted perpendicularly so as to resemble a vast column, and, when high, were seen wheeling and twisting within their continued lines, which then resembled the coils of a gigantic serpent.

John James Audubon,
Ornithological Biographies, 1831-1839

Passage 2

Out of the dimming sky a speck appeared, then another, and another. It was the starlings going to roost. They gathered deep in the distance, flock sifting into flock, and strayed towards me, transparent and whirling, like smoke. They seemed to unravel as they flew, lengthening in curves, like a loosened skein.¹ I didn't move; they flew directly over my head for half an hour. The flight extended like a fluttering banner, an unfurled oriflamme², in either direction as far as I could see. Each individual bird bobbed and knitted up and down in the flight at apparent random, for no known reason except that that's how starlings fly, yet all remained perfectly spaced. The flocks each tapered at either end from a rounded middle, like an eye. Over my head I heard a sound of beaten air, like a million shook rugs, a muffled whuff. Into the woods they sifted without shifting a twig, right through the crowns of trees, intricate and rushing, like wind.

After half an hour, the last of the stragglers had vanished into the trees. I stood with difficulty, bashed by the unexpectedness of this beauty, and my spread lungs roared. My eyes pricked from the effort of trying to trace a feathered dot's passage through a weft³ of limbs. Could tiny birds be sifting through me right now, birds winging through the gaps between my cells, touching nothing, but quickening in my tissues, fleet?

Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, 1974

¹ A length of yarn or thread wound in a loose, elongated coil

² An ensign, banner, or standard

³ The horizontal threads in a piece of weaving

END OF EXAMINATION

2003 AP[®] ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)

7

Question 3

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts one-third of the total essay section score.)

Read the following excerpt from a news story. Then, using appropriate support, write an editorial for your school or local newspaper in which you develop a position on the issues raised in this news story.

PIPER, Kansas (AP) — High school teacher Christine Pelton wasted no time after discovering that nearly a fifth of her biology students had plagiarized their semester projects from the Internet.

She had received her rural Kansas district's backing before when she accused students of cheating, and she expected it again this time after failing the 28 sophomores.

Her principal and superintendent agreed: It was plagiarism and the students should get a zero for the assignment.

But after parents complained, the Piper School Board ordered her to go easier on the guilty.

Pelton resigned in protest in an episode that some say reflects a national decline in integrity.

"This kind of thing is happening every day around the country, where people with integrity are not being backed by their organization," said Michael Josephson, founder and president of the Josephson Institute of Ethics in Marina del Rey, California.

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END OF EXAMINATION