

AP English Literature and Composition
Top Ten Concepts to Remember for Timed-Writing Essays

Mrs. Hausmann

1. Write about literature in present tense.
2. Avoid first-person (I, me, my) and second-person (you, your) pronouns in composing literary analysis. Remember that you are analyzing literature, not criticizing the writer or character.
3. **Punctuate titles properly:** underline the titles of novels and plays; place poem titles in quotation marks.
4. Create a **thesis** that addresses all elements of the prompt and states an opinion that you can defend.
5. Unify each paragraph around an idea or element that is a part of the thesis you have written.
6. Include specific evident (textual reference or direct quotation) for each idea you express, and remember that depth is more important than breadth. It is better to choose a limited number of convincing examples than to list every example you can find in the text.
7. Explain each piece of evidence thoroughly. *Introduce* the quotation or reference; *state* the evidence, and then, *reveal its connection* to your paragraph's central idea and/or the thesis.
8. Conclude in your conclusion by making a clear connection between your thesis and the literary work's meaning or theme. **It is always ultimately about the work's overall meaning.** You do not need to write an entire concluding paragraph, but you do need a concluding statement.
9. Be precise in referring to characters' names and to plot details. (This means correct spelling, correct details, etc.)
10. Pay attention to your grammar (such as apostrophe mistakes or comma splices) and style (variety in diction and sentence structure). Show the readers that you write well because they may reward you with an extra point if you do.