

# TOP 5

Most Difficult Concepts to Teach  
in an AP® Language Course

*...and how to conquer!* ←

- #5 Teaching the rhetorical situation & identifying rhetorical choices
- #4 Writing for sophistication
- #3 Generating evidence & effective quote integrations
- #2 Providing and explaining commentary
- #1 A focus on line of reasoning

Presented by co-authors

Lauren Peterson



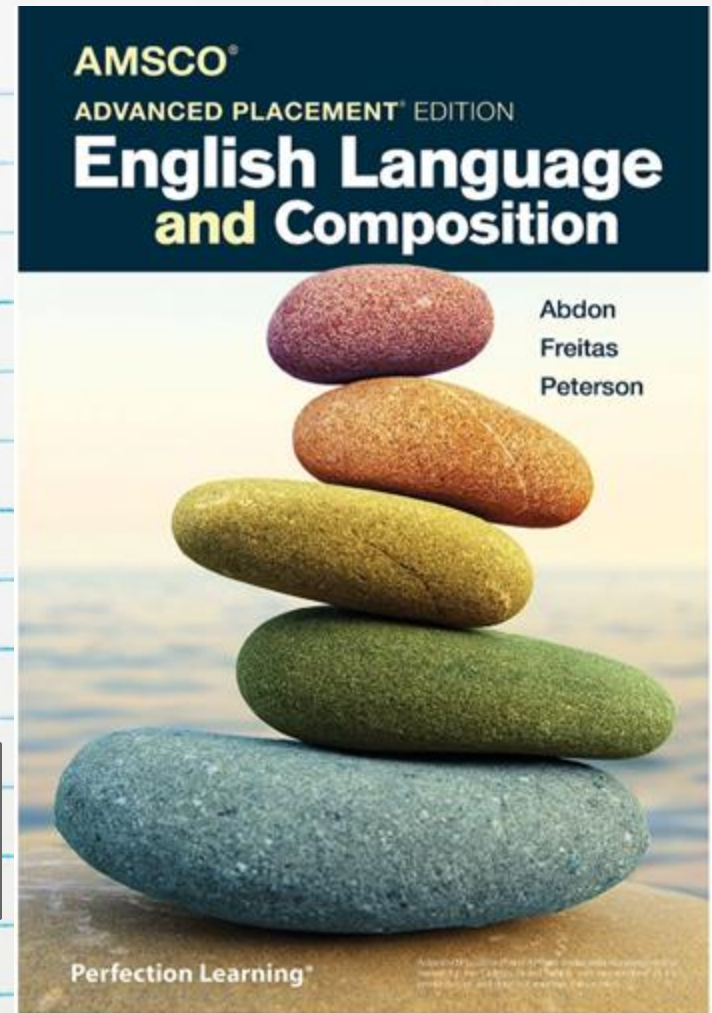
Timm Freitas



5. The Rhetorical Situation & Identifying Rhetorical Choices
4. Writing for Sophistication
3. Generating Evidence & Effective Quote Integration

## 2. Providing & Explaining Commentary

1. A Focus on Line of Reasoning



## Commentary:

Explaining how evidence justifies the claim(s) in the topic sentence and the overall argument in the thesis.

## How-To Write Commentary:

1. Rely heavily on cause-and-effect language.
1. Include connotative verbs.
1. Explicitly articulate the assumptions, stereotypes, and word connotations that have led you to believe the evidence relates to the claim.

### UNIT 5-1.1:

#### Relating Evidence through Commentary

This evidence proves [claim] because [explain how].

Example from the first body paragraph on page 252. The bracketed parts in the template are underlined in the example below.

This evidence proves that modern tyranny is terror management, because in the example of Hitler's rise to power, Hitler said that the fire was "just the beginning." He saw the political opportunity: "There will be no mercy now. Anyone standing in our way will be cut down."

This evidence proves [claim] \_\_\_\_\_  
because [explain how] \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

This evidence proves [claim] \_\_\_\_\_  
because [explain how] \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

This evidence proves [claim] \_\_\_\_\_  
because [explain how] \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

This evidence proves [claim] \_\_\_\_\_  
because [explain how] \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.



## Commentary:

Explaining how evidence justifies the claim(s) in the topic sentence and the overall argument in the thesis.

## The Most Basic Principles:

### Cause-Effect Language

- Because
- Due to
- Since
- Consequently
- As a result
- Subsequently
- Thus
- So that
- Therefore
- In order to

### Analytical Verbs

- Proves
- Confirms
- Defends
- Supports
- Challenges
- Refutes
- Rebuts
- Shows the limitations of
- Exposes
- Qualifies

## UNIT 5-1.1:

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This evidence proves [claim] \_\_\_\_\_

because [explain how] \_\_\_\_\_

This evidence proves [claim] \_\_\_\_\_

because [explain how] \_\_\_\_\_

This evidence proves [claim] \_\_\_\_\_

because [explain how] \_\_\_\_\_

This evidence proves [claim] \_\_\_\_\_

because [explain how] \_\_\_\_\_

# Rhetorical Analysis Commentary

## Rhetorical Analysis Thesis (Open):

In her address to the UN, Greta Thunberg--an international climate change advocate--showcases the inaction of world government officials and warns of the dire consequences of such behavior, potentially moving those in power to take immediate action to solve problems created by the lack of legislation protecting the environment.

## Rhetorical TS Analysis:

Throughout the piece, Thunberg repeatedly accuses the adult UN representatives of inaction to evoke a sense of shame.

Unit 5: Drafting Organizer for Rhetorical Analysis and Argument Essay (Final)		
Introduction	Lead-in addressing an abstract concept	
	Thesis	
Body Paragraph 1	Transitional clause or sentence:	
	Evidence/Claim 1	Connection to abstract idea in thesis
	Lead-in to evidence	Describe evidence
	Explain how that evidence supports the reasoning that justifies that claim and appeals to the audience.	
	Transition to complex discussion or another example? (Not only . . . , but also . . . )	
	Additional discussion	
	How does it lead to or connect with the next paragraph?	Reconnect to abstract idea in thesis

Abstract Idea that runs throughout (What is it really about?)



# Generating the Paragraph:

Topic Sentence:

Throughout the piece, Thunberg repeatedly accuses the adult UN representatives of inaction to evoke a sense of shame.

Evidence:

For example, at the beginning of the piece, once she details the suffering of individuals and ecosystems and warns of mass extinction, Thunberg aggressively charges that all of this stems from the world leaders' obsession with "money" and "world economic growth" (8-9) to the point where "[they] pretend" (9) that all of this destruction "can be solved with just business as usual" (32-33).

# Generating Commentary:

Throughout the piece, Thunberg repeatedly accuses the adult UN representatives of inaction to evoke a sense of shame.

potentially moving those in power to take immediate action to solve problems created by the lack of legislation protecting the environment.

Evidence:

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## Commentary:

This evidence evokes a sense of shame because it highlights the priority that world leaders have for money over life itself. Universally, the right to life is deemed fundamentally valuable, above all else, and in contrast, economic benefits are considered rather superficial. By pointing out that the world leaders are favoring the superficial, she characterizes them as shallow and selfish due to the fact that they favor such. In conjunction with the aforementioned, since world leaders are supposed to care for the LIVES of those they oversee, Thunberg's charges expose how they are eagerly violating their oaths of office for self gain, which is inherently greedy, and is a direct violation of the ethics tied to their positions. When most people are accused of wrongdoing, that is then proved, it generates internal shame, as it creates feelings of vulnerability. Since Thunberg is doing this at the UN--on a global scale--and on TV, these leaders are exposed and are entirely defenseless as they are harshly reprimanded by a high schooler.



# Generating Commentary:

Throughout the piece, Thunberg repeatedly accuses the adult UN representatives of inaction to evoke a sense of shame.



potentially moving those in power to take immediate action to solve problems created by the lack of legislation protecting the environment.



## Commentary:

These charges would potentially move the world leaders to take immediate action because when individuals are exposed and are weakened--especially when in a position of power--they want to save face in order to maintain the trust of their constituents, even if such trust is undeserved. Thus, Thunberg makes it seem as though the only way these rulers could do so is by giving up the vain quest for economic greatness and realistically recognizing that greater efforts are needed to legislate the protection of the environment.

Throughout the piece, Thunberg repeatedly accuses the adult UN representatives of inaction to evoke a sense of shame. For example, at the beginning of the piece, once she details the suffering of individuals and ecosystems and warns of mass extinction, Thunberg aggressively charges that all of this stems from the world leaders' obsession with "money" and "world economic growth" (8-9) to the point where "[they] pretend" (9) that all of this destruction "can be solved with just business as usual" (32-33). This evidence evokes a sense of shame because it highlights the priority that world leaders have for money over life itself. Universally, the right to life is deemed fundamentally valuable, above all else, and in contrast, economic benefits are considered rather superficial. By pointing out that the world leaders are favoring the superficial, she characterizes them as shallow and selfish due to the fact that they favor such. In conjunction with the aforementioned, since world leaders are supposed to care for the LIVES of those they oversee, Thunberg's charges expose how they are eagerly violating their oaths of office for self gain, which is inherently greedy, and is a direct violation of the ethics tied to their positions. When most people are accused of wrongdoing, that is then proved, it generates internal shame, as it creates feelings of vulnerability. Since Thunberg is doing this at the UN--on a global scale--and on TV, these leaders are exposed and are entirely defenseless as they are harshly reprimanded by a high schooler. These charges would potentially move the world leaders to take immediate action because when individuals are exposed and are weakened--especially when in a position of power--they want to save face in order to maintain the trust of their constituents, even if such trust is undeserved. Thus, Thunberg makes it seem as though the only way these rulers could do so is by giving up the vain quest for economic greatness and realistically recognizing that greater efforts are needed to legislate the protection of the environment.



# Argument Commentary



## Working Prompt:

Develop an argument to present to state lawmakers about whether or not the voting age should be lowered to 16.

### Argument Thesis (Open):

While many assume that teenagers shouldn't be able to vote, the voting age should be lowered to 16 because the only way to develop civic responsibility is to allow them to have it.

### Topic Sentence:

Though many adults initially consider teens civically disengaged, the social activity of minors during the contemporary waves of civil unrest highlights their need for representation in national politics.

# Generating Commentary:

Though many adults initially consider teens civically disengaged, the social activity of minors during the contemporary waves of civil unrest highlights their need for representation in national politics. 

Evidence:

For example, since 2016, teens have become increasingly involved in highly political responses to climate change and gun violence, particularly since they are the generation mostly affected. Greta Thunberg initiated school climate change strikes and was invited to speak at the U.N., thus inspiring other teens to explore the politics surrounding the issue. In a similar sense, United States teens have been actively voicing their concerns about gun violence since the Orlando and Parkland mass shootings. Teens were also some of the first to hit the streets--and social media--protesting contemporary racial inequality in 2020.

Commentary:

This evidence highlights the need that teens have for representation because all of the moments referenced in the evidence directly relate to the younger generation in a greater capacity than those who are making laws about the issues, particularly gun violence and racial discrimination. Since teens have been more greatly--and tragically--affected by the rise of school shootings, they offer new perspectives, that adult voters don't have, to ongoing arguments about the issue. Very few politicians and adults have had to live through the constant threat of gun violence on a daily basis. If they have--based on their career choice--at least those adults are prepared for such. Teens, who are legally required to go to school, however, are potentially in danger each day, and they have no choice to be that way. So, it seems that in order to ensure that their first-hand insights are considered when there is a discussion about changing policy centered around often-outdated legislation, their perspectives must be heard. The same is true in regard to racial inequality, since as a generation, teens are more vocal about advocating for legislation that promotes the removal of systemic racism because they have grown up in a more-diverse and accepting culture and aren't afraid of upsetting the status quo.



# Generating Commentary:

Though many adults initially consider teens civically disengaged, the social activity of minors during the contemporary waves of civil unrest highlights their need for representation in national politics.



...develop civic responsibility is to allow them to have it.



## Commentary:

**Furthermore**, teens the past few years have proven that teens are consistently willing to engage in controversial political discussions, **suggesting** that they **do indeed take interest in engaging in political action itself**. The rise of social media has clearly given students a voice in relation to political action; however, it's not necessarily enough to encourage students to fully explore issues on their own. **Thus**, if society wants the youth to begin taking their duties more seriously, which they will clearly do, the government must **give more weight to their voices**, and this can be done through **granting them the right to the ballot**.



Though many adults initially consider teens civically disengaged, the social activity of minors during the contemporary waves of civil unrest highlights their need for representation in national politics. For example, since 2016, teens have become increasingly involved in highly political responses to climate change and gun violence, particularly since they are the generation mostly affected. Greta Thunberg initiated school climate change strikes and was invited to speak at the U.N., thus inspiring other teens to explore the politics surrounding the issue. In a similar sense, United States teens have been actively voicing their concerns about gun violence since the Orlando and Parkland mass shootings. Teens were also some of the first to hit the streets--and social media--protesting contemporary racial inequality in 2020. This evidence highlights the need that teens have for representation because all of the moments referenced in the evidence directly relate to the younger generation in a greater capacity than those who are making laws about the issues, particularly gun violence and racial discrimination. Since teens have been more greatly--and tragically--affected by the rise of school shootings, they offer new perspectives, that adult voters don't have, to ongoing arguments about the issue. Very few politicians and adults have had to live through the constant threat of gun violence on a daily basis. If they have--based on their career choice--at least those adults are prepared for such. Teens, who are legally required to go to school, however, are potentially in danger each day, and they have no choice to be that way. So, it seems that in order to ensure that their first-hand insights are considered when there is a discussion about changing policy centered around often-outdated legislation, their perspectives must be heard. The same is true in regard to racial inequality, since as a generation, teens are more vocal about advocating for legislation that promotes the removal of systemic racism because they have grown up in a more-diverse and accepting culture and aren't afraid of upsetting the status quo. Furthermore, teens the past few years have proven that teens are consistently willing to engage in controversial political discussions, suggesting that they do indeed take interest in engaging in political action itself. The rise of social media has clearly given students a voice in relation to political action; however, it's not necessarily enough to encourage students to fully explore issues on their own. Thus, if society wants the youth to begin taking their duties more seriously, which they will clearly do, the government must give more weight to their voices, and this can be done through granting them the right to the ballot.

# Synthesis Commentary



### Working Prompt:

Develop an argument to present to state lawmakers about whether or not the voting age should be lowered to 16.

### Synthesis Thesis (Open):

While many assume that teenagers shouldn't be able to vote, the voting age should be lowered to 16 because the only way to develop civic responsibility is to allow them to have it.

### Topic Sentence:

Although it may be commonly theorized that "17-year-olds wouldn't be competent voters" (Chan and Clayton), the documented social activity of minors matches their need for representation in national politics.



# Generating Commentary:

Although it may be commonly theorized that "17-year-olds wouldn't be competent voters" (Chan and Clayton), the documented social activity of minors matches their need for representation in national politics.

Evidence:

For example, after Austria recently lowered their voting age, they have since realized that "the quality of these [younger] citizens' choices is similar to that of older voters" (Wagner). In fact, Markus Wagner, a social sciences professor, acknowledges that the "[younger voters] cast votes in ways that enable[d] their interests to be represented equally well."

Commentary:

This evidence proves the need that younger generations have for governmental representation because when nationally tested--like in Austria--political voting patterns were still deemed valid and inclusive. Since older teens are active members in communities affected by national legislation, knowing that their interests are equally represented subsequently inspires civic engagement that matches the participation and interest of older voters.



## Generating Commentary:

Although it may be commonly theorized that "17-year-olds wouldn't be competent voters" (Chan and Clayton), the documented social activity of minors matches their need for representation in national politics.



...develop civic responsibility is to allow them to have it.



## Commentary:

Furthermore, teens will be more inclined to develop greater civic responsibility because granting them the right to the ballot will give more weight to their voices. Thus, understanding that they now have greater social responsibilities, they should desire to be more informed when making the choices the government has now entrusted them with.



# Synthesis Body Paragraph

Although it may be commonly theorized that "17-year-olds wouldn't be competent voters" (Chan and Clayton), the documented social activity of minors matches their need for representation in national politics. For example, after Austria recently lowered their voting age, they have since realized that "the quality of these [younger] citizens' choices is similar to that of older voters" (Wagner). In fact, Markus Wagner, a social sciences professor, acknowledges that the "[younger voters] cast votes in ways that enable[d] their interests to be represented equally well." This evidence proves the need that younger generations have for governmental representation because when nationally tested--like in Austria--political voting patterns were still deemed valid and inclusive. Since older teens are active members in communities affected by national legislation, knowing that their interests are equally represented subsequently inspires civic engagement that matches the participation and interests of older voters. Furthermore, teens will be more inclined to develop greater civic responsibility because granting them the right to the ballot will give more weight to their voices. Thus, understanding that they now have greater social responsibilities, teens should desire to be more informed when making the choices the government has now entrusted them with.



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