

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

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5. The Rhetorical Situation &
Identifying Rhetorical Choices

4. Writing for Sophistication

3. Generating Evidence &
Effective Quote Integration

2. Providing & Explaining
Commentary

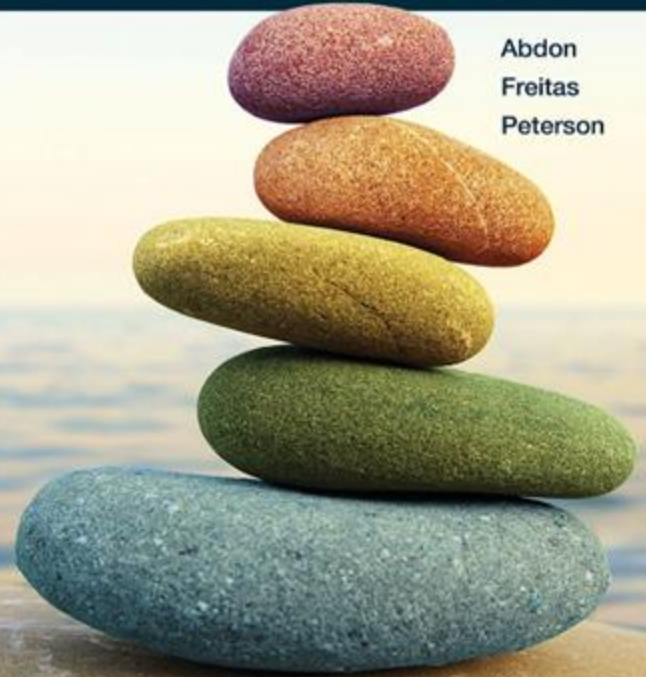
1. A Focus on Line of
Reasoning

AMSCO®

ADVANCED PLACEMENT® EDITION

English Language and Composition

Abdon
Freitas
Peterson



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Essential Questions:

- As a writer, how can you organize a text to help communicate your line of reasoning?
- As a reader, how can you determine if an argument's line of reasoning supports the thesis and is logical?

Understanding Line of Reasoning

A line of reasoning is the logical sequence of the writer's claim, evidence, and commentary that leads a reader to the writer's central argument.

- The most effective lines of reasoning are clear and logical.
- If the line of reasoning is flawed or incomplete, the argument loses credibility.

Fundamentals: Creating or Analyzing Line of Reasoning

1. Create or identify an overarching thesis.
2. Create or identify topic sentences that fall under the umbrella of the overarching thesis.
3. Include or identify transitional language that chronologically/methodologically correlates the relationships between paragraphs, ideas, examples, and commentary.
4. Explain or identify how the evidence proves the writer's claims (in topic sentences and the thesis).

Common Reasoning Patterns

There are many patterns of reasoning. The ones listed below are the ones you are most likely to come across.

- **Deductive Reasoning:** Reasoning from a general concept or assumption to show how a specific example relates to that concept
Example: Fast foods contain high degrees of fat. Foods high in fats pose health problems, such as obesity, high blood pressure, and heart disease. For this reason, we can conclude that fast foods pose health problems.
Signal Words: *if, then, since, for this reason, conclude, therefore*
- **Inductive Reasoning:** Reasoning from specific examples or observations to a general conclusion based on them
Example: In February 2020, the toys in kids' meals at Wendy's were "Wild, Wild Animals." In addition, in the same month, Burger King's kids' toys were "Feisty Pets," while McDonald's offered "Spirit" toys based on the movie about a horse. From these examples we can conclude that animals are popular toys in kids' fast food meals.
Signal Words: *in addition, also, for example, therefore*
- **Causal Reasoning:** Reasoning that something causes something else
Example: Several developments have caused fast food chains to offer healthier options. One was the rise of fast food drive-throughs that offered only healthy food, such as Salad and Go in Arizona, at the same prices as regular fast food chains. A second was the requirement by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration that all large chains must list nutrition information, including calorie content of foods, on their

menus. Making that information available publicly puts pressure on chains to offer foods with lower calories.

Signal Words: *because, consequently, for this reason, explains, supports, caused, therefore, as a result*

- **Analogic or Comparative Reasoning:** Reasoning that something is like or unlike something else
Example: Efforts to market fast food to children continue with few regulations, cementing the presence of fast foods in American culture. In 2018, the fast food industry spent \$29 million lobbying lawmakers to make sure those regulations stay away. And as children get older, they face a similar level of marketing from the makers of e-cigarettes, now largely owned by the big tobacco companies, who spend an average of \$23 million each year lobbying lawmakers. As dollars spent on unregulated marketing to youth have increased, so has the use of e-cigarettes among teens and young adults, and so has apparent harm to health.
Signal Words: *in the same way, like, in contrast, for the same reasons, similar*

Here are different patterns of reasoning as well as words that flag them, alerting the reader to slow down and pay attention. These words are part of the writer's commentary as an argument unfolds.

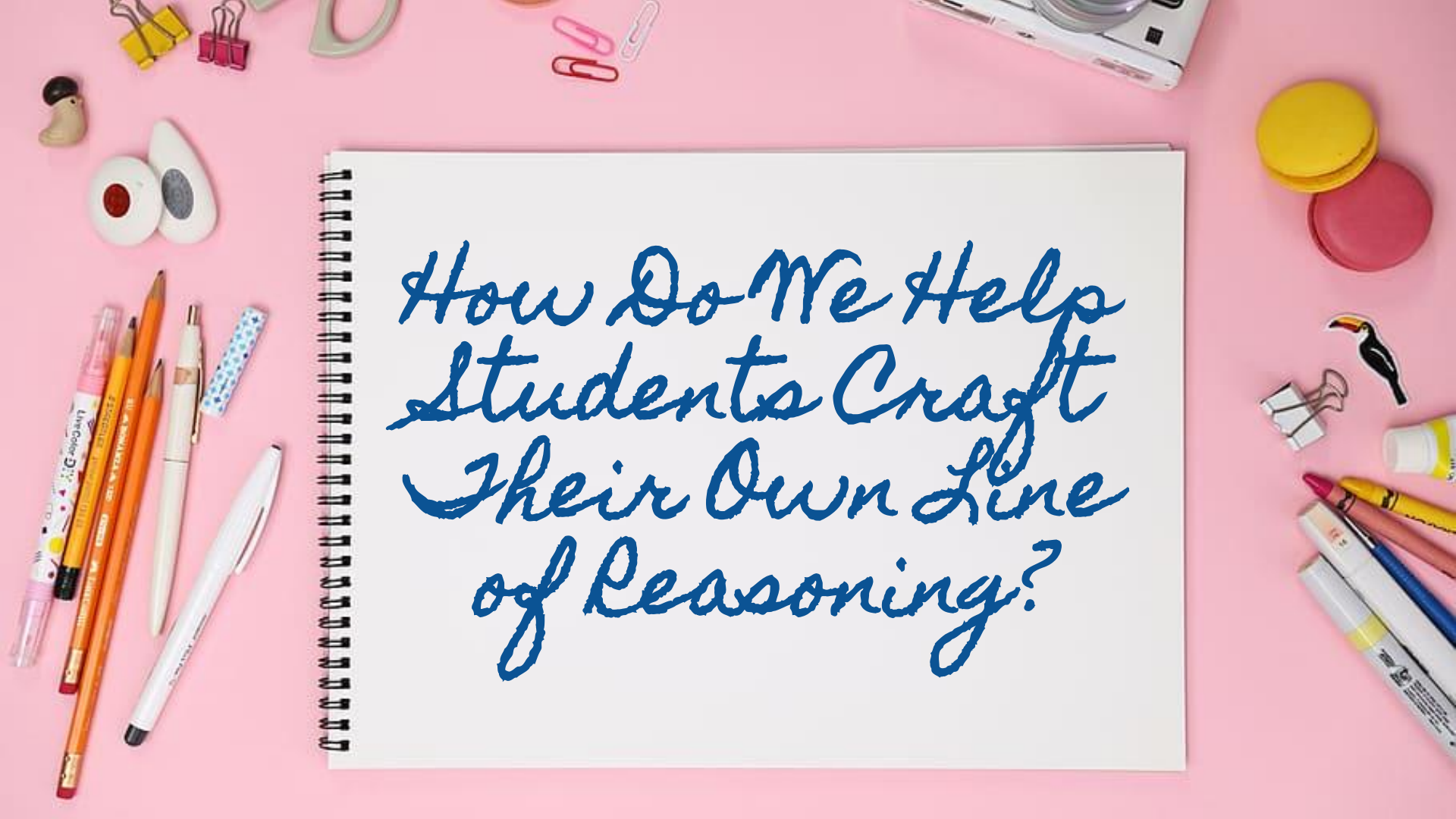
Classroom Activity #1 for Reading & Analyzing Line of Reasoning (page 143):

- ❑ Have students break the reading into sections.
- ❑ Articulate the overarching thesis for the piece.
- ❑ Chronologically identify the claims within the text.
- ❑ Explain the relationships between the claims.
- ❑ Explain how each paragraph relates to the thesis.
- ❑ Explain how transitions establish the relationships between paragraphs or overarching ideas.

Paragraph	Paragraph Claim	Line of Reasoning
Paragraphs 1-2	Fast food has infiltrated every nook and cranny of American society. It has become almost a custom.	The writer introduces the topic of fast food and reminds the readers how ubiquitous it is.
Paragraph 3	Fast food has become a revolutionary force in American life. (thesis)	The writer states his overarching claim, or thesis.
Paragraph 4	The growth rate of fast food is due to fundamental changes in American society.	Historical context: how did we get here?
Paragraph 5	The McDonald's Corporation is a powerful symbol of America's service economy.	The writer uses the next ten paragraphs to provide evidence and commentary to support his overarching claim. Each paragraph discusses an important aspect of American society (e.g., service economy, business competition, conformity v. nonconformity, capitalism, technology).
Paragraphs 6-7	Fast food threatens small businesses as chains take over independent stores.	
Paragraph 8	Successful fast food chains thrive on conformity.	
Paragraph 9	Fast food chains embody the best and worst of capitalism: innovation, and a widening gulf between rich and poor.	
Paragraphs 10-11	Technological advances have contributed to mass production and a disconnect between food sources and food service.	Read each paragraph's claim. Note how each paragraph supports the thesis, revealing a logical line of reasoning that continues through the entire text.
Paragraph 12	Back to Cheyenne Mountains: the growth of the Colorado population mirrors the growth of the fast food industry.	
Paragraph 13	The fast food industry's success is due, in part, to certain political and economic choices like government subsidies.	
Paragraph 14	The fast food industry now controls many of the choices surrounding American agriculture, which has negatively affected rural areas and small towns.	
Paragraph 15	Fast food chains' rise to power has changed how cattle are raised and processed, making the meatpacking industry dangerous.	
Paragraph 16	The fast food industry and some of the peripheral issues, such as "mall and sprawling" and obesity, exhibit a distinctly American viewpoint.	
Paragraph 17	Fast food has impacted ordinary American lives, even children's lives.	
Paragraph 18	The fast food industry is gaining popularity outside America and provides insight into mass consumption.	
Paragraph 19	The purpose of the book is to raise awareness for the complex and concerning issues involved in the fast food industry.	Now what? The author explains how the fast food phenomenon in America is spreading across the globe. Perhaps this is the exigence for engaging in this important conversation.

Classroom Activity #2: Reading & Analyzing Line of Reasoning:

1. Identify the writer's purpose (understand and do); then, articulate these purposes.
2. If these are the purposes (the end goal(s)), how has the writer built to these "end goals" or purposes?
 - a. Highlight the language throughout the piece that builds to that purpose.
 - b. Highlight areas where the writer transitions in a different color.
 - c. Articulate these movements throughout the piece: The speaker begins by —, moves to —, follows this with —, and concludes by —.



How Do We Help
Students Craft
Their Own Line
of Reasoning?

Fundamentals of **Creating** Line of Reasoning:

1. Have students write the purpose of their essays: they want the audience to understand ____ and do _____. (Q1&Q3 Only)
2. Do you have an overarching thesis?
3. Do your topic sentences fall under the umbrella of your overarching thesis?
4. Can you identify **transitional language** that logically correlates the relationships between paragraphs, ideas, examples, and commentary?
5. Did you articulate how the evidence proves your claims in **topic sentences** and the **thesis**? (did you use **c/e** language?)
6. Highlight language in the commentary that relates to the **topic sentence** and the **overarching thesis**.

Examples for Line of Reasoning

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 in order to criticize the current responses of world leaders, 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?)

Line of Reasoning: Topic Sentence Claim

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, as she mentions later, all of this destruction "can be solved with just business as usual" (32-33).

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.

Line of Reasoning: Thesis Claim

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.

Tracing Line of Reasoning in Argument

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.

Line of Reasoning: Topic Sentence Claim

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 UN, 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.

Line of Reasoning: Thesis Claim

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**.

Tracing Line of
Reasoning in
Synthesis

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.

Tracing Line of Reasoning: Topic Sent. Claims

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.

Tracing Line of Reasoning: Thesis Claims

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.

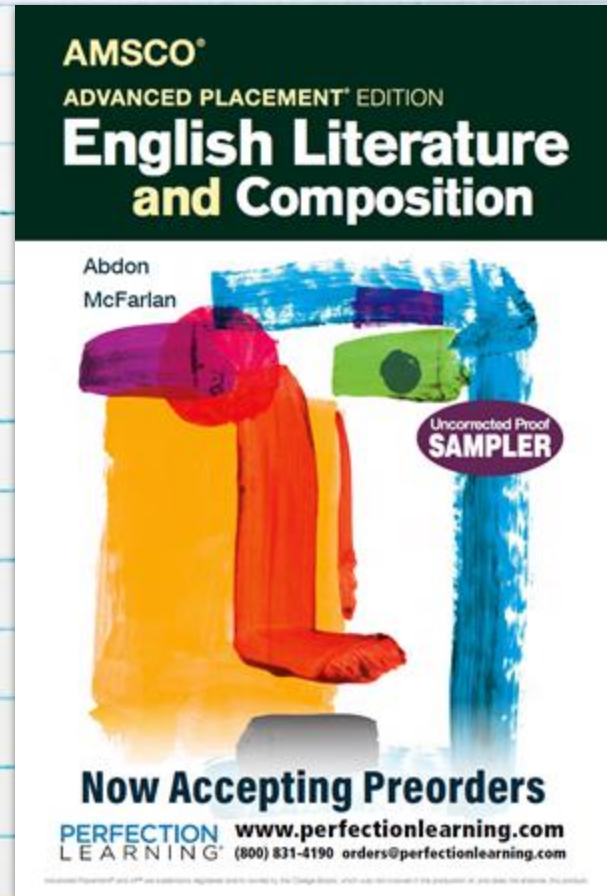


Commentary:

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.

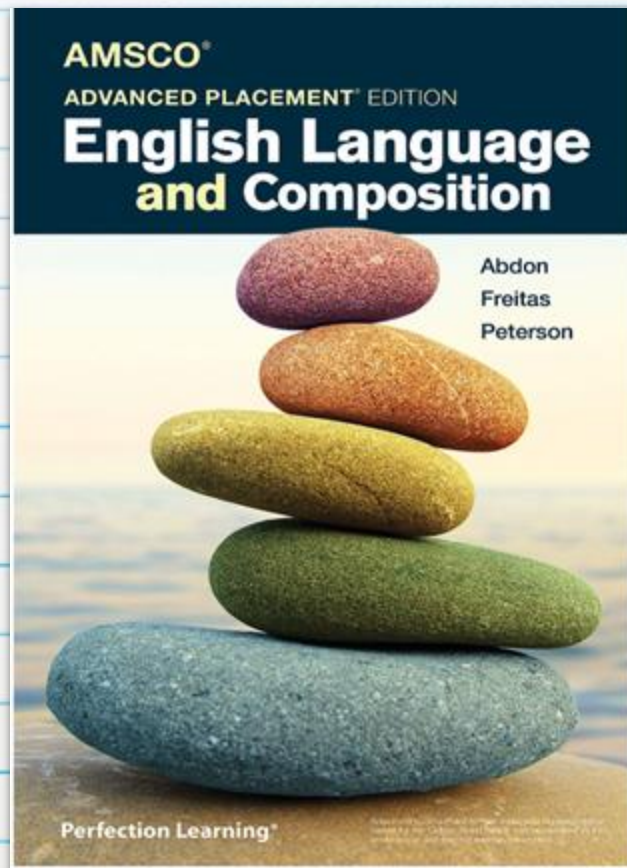
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