

Timed Writing Self-Evaluation Instructions

1. Highlight the following:
 - Thesis = green
 - Topic Sentences & Summary Sentences = pink
 - Concrete Details/Embedded Textual Evidence = blue
 - Commentary = yellow
 - *If you substitute colors, make a key at the top.*
2. Consider each of the following:
 - Do you start each paragraph with a clear and focused topic sentence?
 - Does each paragraph end with a summary sentence (not commentary about your last piece of textual evidence or textual evidence)?
 - Do you have at least two sentences of commentary following each piece of textual evidence?
 - What is your ratio of concrete details/textual evidence to commentary? Ideal is around 20/80.
 - *Make notes to yourself in the margins or on sticky notes regarding the adjustments that you should make.*
3. Examine your concrete details/textual evidence:
 - With a red pen, draw a line under your words (everything except the actual quoted evidence from the soliloquy).
 - Working with a partner, read aloud each piece of embedded textual evidence (context + textual evidence).
 - Does your textual evidence sound like a natural part of the sentence or is the sentence awkward and choppy?
4. Review the list of words that should be avoided in academic writing. If you see any of these, mark them out with an X. See the list on your table clusters.
5. Take a look at your sentence structure.
 - Do you use a variety of sentences? (If many of your sentences begin with the same word or phrase, or have the same structure, then you do not have effective sentence variety.)
 - Do you use transitions? Are those transitions sophisticated or simplistic? Are your transition words always at the beginning of a sentence? This will effect sentence variety. See the list of transition words in the “help desk.”
 - Good places for transitions words are topic or summary sentences.
6. Place a box around all pronouns, then check agreement:
 - See the list of pronouns on your desk clusters.
7. Are there any contractions that are not part of your textual evidence? Strike through and replace them.
8. How many times do you use Othello as a title (not a character)? Find each, and make sure you have the title underlined (not in quotation marks).
9. Find a partner and read your essay aloud. As you read, consider the effectiveness of your (and your partner’s) writing style.
 - Mark areas for improvement in style as needed.
 - Take time to discuss the effectiveness of your argument.
10. Review the content of your essay:
 - Is your thesis effective? Do you clearly and accurately identify the complex tone (at least two adjectives)?
 - Do your thesis, topic sentences, and summary sentences all align? Do you use logic glue (i.e., you stay on topic throughout the essay).
 - Is the organization of your ideas appropriate (consider both paragraphs and order of concrete details/text evidence)?
 - Are your concrete details relevant and apt?
 - Is your commentary focused on connecting device to meaning? (If you are merely talking about literary devices, then you are not doing this effectively.)
 - Is your commentary rich and layered? Are you making complex (rather than a simplistic) argument?
 - Is your argument persuasive?

11. Read through the AP Rubric and score yourself. Remember to consider the essay as a whole, not the parts. An essay with errors may score well if the content is exceptional.

- Scores of 8s and 9s are rare in a first timed writing.
- Scores of 6-9 are “upper half” and 1-4 are “lower half.”

AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1: William Shakespeare, *Othello*

The score should reflect the quality of the essay as a whole—its content, style, and mechanics. **Reward students for what they do well.** The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by 1 point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a 3.

- 9 – 8** These essays offer a persuasive analysis of how the use of literary devices helps to convey Iago’s attitude toward the characters described in the soliloquy. The writers of these essays offer a range of interpretations. They provide convincing readings of the how each character is described and draws a clear connection to the nuances of Iago’s tone as it relates to specific literary elements such as imagery, word choice, details, and figurative language. These essays engage the text through apt and specific references. Although these essays may not be error-free, their perceptive analysis is apparent in writing that is clear and effectively organized. Essays scored a 9 reveal more sophisticated analysis and more effective control of language than do essays scored an 8.
- 7 – 6** These essays offer a reasonable analysis of how the use of literary devices helps to convey Iago’s attitude toward the characters described in the soliloquy. The students provide a sustained, competent reading of the passage, with attention to elements such as imagery, word choice, details, and figurative language as they contribute to Iago’s tone. Although these essays may not be error-free and are less perceptive or less convincing than 9-8 essays, the students present their ideas with clarity and control and refer to the text for support. Essays scored a 7 present better-developed analysis and more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than do essays scored a 6.
- 5** These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible reading of the passage, but tend to be superficial or thin in their discussion of how the literary devices help to convey Iago’s attitude toward the characters described in the soliloquy. While containing some analysis of the passage, implicit or explicit, the discussion of how such elements as imagery, word choice, details, and figurative language contribute to the Iago’s tone may be slight, and support from the passage may tend toward summary or paraphrase. While these writers demonstrate adequate control of language, their essays may be marred by surface errors. These essays are not as well conceived, organized, or developed as 7-6 essays.
- 4 – 3** These lower-half essays fail to offer an adequate analysis of the passage. The analysis may be partial, unconvincing, or irrelevant; the students may ignore the portrayal of the nuances in attitude expressed by Iago toward the characters described in the soliloquy or lack a meaningful connection between the literary elements and tone. These essays may be characterized by an unfocused or repetitive presentation of ideas, an absence of textual support, or an accumulation of errors. Essays scored a 3 may contain significant misreading and/or inept writing
- 2 – 1** These essays compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4-3 range. They may persistently misread the passage or be unacceptably brief. They may contain pervasive errors that interfere with understanding. Although some attempt has been made to respond to the prompt, the student’s ideas are presented with little clarity, organization, or support from the passage. Essays scored a 1 contain little coherent discussion of the passage.