

Writing for Advanced Placement Exams

The free-response questions on Advanced Placement (AP) exams measure a student's ability to write well-developed essays using the composing and content knowledge for a specific discipline. Teachers in AP courses will provide extensive information and practice in writing these essays. The following suggestions are applicable to any discipline.

How to Approach

Free-Response Questions

I. Read the prompt

- Read all questions carefully.
- Identify the task: compare? contrast? support? refute? analyze? explain? evaluate? persuade?

II. Read or examine supporting materials

- Read documents and passages carefully.
- Examine maps, charts, graphs, or cartoons.
- Make notes as you read.

III. Compose the response

- Plan your response.
- Answer all parts of the question.
- Provide evidence beyond common knowledge to show depth of understanding.
- Be sure to explain and not merely list facts.
- Include critical vocabulary that addresses the topic.
- Recall and apply prior knowledge to your response, if appropriate.

To see sample questions in all content areas, visit the following website:

http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/prep_free.htm