

## English 11 – AP - Multi-Paragraph Essay Terminology

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ESSAY - A piece of writing that analyzes different components of a subject. Your essays will be at least four paragraphs long with an introduction, two body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph.

INTRODUCTION - The first paragraph of an essay. Normally concrete opening statements work best, narrowing gradually to a thesis statement (what your essay will show to be true, most effectively used at the end of the paragraph).

BODY PARAGRAPH - A middle paragraph in an essay. It develops (explains) a point you want to make that supports your thesis.

CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH - The last paragraph in your essay. It may sum up your ideas, reflect on what you said in your essay, say more commentary about your subject, or give a personal statement about the subject. It does not restate the introduction.

THESIS - A sentence with a subject and opinion (also called commentary). This comes somewhere in your introductory paragraph. If you write your essay in one sentence, that sentence is your thesis statement.

Pre-WRITING - The process of assembling concrete details on paper before you organize your essay into paragraphs. You can use any or all of the following: bubble clusters, diagrams, outlines, columns, or any brainstorming strategy that works.

CONCRETE DETAILS (CD) - Specific details that form the backbone or core of your body paragraphs. Synonyms for concrete detail include facts, specifics, examples, descriptions, illustrations, support, proof, statistics, evidence, quotations, paraphrasing, or plot references.

COMMENTARY (CM) - Your comments or opinion about something: not concrete detail. Synonyms include opinion, insight, analysis, expansion, interpretation, inference, personal response, feelings, evaluation, explication, and reflection.

TOPIC SENTENCE - The first sentence in a body paragraph. This must have a subject and opinion (commentary) for the paragraph. It does the same thing for a body paragraph that the thesis does for the whole essay.

CONCLUDING SENTENCE - The last sentence in a body paragraph. It is all commentary, does not repeat key words, and gives a finished feeling to the paragraph. It may often serve as a transition to the next body paragraph.

SHAPING THE ESSAY - The planning step that is done after prewriting and before your first draft of an essay; it is an outline of your thesis, topic sentences, concrete details, and commentary.

FIRST DRAFT - The first version of your essay, also called the rough draft.

REVISED DRAFT - To revise is *to see again*. A process of experiencing your writing objectively, improving what works, removing what's extra, and re-arranging what is out-of-sequence.

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PEER RESPONSE - Written responses and reactions to a partner's paper.

CHUNK - One sentence of concrete detail and two sentences of commentary. It is the smallest unified group of thoughts that you can build into a paragraph.

WEAVING - Blending concrete details and commentary in a body paragraph.

RATION - The ration of one part concrete detail (CD) to two-plus parts commentary (CM).

Format for "9" Essays - (Papers with the highest grades generally follow this format. You might wish to follow this suggested format until your are comfortable with your own style.) This is "formula" writing at its best/worst, depending on your perspective.

### *Introduction*

- Opens concretely, showing a clear connection to the topic
- Includes thesis – usually the last sentence
- Paragraph contains more than forty words
- Has three or more sentences including the thesis

### *Body*

- Has two or more paragraphs
- Each paragraph contains an average of eleven sentences
- Each paragraph contains 125 or more words

### *Concluding Paragraph*

- Has 40 or more words
- Shows insight
- Does not repeat the thesis
- Gives a finished feeling (draws a conclusion)

Each paragraph is generally structured in the following way

1. Topic sentence – refers to thesis found in introduction
2. Concrete detail sentence #1 shows support for the topic sentence (For Example...)
3. Commentary
4. Commentary
5. Concrete detail sentence #2 shows support for the topic sentence (In addition...)
6. Commentary
7. Commentary
8. Concrete detail sentence #3 shows support for the topic sentence (Furthermore...)
9. Commentary
10. Commentary
11. Concluding sentence – sums up the paragraph

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### Advanced Placement Essays: Helpful Hints

1. Don't present yourself as an immature writer.

- AP readers see beyond handwriting to the larger issues of style and content, but handwriting can reflect problems:

- Is the handwriting so excessively large or small that it is difficult to decipher?
- Is the handwriting excessively florid?
- If you have poor, difficult to read handwriting, strive to be certain the writing is clear enough to read.

- AP readers must grade twenty-plus essays an hour, and your handwriting may affect attentiveness. Don't make it difficult for the reader to "see" your thinking.

- Brief, scant responses are the worst error you can make as the AP reader is left with insufficient evidence of your thinking to evaluate your ability.

2. Avoid those serious errors, which will mark you as an unprepared writer.

- A very serious error is repeated *comma splices* – running two independent clauses together without a conjunction and with only a comma. (Run-on sentences omit the comma and present the same problem.)

- Another serious error is repeated occurrences of sentence fragments.

- Spelling errors are serious, but a few are acceptable; too many may cost you points. Spelling errors combined with a lack of sentence control are more apt to count against you.

- Errors of usage – e.g., affect/effect and inaccurately used irregular past tenses – affect how the readers evaluate your language competence.

3. Write sentences that are smooth, flowing, clear, and sensible; avoid short, choppy sentences. Instead look for ways to combine short statements into longer, more connected sentences.

- Proofread to ensure that you have not omitted words that render sentences unclear or nonsensical.

- Proofread to make sure that your wording is not so confused, awkward, or ineffective that the reader cannot figure out what you are saying.

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- Sentences which are sharp, precise, and clear but which, at the same time, show complexity characterize the best writing. Sentences whose structures enable you to express intricate, layered understandings effectively will mark you as a mature and capable writer.

- A fluent, clear style is a primary characteristic of higher level writing.

- Use sentence variety to develop a more sophisticated style.

### 4. Pay attention to organization and content: THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES.

- Respond exactly to the question asked. The literature and questions are logical and focused. The pathway to your answer is in the question. Accept that guidance; interpret and illustrate the question.

- Keep your focus clear throughout your essay; make certain the thoughts are in a logical sequence that is continually connected to the focus, thus yielding a unified essay.

- Use specific details both to offer commentary and interpretation about the literary piece and to support and illustrate your points.

- Explain through examples and comments on the details of the text.

- Plan to spend about five minutes brainstorming and structuring your response; then write from your outline or list of ideas. Think through your whole answer before you begin.

- Once you begin writing, try to maintain a continuous, logical, and focused flow. You may have new insights as you proceed, but try to connect continually where you began, where you are, and where you are going with your central idea.