

*Purpose Statements: What am I supposed to write
about?* FRT07

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Purpose statements are designed to force—forgive the harsh connotations—students into thinking critically about texts that they read. Students are required to link concrete elements of the text to greater understandings while simultaneously relying on, and building, their literary/rhetorical knowledge and vocabulary. Because students will read the same texts and arrive at different observations, or focus on different words, phrases, or events, these purpose statements work as great springboards for class discussions. Also, due to the fact that these statements are only a-sentence-a-piece, they are quick homework assignments that students will usually complete. Also, in regard to their highly personal, interpretive nature, copying and cheating is easy to catch; honestly, how many kids are going to read the same work, focus on the exact same element of the text, arrive at the same understanding, and word it the exact same way? Not many. (←Author’s Note: I could create a nice purpose statement about hypophora here. ☺)

In order for students to create purpose statements, I ask them to reflect on all of the literary/rhetorical elements that they know, and I have the students compile the terms on one sheet of paper. I follow this up with creating a class list and adding a few of my favorite techniques that they may have overlooked; I also give them my definition of **purpose: what the reader is supposed to understand—and/or do (if specifically talking about rhetoric)—after experiencing the text or discourse.**

Once students create their giant lists of literary and rhetorical terms, I make sure that they are clear on all of their definitions. Depending on the grade level, this list may be ridiculously long, or it may be quite short. I then provide my students with the purpose statement template and examples of it in action. (Note: Throughout my provided examples, I have linked each one to the lit/rhetorical terms explored; however, I don’t make my students do this. It doesn’t seem like a bad idea, though. You will also notice that I rely heavily on examples from Martin Luther King Jr. and Shakespeare with a scattering of Steinbeck. This is because these are the works I use to introduce the technique with the different grade levels I teach.):

Template:

(Author’s Last Name) presents (summary of concrete major literary/rhetorical element—explicitly/implicitly relating to a literary/rhetorical term) in order to (answer to what you understand about characters/plot/universal insights (thematic observations) based on the summarized element— explicitly/implicitly relating to a literary/rhetorical term).

e.g.,

Literary

Shakespeare presents catastrophic and ominous natural events in order to foreshadow the assassination of Caesar and further establish that fate is driving the aforementioned event. (Setting/Foreshadowing/Conflict/Universal Insight)

Shakespeare presents Cassius’s past negative experiences with Caesar in order to characterize their relationship as one fueled by jealousy and hatred. (Narration/Conflict/Characterization)

Steinbeck presents Lennie chasing after a dead mouse in order to illustrate Lenny’s simple thought processes and obsession with soft objects. (Exposition/Characterization)

Thematic

Universal Idea: Individual abstract concept(s) that are explored throughout a work of literature.

e.g.

Dishonesty, Community, Truth, Responsibility, Consequence

Universal Insight: A didactic statement about the universal idea that is true for most, if not all, individuals. Universal Insights often establish relationships between multiple universal ideas.

Template: (To avoid “You” statements)

(Artist) writes (insert title) in order to illustrate that (universal idea) (specific insight about the idea that is supposed to be true for most, if not all, individuals).

e.g.

John Doe writes “The Little Boy Who Cries Wolf” in order to illustrate that dishonesty often begets negative consequences. (Unless you are a politician).

John Steinbeck writes Of Mice and Men in order to illustrate that companionship often requires immense sacrifice.

More Concrete Purpose statements for Struggling Students (Keeping Observations within the text)

Shakespeare presents a general public servant with a warning letter for Caesar in order to show that many individuals know of the conspiracy against the ruler. (Suspense/Dramatic Irony)

Shakespeare presents a concerned teacher in order to show that the public has a love for Caesar. (Internal Conflict/ Characterization/Characterizing Mass Audience)

Rhetorical

I have two types of rhetorical purpose statements: Overall and Focused. I require the students to complete these first templates directly after they read a piece for the sake of making sure they understand the informative and persuasive layers of the work they are looking at. I then move to more specific observations after I know the students understand the OVERALL, LAYERED purpose of the work. The reason I do this is so that when we bridge to rhetorical analysis paragraphs and essays, I can ask them to look at their focused purpose statements and ask them discuss observations as to how the focused statements help drive the speaker's overall purpose. The overall purpose statements are their thesis statements; the focused purpose statements are their topic sentences.

Overall Rhetorical Purpose

To Inform (Understand): . (Speaker) presents the entirety of his/her (speech/article) in order to inform (audience) (answer to what s/he wants the audience to understand about the (subject)).

E.g. President John F. Kennedy presents the entirety of his steel crisis media address in order to inform the American public of the unjustifiable and selfish actions recently taken by US steel executives in the midst of a time of economic recovery.

Chavez presents the entirety of his article "He Showed Us the Way" in order to inform Christian activists and potential sympathizers of the power and necessity of utilizing nonviolence even in the most dire circumstances.

To Persuade (Do): (Speaker) presents the entirety of his/her (speech/article) in order to persuade (audience) (answer to what s/he wants the audience to do based on the information about the (subject)).

E.g. President John F. Kennedy presents the entirety of his steel crisis media address in order to persuade the American public to join him in condemning the US steel executives' actions and ultimately provide social pressure—derived from their anger at the injustice—which will hopefully assist in lowering steel costs.

Chavez presents the entirety of his article "He Showed Us the Way" in order to persuade Christian activists and potential sympathizers to either support the morality of nonviolent movements and/or universally embrace nonviolent tactics when engaging in protests.

Combined: (Speaker) presents the entirety of his/her (speech/article) in order to showcase (insert answer to what the speaker wants the audience to understand), ultimately moving (insert audience) to (answer to what he wants the audience to do based on after experiencing the text).

E.g. President John F. Kennedy presents the entirety of his steel crisis media address in order to showcase the unjustifiable and selfish actions recently taken by US steel executives in the midst of a time of economic recovery, ultimately moving the American public to join him in condemning the US steel executives' actions, which will hopefully assist in lowering steel costs due to social pressures.

Chavez presents the entirety of his article "He Showed Us the Way" in order to showcase the power and necessity of utilizing nonviolence—even in the most dire circumstances—ultimately moving Christian activists and potential sympathizers of the Farmworkers' Movement to either support the morality of nonviolent movements and/or universally embrace nonviolent tactics when engaging in protests.

Focused Rhetorical Purpose

Martin Luther King, Jr. presents an allusion to Abraham Lincoln in order to invoke the memory of the civil rights icon and tie the positive connotations of this man to his—King's—message. (allusion/positive ethical appeal/ethos)

Cesar Chavez repeatedly refers to the lives of internationally renowned civil rights leaders in order to exemplify the practical power that nonviolent protest holds. (Exemplification/Emotional and Logical reasoning)

Martin Luther King, Jr. alludes to the Gettysburg Address in order to establish the socio-political similarities during the times of the Civil War and the present. (allusion/rhetorical situation)

Martin Luther King, Jr. presents consistently positive images in conjunction with the Emancipation Proclamation in order to exhibit the hope it brought to racial minorities during a tumultuous time. (Connotation/Diction and Imagery/Exordium/Tone)

Martin Luther King, Jr. presents repeated images relating to imprisonment in order to characterize the dismal oppression minorities currently face at the hands of the government. (Connotation/ Diction and Imagery (metaphor)/Exigence)

Martin Luther King, Jr. develops an extended metaphor based on financial imagery in order to criticize the racial injustice that permeating throughout society. (Extended metaphor/Tone/Exigence)

A Note about “Presents”

The purpose statement template forces the students to use the authorial verb **presents**, but I don’t mind if they change it (especially with rhetorical analysis) as long as the new verb is equally as poignant. Also, when completing this assignment and focusing on a literary work, “presents” always works to prompt students as they try and look for something concrete. Also, I don’t force them to use literary or rhetorical terminology; I ask them to say what the author is doing however they can understand it.

When Juggling Lit Terms and Abstraction Gets Hard: A Guide to Creating Insightful Statements

My former school district took students from 13 other school systems and some were stronger than others. My new district has kids coming in from an even greater number of locations. Because of this, when I first start assigning purpose statements, I get varied results. Also, as we all well know, some students may be perfectly capable of pondering abstract concepts, yet the time they use on the bus or in homeroom isn’t enough to generate the voluptuously insightful thoughts we desire. Due to the aforementioned circumstances, I have developed the following as a guide for common mistakes. The guide is also so that students can’t say that I never gave them more guidance than what I do in class so that when they produce rushed garbage, I can ask them to take out this sheet and show me where instructions are unclear.

The Guide: **Below, I’m going go over some of the common errors I notice with initial purpose statement construction, and I expect that students will deal with the issues and not produce statements that are not thorough and/or insightful. Furthermore, student citations should ALWAYS FOLLOW MLA formatting. My directions and examples are clear; if student work doesn’t look like the model, students should not expect receive an A or a B on the assignment.**

STUDENTS MUST MAKE SURE THEIR PURPOSE STATEMENTS DEAL WITH THE CONCRETE (AUTHOR PRESENTS (Summary of CONCRETE PLOT OR LANGUAGE)) and the abstract (IN ORDER TO...). What shows up on the right-hand side of the words “in order to” should always contain at least one word that is an idea (i.e. intangible.) In each of my corrected examples below, I have underlined the abstraction found on the right-hand side. Note, if the corresponding textual evidence is not properly cited, students will receive no credit for the **WHOLE** purpose statement.

Problem 1: Incorrect reading comprehension (example taken from Act II.i, while Romeo’s friends search for him after the Capulet party.)

1. Shakespeare presents Mercutio and Romeo talking about love in order to display how each loves Rosaline.
Problem: Mercutio doesn’t love Rosaline, and Romeo has moved on. This is blatantly incorrect information; this suggests you weren’t able to comprehend the reading, and your answer is entirely incorrect. It’s wrong, no questions asked. You are required to understand the text you read. All students must use comprehension resources I provide for them.
1. **Corrected:** Shakespeare presents Mercutio talking about Romeo’s love for Rosaline in order to highlight the miscommunication between the characters found in the audience and Romeo knowing he now loves Juliet, while Mercutio does not. (**NOTE:** This purpose statement relates dramatic irony to conflict.)

Problem 2: Vacuous statements

1. Shakespeare presents figurative language in order to show Romeo’s true feelings for her.
Or
2. Shakespeare presents Romeo and Juliet mentioning death in order to foreshadow a future conflict.
Or
3. Shakespeare presents Romeo comparing Juliet to the Sun in order to display figurative language.
Or
4. Shakespeare presents Romeo in Juliet’s garden to show dramatic irony.
The above purpose statements do not show me that a student has recognized and interpreted anything meaningful. These suggest a student has rushed through the assignment.

1. **Problem:** The problem with the first example is that the figurative language is not summarized or identified. Also, I have no idea what “Romeo’s true feelings” are for “her.” What are Romeo’s “true feelings”? Who is the “her”?
Corrected: *Shakespeare presents Romeo comparing Juliet to the Sun in order to highlight how infatuated he is by her (to the point his world revolves around her).*
2. **Problem:** The left-hand side of the “in order to” is fine in the case of the second example; however, the right-hand side exhibits little understanding. What is the future conflict? Do you mean their death? Oh, good. Then write it.
Corrected: *Shakespeare presents Romeo and Juliet mentioning death in order to foreshadow their deaths as an outcome of their romance.*
3. **Problem:** There is no abstraction on the right-hand side of the “in order to.” This does not demonstrate even an attempt at higher order thinking.
Corrected: *Shakespeare presents Romeo comparing Juliet to the Sun in order to highlight how infatuated he is by her (to the point his world revolves around her).*
4. **Problem:** First, there is no abstraction on the right-hand side of the “in order to.” This does not demonstrate even an attempt at higher order thinking. Second, the statement gives me no indication this student understands dramatic irony—what it is, or how it functions. When a student discusses dramatic irony, s/he needs to link it to some element of suspense (tension/anticipation) and/or conflict (struggle).
Corrected: *Shakespeare presents Romeo listening to an oblivious Juliet’s reflections in order to build suspense as the audience anticipates Romeo’s revelation of his presence. (Note: This purpose statement relates dramatic irony to suspense.)*

Moving to Paragraphing

Along with the purpose statements, I also require students to follow them with properly cited textual evidence that relates to the concrete element(s) they decide to incorporate into the left side of the template—what comes after “presents” and before “in order to”. If students complete this second element of the assignment in conjunction with the purpose statements themselves, they—the students—essentially come into class with thoughtful topic sentences and properly cited textual evidence. I usually ask students to share their work with one another and then with the class as a whole. I then ask them to pick their two best purpose statements and turn them into paragraphs using what I call “perfect paragraph structure” (←My format for this is all of the crazy boxes on the last page).

The initial assignment would look like this: (Example 1 is Romeo and Juliet; Example 2 is “He Showed us the Way”)

Purpose Statement:

1. *Shakespeare presents Tybalt’s outrage during the Capulet party in order to display his aggressively violent, yet loyal nature.*
2. *Cesar Chavez refers to the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in order to present the power that nonviolent protest holds.*

Textual Evidence

1. *“Fetch me my rapier, boy. What dares the slave/Come hither, cover’d with an antic face,/To fleer and scorn at our solemnity?/Now, by the stock and honour of my kin,/To strike him dead, I hold it not a sin” (I.v. 55-59).*
“He is a Montague, our foe” (I.v.61).
“It fits, when such a villain is a guest:/I’ll not endure him” (I.v.77)
2. *“Dr. King’s entire life was an example of the power that nonviolence brings to bear in the real world” (Chavez 4).*

Now, for the first example, this is a lot of textual evidence; I often ask my students to find at least two pieces of text to match with their purpose statements, but it’s not always easy, so one does suffice—as evidenced by example 2. It just so happens that the scene from example one is loaded with evidence of Tybalt’s loyalty -to-a-fault and aggression, so I have recorded most of it. As a first step in paragraphing, I have students add the TAG (Title, Author, Genre) to their purpose statements: You’ll notice the change below: (I don’t make them write out play as the Act and roman numerals imply it.)

Topic Sentence

1. *In Act I, scene v of Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare presents Tybalt’s outrage during the Capulet party in order to display his aggressively violent, yet loyal nature.*
2. *In the article, “He Showed Us The Way,” civil rights leader and labor union organizer, Cesar Chavez, repeatedly refers to the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in order to present the power that nonviolent protest holds.*

There is nothing overly hard in adding this information, I just require it of every topic sentence when I ask my students to produce non-essay responses. In essays, I only require the aforementioned elements in the thesis.

I then move to showing students how to properly integrate their quotations and I use three fun metaphors—two of which will be quickly visited here—for this: having a foreign friend named **Dogmar** (which I can’t write out because it would

take too long, but I would happily video chat about), Channeling one's inner Disney Princess: **Elsa** in this case, and **Tuna Fish Sandwiches**. With Elsa, I tell students they need to take her advice and "Let it Flow." (I know it's actually "Go," but then this wouldn't make sense.) I instruct them that all textual evidence needs to "flow" within one's writing, not stand out like pigeon at a cat convention. I then teach them to do this with the following metaphor of the tuna fish sandwich. I tell them that when making a delectable sandwich that if they just open the can (another's writing) and put it on the bread (their writing), they will actually have a soggy mishmash of NASTINESS because they didn't drain the water: no one wants their writing to resemble a soggy tuna sandwich. So, I tell them that students need to drain the water (from long pieces of textual evidence) and only take the meat; it's the only way to make a good sandwich, or in this case, a good paragraph. I also tell them that some people need more meat on their sandwiches than others, so they should apply their "meat" wisely. Once they hear out my metaphor, I show them how to use textual and contextual summary to allow the "meat" to "flow" with their writing. This is exemplified below:

Original Textual Evidence:

1. *"Fetch me my rapier, boy. What dares the slave/Come hither, cover'd with an antic face,/To flee and scorn at our solemnity?/Now, by the stock and honour of my kin,/To strike him dead, I hold it not a sin" (I.v. 55-59).*
"He is a Montague, our foe" (I.v.61).
"It fits, when such a villain is a guest:/I'll not endure him" (I.v.77)
2. "Dr. King's entire life was an example of the power that nonviolence brings to bear in the real world" (Chavez 4).

Drained Textual Evidence:

1. *"Fetch me my rapier, ~~boy~~. What dares the slave/Come hither, cover'd with an antic face,/To flee and scorn at our solemnity?/Now, by the stock and honour of my kin,/To strike him dead, ~~I hold it not a sin~~" (I.v. 55-59).*
"He is a Montague, our ~~foe~~" (I.v.61).
~~"It fits, when such a villain is a guest:/I'll not endure him" (I.v.76-77)~~
2. "Dr. King's entire life was an example of the power that nonviolence brings to bear in the real world" (Chavez 4). (No change; sometimes you need it all.)

Letting it FLOW:

1. *Take, for example, how in the midst of reveling at a Capulet fest, Tybalt overhears Romeo commenting on an unidentified woman's beauty. In response to this discovery, Tybalt directs his servant to "fetch [him] his rapier," (I.v.55) while contemplating how if he were "to strike [Romeo] dead" it would be "not a sin" (I.v.59).*
In the midst of Tybalt's contemplations, Capulet discovers his intentions and mandates that Tybalt not create a scene. In response to his uncle's directive Tybalt retorts, "I'll not endure" (I.v.77). Romeo's presence at the party as "he is a Montague, [the Capulet's] foe" (I.v.61).
2. Take, for example, how he begins his article by reminding his audience that "Dr. King's entire life was an example of the power that nonviolence brings to bear in the real world" (Chavez 4).

(Note: I only use the phrase "Take, for example, how" at the beginning of the year to continuously prompt students to move towards providing an example after the topic sentence. Once they demonstrate they understand this by waking up with night sweats screaming, "Always follow a topic sentence with 'take, for example, how'," I tell them to skip that wording and move to merely providing context.)

Lastly, after I work with students on getting their textual evidence to "FLOW," I have them begin marking the text to provide analysis. I have realized over the years that, in dealing with 13 towns' worth of students, students are usually limited in their understanding of what analysis is: explaining how the evidence relates to the claim. They also struggle with knowing how to do that. So, before I explain to them what they have to do to provide analysis, I have students reflect on their evidence AND the context they provided before they integrated their text. I make them read their text and integration and mark—as designated with the squiggles below—the words and phrases that most clearly demonstrate (to them as interpretive readers) the author's purpose from the topic sentence, in this case Tybalt's violently aggressive and loyal nature. I do this so that they will know what they have to reference throughout their analysis. If they don't refer back to the squiggled words in their analysis, they haven't done this correctly. **(Side Note: A way that I prove to students that this is how analysis is done is by showing them a picture of Joy from Pixar's Inside Out. I have them explain to me**

how they know she is supposed to represent the emotion of Joy (or Happiness). I make them provide all of the evidence first and then have them explain how what they claim relates to Joy itself. I specifically ask in this manner: how do you know? And they consistently respond with "Because" and they refer back to individual characteristics they pull from the picture. They also then explain the connotations of colors and the common and social assumptions tied to her posture and/or physical features. And this is exactly what analysis is: explaining how the image/language conveys an understanding by explaining common conceptions that lead to a conclusion.) I also usually force the students to use the word "because" as they explain textual evidence as it prompts analysis; although, when they are learning, it is sometimes fallacious.

Anyway, below I have provided two examples of what I expect students to do when providing analysis. You'll notice that in both examples, there is squiggled text and the in the Chavez example I have actually moved to complete the analysis. In the Shakespearean example, I have only generated the initial analysis as to have them work on completing it with the information I underlined.

Chavez Paragraph Derived from Purpose Statement

TS: In the article, "He Showed Us The Way," civil rights leader and labor union organizer, Cesar Chavez, refers to the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in order to present the power that nonviolent protest holds and move his audience to practice it.

TE: Take, for example, how he begins his article by reminding his audience that "Dr. King's entire life was an example of the power that nonviolence brings to bear in the real world." (Chavez 4).

A: This acknowledgment of King **presents** the power of nonviolence **because it informs the audience** of a tangibly successful model that gives merit to his claim. Furthermore, in assuming that the audience most likely has a deep respect for Dr. King, referring to King allows Chavez to tie the positive emotions that are linked to this American icon with his stance on the power of nonviolence. All of this works **to persuade the audience** to embrace nonviolent tactics because members are forced to recognize the truth of its power, which makes it more desirable. People want to act in ways that work, and Chavez has proven that nonviolence does. Also, individuals are drawn toward positive emotions, so once they find nonviolent protest practical and positive, they will be more likely to embrace the tactic.

Shakespeare Paragraph Derived from Purpose Statement

Topic Sentence

In Act I, scene v of *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare presents Tybalt's outrage during the Capulet party in order to display his aggressively violent, yet loyal nature.

Textual Evidence: (The Underlined Words are What I will Refer Back to During my Analysis)

Take, for example, how in the midst of reveling at a Capulet fest, Tybalt overhears Romeo commenting on an unidentified woman's beauty. In response to this discovery, Tybalt directs his servant to "fetch [him] his rapier," (I.v.55) while contemplating how if her were "to strike [Romeo] dead" it would be "not a sin" (I.v.59).

Analysis

Tybalt's initial charge to his servant immediately demanding his sword illustrates Tybalt's aggressive nature because....(I would move to explain how the sword conveys the idea of aggression. I would also discuss how the fact that this is Tybalt's first and only idea in regard to handling the situation also shows his aggressive nature). Furthermore, his commenting about what he intends to do with the sword illustrates his violent nature because...(I would explain how wanting to murder another while justifying it is ultimately violent).

Textual Evidence: (The Underlined Words are What I will Refer Back to During my Analysis)

In the midst of Tybalt's contemplations, Capulet discovers his intentions and mandates that Tybalt not create a scene. In response to his uncle's directive Tybalt retorts, "I'll not endure" (I.v.77). Romeo's presence at the party as "he is a Montague, [the Capulet's] foe" (I.v.61).

Analysis:

Tybalt's challenging his uncle displays his loyalty to heritage because....(I would explain how challenging the authority of his uncle shows Tybalt's extreme loyalty to the family name. I would also explain how the word foe suggests enmity between the families and how that connection makes Tybalt not want to endure even a well-respected Montague.)

Moving to Individual Essay Writing

The basic formula for having students write essays from their thesis statements is this: have them find varying patterns in their observations, and then have them determine the common link. Have them use their common link as their thesis and then move to use their purpose statements as individual paragraphs under the umbrella of their thesis. Students recognize different patterns, favor different techniques, and understand different themes more clearly. Letting them use their own thoughtful work, already produced, as a springboard, assisting them in finding cohesion, and then asking them to write about it empowers them to write their own papers, and it saves you from having to read 8 million pages of the same response. I have a template for my essay assignment below based on Chapter 1 of *Of Mice and Men*. I produce examples from *Julius Caesar*, as I read that with my students before Steinbeck's classic.

Producing an essay about chapter 1 without a prompt:

1. Write a single sentence that in some way encapsulates most of your chapter 1 purpose statements. Make sure to include TAG, and also make sure that your final observation after the "in order to" statement pertains to the universal insight of the chapter.

e.g.,

In the play *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare presents all of Act I in order to characterize individuals and their relationships, foreshadow Caesar's death, and ultimately illustrate that language is more powerful than authority.

2. Arrange your purpose statements so that you can thoughtfully organize your observations in a manner that makes sense. That is, order and combine different purpose statements to create your paragraphs for your paper.

e.g.,

Shakespeare presents Caesar's request to Anthony during the race of Lupercalia in order to exhibit Caesar's love for Antony and his superstitious nature.

Shakespeare presents Caesar ignoring a soothsayer in order to expose his hypocritical and potentially ambitious nature.

Shakespeare presents Brutus's inner turmoil in order to suggest that the ruling class has problems with Caesar's power.

Shakespeare presents Cassius's and Brutus's conversation in order to expose Cassius's hate for Caesar, along with his—Cassius's—strong ability to persuade others.

Shakespeare presents ominous natural and supernatural occurrences in order to foreshadow the death of Caesar.

Shakespeare presents deceitful and misleading conversations and practices in order to illustrate that language is more powerful than authority.

3. Notice that in step two, I will actually have four body paragraphs rather than the typical three. Also note that I could—if I wanted to—establish other connections between my purpose statements and arrange my paragraphs differently; however, also notice how I have arranged them in a manner that seems most reasonable. Anyway, now that you have arranged your topic sentences—which are the first sentence in each paring, consider how the second sentence fits in with the first. The reason for this is because you need to transition to the second sentence in the middle of your paragraph, so you have to indicate this transition with a relationship. See my example below:

*Shakespeare presents Caesar's request to Anthony during the race of Lupercalia in order to exhibit Caesar's love for Antony and his superstitious nature. Context, "Textual Evidence" (Citation). Analysis (using the word "because" and being at least two sentences). **And though Caesar is perceived as superstitious**, Shakespeare **then** presents Caesar ignoring a soothsayer in order to expose his hypocritical and potentially ambitious nature. Context, "Textual Evidence" (Citation). Analysis (using the word "because" and being at least two sentences).*

4. Paragraph transitions: If there is a chronological or topical connection between your paragraphs, use that connection to create a transition statement. Although you have probably been taught to transition at the end of paragraphs in the past, consider actually doing it at the beginning of the next. Check out my example as I transition from my first body paragraph to my second:

***The publically perceived hypocritical nature and ambition of Caesar** prompts Shakespeare **to follow this incident** by presenting Brutus's inner turmoil in order to suggest that the ruling class has problems with Caesar's power. Context, "Textual Evidence" (Citation). Analysis (using the word "because" and being at least two sentences).*

Of all of the Roman rulers, Cassius has the most disdain for Caesar, so Shakespeare presents Cassius's and Brutus's conversation in order to expose Cassius's hate, along with his—Cassius's—strong ability to persuade others. *Context, "Textual Evidence" (Citation). Analysis (using the word "because" and being at least two sentences).*

5. **If paragraphs don't easily transition, then don't force it. Paragraphs are separated for a reason. Check out my final example below:**

In the midst of exploring the makeup of these characters, Shakespeare presents ominous natural and supernatural occurrences in order to foreshadow the death of Caesar. *Example 1 Context, "Textual Evidence" (Citation). Analysis (using the word "because" and being at least two sentences). Example 2: Context, "Textual Evidence" (Citation). Analysis (using the word "because" and being at least two sentences).*

Throughout the act, Shakespeare presents ***multiple*** deceitful and misleading conversations and practices in order to ***ultimately*** illustrate that language is more powerful than authority.

6. Add a conclusion: BAM! You're Done!¹

General Thoughts about Including Literature in the AP Language Curriculum: Literature as Argument
(I'll use *Frankenstein* for my example)

1. **Brainstorm the ideas on which the work focuses. Make sure these are singular abstractions.**

e.g. *Frankenstein*: Isolation, Over-Industrialization, Knowledge, Revenge, etc.

2. **Have students then fill in this template about one of the abstractions (but make sure they use absolutely NO "YOU" statements):**

(Author's last name) writes (Title) in order to illustrate that (universal idea) (what the author seemingly suggests (implies) about the idea that is universal to most, if not all, people)).

e.g. *Frankenstein*:

- 1) Shelley writes *Frankenstein* in order to illustrate that revenge often begets greater tragedies rather than providing solace.
- 2) Shelley writes *Frankenstein* in order to illustrate that knowledge, and the obsessive pursuit of acquiring more, has the potential to instigate moral decline.
3. **Have them summarize events in the book that prove the thesis statements (the author's argument(s) based on step 2) that they generate to be true.**

e.g. *Frankenstein*

1. The Monster and Victor drive each other to the arctic seeking revenge, and it neither receive the satisfaction of killing the other. Instead, they just consistently cause each other more pain. etc.
2. Victor refuses to admit his guilt at Justine's trial. Victor's quest in studying and obsessing over his monster at the University of Ingolstadt. Victor agreeing to make a mate and then refusing to do so. etc.
4. **Now they have arguments with evidence to dispute. They can decide if what the author is claiming is true/partially true/ or not true, and they then have the opportunity to engage in the argument by countering literary examples with other examples from their lives. If you are studying American lit, find two pieces that may suggest differing perspectives about the same ideas and let students prove the other author's literary argument wrong by using examples from the contrasting author you have provided.**

e.g.

Although Shelley makes a good point that there may be limits to what humans should know, she neglects to recognize the important discoveries that have been made when scientists pursue morally "questionable" tactics. --
--Follow this with a stem cell article reference or something like that--

¹ Conclusion Instruction is found in the document *Writing Intro's and Conclusion* A Garden of English Production: *GardenofEnglish2019*©

Universal Ideas

| | | |
|---------------|----------------|-------------|
| Addiction | Fear | Pride |
| Alienation | Fidelity | Progress |
| Ambition | Freedom | Purity |
| Anarchy | Friendship | Race |
| Apathy | Gluttony | Reality |
| Apostasy | Grace | Rebirth |
| Atonement | Greed | Redemption |
| Beauty | Growth | Regret |
| Belonging | Hate | Renewal |
| Betrayal | Heresy | Respect |
| Brotherhood | Heroism | Revenge |
| Change | Hope | Salvation |
| Chaos | Humility | Savagery |
| Community | Identity | Secrecy |
| Companionship | Imagination | Sin |
| Conformity | Immorality | Sloth |
| Corruption | Individuality | Solidarity |
| Courage | Infidelity | Solitude |
| Curiosity | Innocence | Stability |
| Death | Jealousy | Struggle |
| Defiance | Justice | Submission |
| Desire | Judgment | Success |
| Destruction | Knowledge | Suppression |
| Dishonesty | Life | Survival |
| Disobedience | Longing | Temptation |
| Disbelief | Loyalty | Tradition |
| Dominance | Lust | Trust |
| Doubt | Madness | Truth |
| Duty | Materialism | Vanity |
| Dystopia | Maturation | Vengeance |
| Ego | Mortality | War |
| Empathy | Obligation | Work |
| Encouragement | Obsession | |
| Enlightenment | Patriotism | Etc. |
| Eternity | Peace | |
| Failure | Perseverance | |
| Faith | Poverty | |
| Family | Power | |
| Fantasy | Predestination | |

"The Most Dangerous Game" by Richard Connell (1893-1949)

"OFF THERE to the right--somewhere--is a large island," said Whitney.
It's rather a mystery--"

"What island is it?" Rainsford asked.

5 "The old charts call it `Ship-Trap Island,'" Whitney replied. "A suggestive name, isn't it? Sailors have a curious dread of the place. I don't know why. Some superstition--"

"Can't see it," remarked Rainsford, trying to peer through the dank tropical night that was palpable as it pressed its thick warm blackness in upon the yacht.

10 "You've good eyes," said Whitney, with a laugh, "and I've seen you pick off a moose moving in the brown fall bush at four hundred yards, but even you can't see four miles or so through a moonless Caribbean night."

"Nor four yards," admitted Rainsford. "Ugh! It's like moist black velvet."

"It will be light enough in Rio," promised Whitney. "We should make it in a few days. I hope the jaguar guns have come from Purdey's. We should have some good hunting up the Amazon. Great sport, hunting."

15 "The best sport in the world," agreed Rainsford.

"For the hunter," amended Whitney. "Not for the jaguar."

"Don't talk rot, Whitney," said Rainsford. "You're a big-game hunter, not a philosopher. Who cares how a jaguar feels?"

"Perhaps the jaguar does," observed Whitney.

20 "Bah! They've no understanding."

"Even so, I rather think they understand one thing--fear. The fear of pain and the fear of death."

"Nonsense," laughed Rainsford. "This hot weather is making you soft, Whitney. Be a realist. The world is made up of two classes--the hunters and the huntees. Luckily, you and I are hunters. Do you think we've passed that island yet?"

25 "I can't tell in the dark. I hope so."

"Why?" asked Rainsford.

"The place has a reputation--a bad one."

"Cannibals?" suggested Rainsford.

"Hardly. Even cannibals wouldn't live in such a God-forsaken place. But it's gotten into sailor lore, somehow. Didn't you notice that the crew's nerves seemed a bit jumpy today?"

30 "They were a bit strange, now you mention it. Even Captain Nielsen--"

"Yes, even that tough-minded old Swede, who'd go up to the devil himself and ask him for a light. Those fishy blue eyes held a look I never saw there before. All I could get out of him was `This place has an evil name among seafaring men, sir.' Then he said to me, very gravely, `Don't you feel anything?'--as if the air about us was actually poisonous. Now, you mustn't laugh when I tell you this--I did feel something like a sudden chill."

35 "There was no breeze. The sea was as flat as a plate-glass window. We were drawing near the island then. What I felt was a--a mental chill; a sort of sudden dread."

"Pure imagination," said Rainsford.

"One superstitious sailor can taint the whole ship's company with his fear."

40 "Maybe. But sometimes I think sailors have an extra sense that tells them when they are in danger."

Sometimes I think evil is a tangible thing--with wave lengths, just as sound and light have. An evil place can, so to speak, broadcast vibrations of evil. Anyhow, I'm glad we're getting out of this zone. Well, I think I'll turn in now, Rainsford."

"I'm not sleepy," said Rainsford. "I'm going to smoke another pipe up on the afterdeck."

45 "Good night, then, Rainsford. See you at breakfast."

"Right. Good night, Whitney."

There was no sound in the night as Rainsford sat there but the muffled throb of the engine that drove the yacht swiftly through the darkness, and the swish and ripple of the wash of the propeller.

50 Rainsford, reclining in a steamer chair, indolently puffed on his favorite brier. The sensuous drowsiness of the night was on him. "It's so dark," he thought, "that I could sleep without closing my eyes; the night would be my eyelids--"

An abrupt sound startled him. Off to the right he heard it, and his ears, expert in such matters, could not be mistaken. Again he heard the sound, and again. Somewhere, off in the blackness, someone had fired a gun three times.

55 Rainsford sprang up and moved quickly to the rail, mystified. He strained his eyes in the direction from which the reports had come, but it was like trying to see through a blanket. He leaped upon the rail and balanced himself there, to get greater elevation; his pipe, striking a rope, was knocked from his mouth. He lunged for it; a short, hoarse cry came from his lips as he realized he had reached too far and had lost his balance. The cry was pinched off short as the blood-warm waters of the Caribbean Sea dosed over his head.

2015 AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Question 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

On the tenth anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., labor union organizer and civil rights leader Cesar Chavez published an article in the magazine of a religious organization devoted to helping those in need. Read the following excerpt from the article carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze the rhetorical choices Chavez makes to develop his argument about nonviolent resistance.

Line Dr. King's entire life was an example of power that
nonviolence brings to bear in the real world. It is an
example that inspired much of the philosophy and
strategy of the farm workers' movement. This
5 observance of Dr. King's death gives us the best
possible opportunity to recall the principles with
which our struggle has grown and matured.

Our conviction is that human life is a very special
possession given by God to man and that no one has
10 the right to take it for any reason or for any cause,
however just it may be.

We are also convinced that nonviolence is more
powerful than violence. Nonviolence supports you if
you have a just and moral cause. Nonviolence
15 provides the opportunity to stay on the offensive, and
that is of crucial importance to win any contest.

If we resort to violence then one of two things will
happen: either the violence will be escalated and there
will be many injuries and perhaps deaths on both
20 sides, or there will be total demoralization of the
workers.

Nonviolence has exactly the opposite effect. If, for
every violent act committed against us, we respond
with nonviolence, we attract people's support. We can
25 gather the support of millions who have a conscience
and would rather see a nonviolent resolution to
problems. We are convinced that when people are
faced with a direct appeal from the poor struggling
nonviolently against great odds, they will react
30 positively. The American people and people
everywhere still yearn for justice. It is to that
yearning that we appeal.

But if we are committed to nonviolence only as a
strategy or tactic, then if it fails our only alternative is
35 to turn to violence. So we must balance the strategy
with a clear understanding of what we are doing.
However important the struggle is and however much
misery, poverty and exploitation exist, we know that
it cannot be more important than one human life. We
40 work on the theory that men and women who are truly
concerned about people are nonviolent by nature.
These people become violent when the deep concern
they have for people is frustrated and when they are
faced with seemingly insurmountable odds.

45 We advocate militant nonviolence as our means of
achieving justice for our people, but we are not blind
to the feelings of frustration, impatience and anger

which seethe inside every farm worker. The burdens
of generations of poverty and powerlessness lie heavy
50 in the fields of America. If we fail, there are those
who will see violence as the shortcut to change.

It is precisely to overcome these frustrations that
we have involved masses of people in their own
struggle throughout the movement. Freedom is
55 best experienced through participation and self-
determination, and free men and women instinctively
prefer democratic change to any other means.

Thus, demonstrations and marches, strikes and
boycotts are not only weapons against the growers,
60 but our way of avoiding the senseless violence that
brings no honor to any class or community. The
boycott, as Gandhi taught, is the most nearly perfect
instrument of nonviolent change, allowing masses of
people to participate actively in a cause.

When victory comes through violence, it is a
65 victory with strings attached. If we beat the growers at
the expense of violence, victory would come at the
expense of injury and perhaps death. Such a thing
would have a tremendous impact on us. We would
lose regard for human beings. Then the struggle
70 would become a mechanical thing. When you lose
your sense of life and justice, you lose your strength.

The greater the oppression, the more leverage
nonviolence holds. Violence does not work in the
75 long run and if it is temporarily successful, it replaces
one violent form of power with another just as
violent. People suffer from violence.

Examine history. Who gets killed in the case of
violent revolution? The poor, the workers. The people
80 of the land are the ones who give their bodies and
don't really gain that much for it. We believe it is too
big a price to pay for not getting anything. Those who
espouse violence exploit people. To call men to arms
with many promises, to ask them to give up their lives
85 for a cause and then not produce for them afterwards,
is the most vicious type of oppression.

We know that most likely we are not going to do
anything else the rest of our lives except build our
union. For us there is nowhere else to go. Although
90 we would like to see victory come soon, we are
willing to wait. In this sense, time is our ally. We
learned many years ago that the rich may have
money, but the poor have time.

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Question 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

On April 10, 1962, as the United States was emerging from a recession, the nation’s largest steel companies raised steel prices by 3.5 percent. President John F. Kennedy, who had repeatedly called for stable prices and wages as part of a program of national sacrifice during a period of economic distress, held a news conference on April 11, 1962, which he opened with the following commentary regarding the hike in steel prices. Read Kennedy’s remarks carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the rhetorical strategies President Kennedy uses to achieve his purpose. Support your analysis with specific references to the text.

Line
5 Simultaneous and identical actions of United States Steel and other leading steel corporations, increasing steel prices by some 6 dollars a ton, constitute a wholly unjustifiable and irresponsible defiance of the public interest.

10 In this serious hour in our nation’s history, when we are confronted with grave crises in Berlin and Southeast Asia, when we are devoting our energies to economic recovery and stability, when we are asking Reservists to leave their homes and families for months on end, and servicemen to risk their lives—and four were killed in the last two days in Viet Nam—and asking union members to hold down their wage requests, at a time when restraint and sacrifice are being asked of every citizen, the American people will find it hard, as I do, to accept a situation in which a tiny handful of steel executives whose pursuit of private power and profit exceeds their sense of public responsibility can show such utter contempt for the interests of 185 million Americans.

20 If this rise in the cost of steel is imitated by the rest of the industry, instead of rescinded, it would increase the cost of homes, autos, appliances, and most other items for every American family. It would increase the cost of machinery and tools to every American businessman and farmer. It would seriously handicap our efforts to prevent an inflationary spiral from eating up the pensions of our older citizens, and our new gains in purchasing power.

30 It would add, Secretary McNamara^{*} informed me this morning, an estimated one billion dollars to the cost of our defenses, at a time when every dollar is needed for national security and other purposes. It would make it more difficult for American goods to compete in foreign markets, more difficult to withstand competition from foreign imports, and thus more difficult to improve our balance of payments position, and stem the flow of gold.

40

And it is necessary to stem it for our national security, if we are going to pay for our security commitments abroad. And it would surely handicap our efforts to induce other industries and unions to adopt responsible price and wage policies.

45 The facts of the matter are that there is no justification for an increase in the steel prices. The recent settlement between the industry and the union, which does not even take place until July 1st, was widely acknowledged to be non-inflationary, and the whole purpose and effect of this Administration’s role, which both parties understood, was to achieve an agreement which would make unnecessary any increase in prices.

50 Steel output per man is rising so fast that labor costs per ton of steel can actually be expected to decline in the next twelve months. And in fact, the Acting Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics informed me this morning that, and I quote: “Employment costs per unit of steel output in 1961 were essentially the same as they were in 1958.”

60 The cost of the major raw materials, steel scrap and coal, has also been declining, and for an industry which has been generally operating at less than two-thirds of capacity, its profit rate has been normal and can be expected to rise sharply this year in view of the reduction in idle capacity. Their lot has been easier than that of a hundred thousand steel workers thrown out of work in the last three years. The industry’s cash dividends have exceeded 600 million dollars in each of the last five years, and earnings in the first quarter of this year were estimated in the February 28th Wall Street Journal to be among the highest in history.

70 In short, at a time when they could be exploring how more efficiency and better prices could be obtained, reducing prices in this industry in recognition of lower costs, their unusually good labor contract, their foreign competition and their increase in production and profits which are coming

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this year, a few gigantic corporations have decided to increase prices in ruthless disregard of their public responsibilities.

85 The Steel Workers Union can be proud that it abided by its responsibilities in this agreement, and this government also has responsibilities, which we intend to meet.

90 The Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission are examining the significance of this action in a free, competitive economy.

95 The Department of Defense and other agencies are reviewing its impact on their policies of procurement, and I am informed that steps are underway by those Members of the Congress who plan appropriate inquiries into how these price

decisions are so quickly made, and reached, and what legislative safeguards may be needed to protect the public interest.

100 Price and wage decisions in this country, except for very limited restrictions in the case of monopolies and national emergency strikes, are and ought to be freely and privately made, but the American people have a right to expect in return for that freedom, a higher sense of business responsibility for the welfare of their country than
105 has been shown in the last two days.

110 Some time ago I asked each American to consider what he would do for his country and I asked the steel companies. In the last 24 hours we had their answer.

* Robert S. McNamara, secretary of defense from 1961 to 1968