

**AP Language and Composition  
Writing Checklist**

<b>author's name</b>	Avoid "the reading" or "the article" or "the prompt"—use the author's whole name or last name. Never refer to an author by first name only. Avoid putting Mrs., Ms., etc. before author's name.		
<b>clichés</b>	Avoid clichés.		
<b>conciseness/economy</b>	High-scoring essays use economy of expression; many ideas are <u>developed</u> in a concise way. Cut the deadwood.		
<b>I/you/your</b>	Avoid the first person voice except in the first paragraph. (A few first person statements in the body are acceptable in Defend, Challenge, Qualify essays). Avoid the second person voice: the use of pronouns "you" and "your".		
<b>indent</b>	Clearly indent for paragraphs—do not skip lines between paragraphs.		
<b>key terms</b>	Define key terms in the context of your analysis if necessary—show that you understand what important ideas mean.		
<b>line numbers</b>	Line numbers are unnecessary. The prompts for AP essays are short, and AP readers are very familiar with the prompt and reading. Including line numbers takes up time.		
<b>paraphrase</b>	Avoid extensive paraphrase.		
<b>praising</b>	Avoid praising the prompt essay or aspects of the prompt essay ("perfect example," "good job," "outstanding," etc.)		
<b>present tense</b>	Analytical writing about literature should always use the present tense.		
<b>prompt</b>	Refer to the prompt essay in specific, focused ways.		
<b>quotation marks</b>	Use quotation marks for any direct quotation— sometimes even one word!		
<b>"says"</b>	Avoid the word "says." Consider using one of the words below instead:		
	asserts claims contends adds indicates	acknowledges believes suggests concludes conveys	stresses argues points out begins
<b>"show"</b>	Avoid the word "show."		
	illustrate offer reveal prove convey	produce indicate demonstrate illuminate	establish create provide discredit present clarify portray refute
<b>"than/then"</b>	Use "then" and "than" correctly. "Then" is when; "than" is a comparison that means "in relation to."		
<b>thesis</b>	Make your thesis statement as specific as possible.		
<b>"you/your"</b>	Avoid the second person voice: the use of pronouns "you" and "your".		

Language Analysis Essay Reminder: 1. Identify three to five major language features used in the prompt. 2. Identify shifts within the essay and organize your essay according to shift. 3. Write your essay dividing it not by language feature, but by chunks of the prompt (divided by the shifts).