

AP English Language and Composition Common Mistakes · 常见错误

All three essays share one rubric, and the commentary row is where the marks are. Most essays lose points by identifying devices instead of explaining their effect, and by supplying more evidence where explanation was needed. 三篇作文共用一份评分表, 失分集中在“论证”一栏。

Thesis

Restating the prompt. A thesis must make a claim a reader could disagree with.

Listing devices as the thesis – ‘the author uses ethos, pathos and logos’ is a plan, not an argument.

Writing a thesis with no line of reasoning, so the essay’s structure is invisible before it begins.

Hiding the thesis in the conclusion. Place it where a grader reading quickly will find it.

Evidence and commentary

Naming a device without explaining its effect. ‘This is a metaphor’ earns nothing; what the metaphor does to the reader earns the point.

Block-quoting. Long quotations displace commentary, which is where the marks are; quote briefly and embed.

Summarising the passage instead of analysing it. A summary demonstrates reading, not argument.

Writing ‘this shows the author is trying to persuade the audience’. Every text in the exam is; the point is how, and on whom.

Supplying a third example where a second explanation was needed. Two well-explained pieces of evidence outscore five listed ones.

Analysing the character or subject rather than the writer’s CHOICES.

Sophistication and style

Reaching for sophistication with vocabulary. It is earned by situating the argument in a broader context, taking a genuine complication seriously, or sustained stylistic control.

Raising a counter-argument and abandoning it in a clause. State the objection in its strongest form, then answer it.

Writing a formulaic five-paragraph structure that forces the argument into three body paragraphs it does not have.

Spending the first paragraph on general observations about society. Start with the argument.