# AP English Language and Composition

**Revision Sheet · 考前速记**

*Learn these by heart before the exam.* 考试前把这些内容背熟。

## The Rhetorical Situation

**Rhetorical situation** 修辞情境: exigence, purpose, audience, writer, context, message - the six parts every text answers to

**Exigence** 写作动因: the problem or occasion that makes the writer speak NOW; name it and the purpose becomes obvious

*Purpose is a verb, not a topic: to persuade, to warn, to celebrate, to justify, to satirise. Write it as an infinitive and your thesis writes itself.*

*Audience is defined by beliefs, values and needs, not by age. Ask what the audience already accepts, and what it must be moved from.*

*Context is what the audience knows and feels at that moment. A speech after a disaster and the same words a year later are different texts.*

**Ethos, logos, pathos** 人格、逻辑、情感诉求: credibility, reasoning, emotion; name the appeal only alongside the specific move that creates it

## Claim, Thesis and Line of Reasoning

*A claim is arguable. If nobody could disagree, it is a fact and cannot anchor a paragraph.*

**Defensible thesis** 可辩护的论点: a single sentence stating a position that the essay can actually support; may preview the reasoning, but never lists devices

*Do not write 'the author uses ethos, pathos and logos'. Write what the author is DOING and to what end; the devices belong in the body.*

**Line of reasoning** 论证脉络: the ordered chain of claims that carries the thesis; each paragraph is one link, not a separate essay

*Evidence types: facts, statistics, anecdote, expert testimony, analogy, historical example. Choose by what the audience will accept.*

**Commentary** 阐释分析: the sentences explaining HOW the evidence proves the claim; this is where marks live, not in the quotation

*Ratio rule: for every line of quoted evidence, write two or more lines of commentary. Quotation without explanation scores as summary.*

*Methods of development: definition, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, narration, exemplification, classification, process analysis, description.*

## Style, Syntax and Devices

*Diction is word choice: formal or colloquial, abstract or concrete, connotation versus denotation. Describe the effect, not the label.*

*Syntax moves: short sentence for emphasis, periodic sentence delays the point, cumulative sentence piles detail after it, parallelism creates rhythm, antithesis balances opposites.*

**Juxtaposition** 并置对照: placing two unlike things side by side so the contrast itself makes the argument

*Repetition family: anaphora (start), epistrophe (end), asyndeton (no conjunctions, speed), polysyndeton (many conjunctions, weight).*

*Figurative: metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, understatement, irony, satire, allusion. Always ask what the comparison lets the writer claim without stating it.*

**Tone** 语气: the writer's attitude to the subject, carried by diction and syntax; a shift in tone is a structural signal worth analysing

*Concession and rebuttal: grant the opposing point, then limit it. This raises ethos rather than weakening the argument.*

*Qualifiers (often, in most cases, arguably) make a claim defensible. Absolutes (always, never, everyone) make it easy to refute.*

## Coherence and Editing

*Transitions signal the RELATION, so pick by meaning: however (contrast), therefore (consequence), moreover (addition), for instance (example), nevertheless (concession).*

*Unity means every sentence serves that paragraph's claim. Coherence means the reader can follow how each sentence connects to the last.*

*Introduction: context, then narrow to the issue, then the thesis. Conclusion: extend the argument's significance - never a restatement in new words.*

*Punctuation that earns marks: colon introduces evidence or a list; semicolon joins two related independent clauses; dash inserts emphasis.*

*Common errors: comma splice, dangling modifier, vague pronoun reference, shifting verb tense, subject-verb disagreement across a long phrase.*

## Logical Fallacies

*Ad hominem attacks the person, not the claim. Straw man refutes a weakened version of the opposing view.*

*Hasty generalisation reasons from too few cases. Post hoc treats sequence as cause. False dilemma offers two options where more exist.*

*Slippery slope chains unproven consequences. Circular reasoning assumes what it must prove. Appeal to authority cites someone outside their field.*

*Bandwagon appeals to popularity. Red herring changes the subject to something easier to defend.*

## Exam technique

*Three free-response tasks: synthesis (argue using provided sources), rhetorical analysis (explain how a writer builds an argument), and argument (defend your own position).*

*Synthesis: cite at least three sources by their labels, and USE them as evidence for your own claim. A source-by-source summary is not an argument.*

*Rhetorical analysis explains WHY a choice works on that audience for that purpose. Naming devices without effect is the single most common low score.*

*The argument essay wants your own specific evidence: history, literature, science, current events, personal observation. Specific beats general every time.*

*Plan for a few minutes: circle the exigence, write the thesis, list the paragraph claims in order. An unplanned essay loses the line of reasoning.*

*Sophistication comes from a genuine complexity: naming tension, acknowledging limits of your own claim, or situating the argument in a wider context. It is not decorative vocabulary.*

*In multiple choice, read the line references in context and eliminate answers that are true of the passage but do not answer the question asked.*