

Audience, Tone, and Sentence Craft

AP English Language ■ Unit 8

AP English Language



What we will cover

- 1 Understanding an Audience's Beliefs and Needs
- 2 Writing for an Audience's Beliefs and Needs
- 3 Word Choice, Comparisons, and Syntax
- 4 Using Words and Syntax for Tone and Style
- 5 Clauses and Relationships Between Ideas
- 6 Writing Clear Sentences

Understanding an Audience's Beliefs and Needs

Unit 8 is the course's most advanced treatment of **style** 文体 – the point at which word choice, syntax, and audience stop being separate topics.

- Writers may make **comparisons** – **similes, metaphors, analogies, or anecdotes** 明喻、隐喻、类比与轶事 – in an attempt to relate to an audience.
- Writers' choices regarding **syntax and diction** 句法与措辞 influence **how the writer is perceived** by an audience.
- **Word choice may reflect a writer's biases** 偏见 and may affect their **credibility** with a particular audience.
- Because **audiences are unique and dynamic**, writers must consider the **perspectives, contexts, and needs** of the intended audience.

Understanding an Audience's Beliefs and Needs, continued

The third point is worth dwelling on. Diction does not only characterise the subject – it characterises the writer.

A reader who notices loaded word choice starts to discount everything that follows, which is why an unqualified vocabulary is a credibility risk, not a strength.

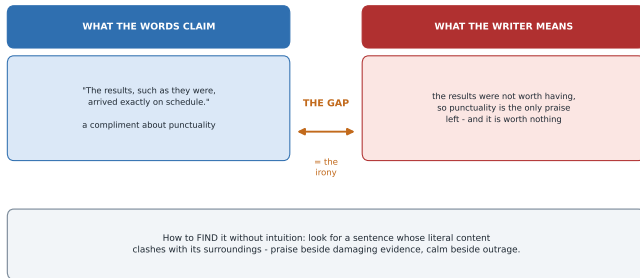
Writing for an Audience's Beliefs and Needs

The instruction here is that **audiences are dynamic**: they change as they read. An argument that has just conceded something is being read by a slightly different audience than the one that began the essay.

Press first and concede afterwards, and the concession reads as retreat.

Word Choice, Comparisons, and Syntax

Irony is a gap - and analysis means naming both sides of it



the distinction this unit turns on

Word Choice, Comparisons, and Syntax

- A writer's **style** is the **mix of word choice, syntax, and conventions** employed by that writer. Style is a *composite*, which is why "the writer's style is formal" is not analysis – it names the result without any of the components.
- Writers may signal a **complex or ironic perspective** through stylistic choices. **Irony** 反讽 may emerge from the difference between what is said and what is meant, or between what is expected and what occurs.

Using Words and Syntax for Tone and Style

For your own writing, the safest use of irony is none.

What the sophistication point actually rewards is **control**: a consistent register, a vocabulary that is precise rather than inflated, and syntax that ranks ideas deliberately.

Clauses and Relationships Between Ideas

- **Modifiers** 修饰成分 – words, phrases, or clauses – **qualify, clarify, or specify** information about the thing they modify.
- **Parenthetical elements** 插入成分 – though not essential to understanding what they describe – **interrupt** the sentence to add information, comment, or emphasis.

Writing Clear Sentences

A concrete discipline: **place modifiers next to what they modify**, and use parentheticals sparingly.

One well-placed interruption creates emphasis; three in a paragraph destroy it, because a reader cannot tell which interruption mattered.

Exam tips

- **Style is a composite** – word choice, syntax, conventions. Naming the components is analysis; naming the result is not.
- Loaded diction **damages the writer's credibility**. Say so; it is examinable.
- Find irony **structurally**: a sentence whose literal content clashes with its surroundings.
- **Concede before you press**. The audience that reads your claim will already have decided whether you are fair.
- A **modifier** is where judgement hides. *The long-delayed report* has already evaluated it.
- Use parentheticals **sparingly** in your own writing. Three in a paragraph cancel each other out.