

## AP Exam Basics

### The Exam Structure:

Part I	Multiple Choice (55-60 questions in <u>one hour</u> ; 45% of score) [usually four passages but sometimes five]
A. Prose (12-15 questions)	15 minutes
B. Poem (12-15 questions)	15 minutes
C. Prose (12-15 questions)	15 minutes
D. Poem (12-15 questions)	15 minutes
Part II	Essay (3 free response questions in <u>two hours</u> ; 55% of score)
A. Poetry	40 minutes
B. Prose	40 minutes
C. Open	40 minutes

### Essay Scores:

9		9-8 Students are writers!
8	↑	
7	upper half	7-6 Students write well.
6		
5	thin in terms of evidence	
4	↓	
3	lower half	
2		
1		

- \* A poorly written essay must be given a score no higher than a 3.
- \* A stylistically well-written paper may be rewarded with an extra point.

### Test Scores:

5	extremely well qualified	(equivalent to A in college course)
4	well qualified	(equivalent to A- in college course)
3	qualified	(equivalent to B in college course)
2	possibly qualified	(equivalent to C or D in college course)
1	no recommendation	(equivalent to F in college course)

## **Tips for Maximizing your Score on the Multiple Choice Section**

### **Test-Taking Strategies**

- Remember that you have approximately one minute to spend per question. Monitor your progress and stay on pace.
- Choose the best, not the right, answer! Several answers may be technically correct, so you must examine all the choices.
- Understand that you need to get approximately half of the multiple-choice questions correct to have possibility of a 3 or better.
- Your correct answers will be reduced by  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the number you mark incorrectly. If you can eliminate two incorrect answers, then guess. If not, leave the question blank on your answer sheet.
- The questions are of a varied level of difficulty, and they are mixed together—not in order of complexity. Don't become frustrated with what seems to be an impossible first question.
- Tackle the easier questions first. Skip any questions that befuddle you, mark them in the margin, and then come back if you have time.
- Be careful in bubbling your answer sheet. Be especially cognizant of skipped numbers and erase changed answers completely.

### **Reading Strategies**

- Read the questions (but not the choices) first. You'll be a more effective reader if you are reading with purpose.
- Read footnotes and any additional information. Take advantage of all the help the test preparers have given you.
- Before reading poems or questions, number all the poem lines to the left.
- After you've read the questions and the passage, mark the reading passage. A blank passage won't help you to analyze the necessary elements in detail.
- Read poems four times before answering questions.

### **Self-Reflection**

- Analyze your answering and guessing techniques. Notice how effective you are when you change answers and when you guess from narrowed-down choices.
- Develop your own strategies by assessing your strengths and weaknesses.