

AP English Literature and Composition

Adapted from Barb Wirtz, Burroughs High School

In your timed-writing responses, do not parrot the prompt. This causes your reader to cringe, sigh, and question whether Solieri really was the Patron Saint of Mediocrity because he or she holds evidence to the contrary in hand. You are obligated to address all aspects of the prompt, but you need to do so meaningfully—which means you need to elaborate. Instead of parroting, craft an interesting mad lib response, which not only provides necessary information, but seduces the reader into believing you are not only interesting but insightful as well.

1979 prompt:

Choose a complex and important character in a novel or a play of recognized literary merit who might, on the basis of the character's actions alone, be considered evil or immoral. In a well-organized essay, explain both how and why the full presentation of the character in the work makes us react more sympathetically than we otherwise might. Avoid plot summary.

Parrot prompt response:

Willy Loman is highly immoral in *Death of a Salesman*, yet Miller makes him sympathetic.

Mad lib prompt response:

In _____'s _____, _____,
(author) (genre of literature) (title)

the character _____ is _____ for his or her
(name) (some synonym for evil)

(explain immoral/evil behavior)

however, he or she is developed more sympathetically [when or through or because of]

1980 prompt:

A recurring theme in literature is the classic war between passion and responsibility. For instance, a personal cause, a love, a desire for revenge, a determination to redress a wrong, or some other emotion or drive may conflict with moral duty. Choose a literary work in which a character confronts the demands of a private passion that conflicts with his or her responsibilities. In a well-written essay show clearly the nature of the conflict, its effects upon the character, and its significance to the work. Avoid plot summary

Parrot prompt response:

In *Fences*, Troy Maxson undergoes "a classic war between passion and responsibility." His private passion conflicts with his responsibility.

Mad lib prompt response:

In _____'s _____, _____,
(author) (genre) (title)
the character _____'s passion for _____
conflicts directly with _____,
ultimately resulting in _____ and showing/revealing that
(effects on character)
_____.
(significance to work as a whole)

1982 prompt:

In great literature, no scene of violence exists for its own sake. Choose a work of literary merit that confronts the reader or audience with a scene or scenes of violence. In a well-organized essay, explain how the scene or scenes contribute to the meaning of the complete work. Avoid plot summary.

Parrot prompt response:

In *Life of Pi*, the reader is confronted with scenes of violence that contribute to the novel's meaning.

Mad lib prompt response:

In _____'s _____, _____, the
(author) (genre) (title)
_____ scene of _____
(synonym for violent)
develops/emphasizes the work's theme of _____.

1984 prompt:

From a novel or play of literary merit, select an important character who is a villain. Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze the nature of the character's villainy and show how it enhances the meaning of the work. Do not merely summarize the plot.

Parrot prompt response:

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the Commander's villainy enhances the meaning of the novel.

Mad lib prompt response:

In the _____, _____,
(genre) (title) (author)
creates _____, a villain who _____,
(character's name) (character's predominant villainous action)
but his villainy is necessary in developing the idea that _____.
_____.

1981 prompt:

The meaning of some literary works is often enhanced by sustained allusion to myths, the Bible, or other works of literature. Select a literary work that makes use of such a sustained reference. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain the allusion that predominates in the work and analyze how it enhances the work's meaning.

Parrot prompt response:

In *Pygmalion*, Shaw sustains mythological allusions that add to the play's meaning.

Mad lib prompt response:

In the _____, _____, _____'s
(type/genre) (title) (author)
pervasive use of _____ allusion is used to _____ the theme of
(Biblical or mythological or literary) (synonym of enhance)
_____.