

One Page Concept Review: the Q2 Essay

Q2 Prompts Grouped into Types of Questions

Determining narrator's attitude toward something (character, society, theme, etc.):	45%
Analyzing methods of characterization (including how the author establishes a character's point-of-view):	36%
Analyzing a narrative technique that creates a specific impression or perception	19%

As You Read:

- Ask yourself, "What is the conflict or implied conflict?"
- Ask yourself, "Is the tone of this text ironic or straight?"
- If it is satiric, ask yourself, "What is the target of the satire?"
- If it is descriptive, ask yourself, "How is this description like the characters?"
- If it is pre-20th century prose, ask yourself, "Do the class or gender of the characters help me to understand their motivations or behaviors?"

Annotation:

- Mark the break or tone shift that is present in most Q2 prose selections. Even if you don't end up using it for a structure, it is still important to understand why College Board chose a passage that moves from one state to another.
- Typically any annotation you do beyond that will be to mark evidence. Extensive annotations trades off with writing time. Because the Q2 essay is typically reliant on you making inferences about details in the text, it should require less technical analysis, which should require less annotation to gather your thoughts.

Intro and Thesis:

- Intros for this essay are typically short. The reader has the text right in front of him or her, so there is no need to spend a lot of time setting up the text.
- Do not use the language of the prompt. Put it in your own words.
- Prompts are two parts: How does Concept X lead to some bigger idea in the text.
- There is zero reason to list the literary devices you plan on using in your thesis unless you are writing about just one. (Example: an essay breaking down an extended metaphor or one pattern of repeated imagery)
- Because these are so self-contained, sometimes you won't have a lot of room to narrow the prompt, but consider if you can. As always, you tend to get more credit for developing an idea in depth rather than superficially discussing many ideas. Make sure any narrowing that you are doing is clear in the thesis.
- Unless it's a satire, you probably won't have enough information for a theme analysis, so look to connect to either character development, revelation of character, or conflict development. Occasionally you will want to connect to something else, but it will still probably be a literary technique. Whatever it is, this information should be in your thesis.

Best Structures:

- **Before/After** [I. Intro and thesis; II. Up until X moment, Y is true (Y=an interpretation, not an event); III. After X moment, Z is true (Z=an interpretation, not an event); IV. Change shows something important in the text (from thesis)]
- **Cause/Effect** [I. Intro and thesis; II. X is true; III. X causes Y; IV. Y shows something important in the text (from thesis)]
- **Contrast** [I. Intro and thesis; II. Concept X; III. Contrasts with Concept Y; IV. Difference/Preference for X or Y shows something important in the text (from thesis)]
- **Idea/Qualification** [I. Intro and thesis; II. Idea/Expectation/Appearance; III. Idea/Expectation/Appearance is qualified/contradicted/reversed; IV. The gap between the two shows something important in the text (from thesis)]

If you do something else, you want a structure where body paragraph one sets up body paragraph two. If you can re-arrange the order of your body paragraphs and it still makes sense, you're probably writing two superficial mini-essays instead of developing a single idea at length. Look at the Sample Structures for Four Paragraph Papers in the AP Writing sub-section of my web-page for more ideas.

You are free to write more than four paragraphs, just be aware that the more ambitious your structure, the more likely you are to run up against time constraints.

Do NOT structure your essay by literary device (e.g., one paragraph about diction and one paragraph about metaphor).

Body Paragraphs:

- You must have topic sentences. This is non-negotiable. And it probably won't happen unless you have planned your essay structure first.
- There is zero reason to suck up to the author (this is such a high school thing). It's just diction. Not *powerful*, *strong*, or *well-chosen* diction. The only adjective attached to a literary term should be a tone word.
- Evidence should generally be chronological and work its way through the text.
- Set up evidence. Do not drop quotes or write things like *For example*, "*He sat up.*"
- Use only the part of the quote you need. Do not over-quote.
- Do not string a bunch of snippet quotes together and call it analysis. This is usually just summary.
- You can't just *say* the evidence shows something. You have to *explain why* it shows something. Remember you are teaching the piece to the reader.
- Forbidden topics: details/devices are there to make the work come alive, help the reader to picture something, or make a character or situation seem more real. Every single fiction author who ever lived is including every detail to do these things, so pointing this out is accomplishing nothing.
- Instead, your point should be something that helps the reader to understand the piece. Why is the author making these choices to communicate his or her ideas?

Conclusion:

- Sum up what you have proved. Be specific when doing this.
- Then transition into a discussion about how this fits into the larger development of the selection. Remember, this is more likely to be a writer's technique than a theme for this essay (e.g., revealing and/or developing character, conflict, mood, etc.).
- If it's a satire, however, it needs to end with a discussion of theme (how the target of the satire reveals the thoughts of the writer about the topic he or she is ridiculing).