AP Q2 Thesis Statements

- 2019 Prompt: Carefully read the following excerpt from William Dean Howells’ novel The Rise of Silas Lapham (1885). Then, in a well-constructed essay, analyze how the author portrays the complex experience of two sisters, Penelope and Irene, within their family and society. You may wish to consider such literary elements as style, tone, and selection of detail.
  - Thesis 1: From an excerpt of his The Rise of Silas Lapham, William Dean Howells portrays sisters Penelope and Irene as dependent on their family yet independent from society through selection of detail, words focused on self-reliance, and a significant shift in tone in order to challenge why we feel the need to constantly seek the acceptance and adoration of others but also warn against the dangers of living an overly sheltered life.
  - Thesis 2: The social world and the world of the family sit in opposition. The tension between familial intimacy and the inaccessibility of society organize their experience.
  - Thesis 3: In the novel The Rise of Silas Lapham, by William Dean Howells, two sisters of different nature both view societal point of view as foreign. Howells uses a plethora of literary devices such as style, tone, and selection of detail when portraying the sisters’ conflicted experience due to society’s influence. Howells shows that the sisters are isolated from the world outside the home and unable to communicate with the people they meet.
  - Thesis 4: This excerpt from The Rise of Stilas Lapham discusses the lavish yet helpless lives of sister Irene and Penelope in a satirical way in an attempt to explain the seemingly selfish lives of Laphams ‘because they did not know how to do otherwise’. Author William Dean Howells highlights the clueless and unaware sisters through detailed examples and a satirical tone.

- 2018 Prompt: The following interchange, excerpted from an 1853 novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne, occurs when the two characters who have been living on the Blithedale farm—a community designed to promote an ideal of equality achieved through communal living—are about to part ways. Read the passage carefully. In a well-written essay, analyze how Hawthorne portrays the narrator’s attitude towards Zenobia through the use of literary techniques.
  - Thesis 1: Through the use of strongly unfavorable diction to underscore Zenobia’s unpleasant and false disposition and repeated insistances on her actions as performance, Hawthorne portrays the narrator’s attitude towards Zenobia as one of contempt and disapproval.
  - Thesis 2: The shift and internal resolution that the narrator experiences create a resolution in her attitude towards Zenobia. Where at first she was complacent in her acceptance of Zenobia’s oppulent lifestyle, she turns scornful and resentful as she regains control over Zenobia’s proud aura and facade.
  - Thesis 3: Hawthorne employs disapproving diction and a scornful tone to convey the narrator’s cold, distasteful attitude towards Zenobia in this excerpt.
  - Thesis 4: The narrator’s attitude toward Zenobia and their corresponding actions [are] most clearly expressed through Hawthorne’s use of parallel contrasts and character monologue. It is through these techniques that it is revealed that although the narrator is fond of Zenobia, they are also critisizing of the choices she has made.
2017 Prompt:
In the passage below, from *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751) by Tobias Smollett, Mr. Pickle encounters Godfrey Gauntlet, the brother of his beloved Emilia. Consider how the two men confront their own uncontrolled emotions and yet attempt to abide by their social norms. In a well-developed essay, analyze how the author explores the complex interplay between emotions and social propriety in the passage. You may wish to consider such literary techniques as dialogue, narrative pace, and tone.

- Thesis:

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In his novel *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*, Tobias Smollett uses quick dialogue and a hurried narrative pace to demonstrate the conflict between Peregrine and Godfrey's heated anger and acting within social norms, revealing how society's rules governing behavior prevent people from acting on natural instincts.
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2016 Prompt:
In this excerpt from Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), Michael Henchard and his daughter Elizabeth-Jane are reunited after years of estrangement. During this separation, Henchard has risen from poor seasonal farmworker to wealthy mayor of a small country town, while Elizabeth has supported herself by waiting on tables at a tavern.

Read the passage carefully. Paying particular attention to tone, word choice, and selection of detail, compose a well-written essay in which you analyze Hardy’s portrayal of the complex relationship between the two characters.

- Thesis:

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push her away. Thus, between Henchard's verbal aggressions and his tacit shift towards less verbal neglect even as Elizabeth-Jane changes her behavior to please him, this passage suggests that though the father and daughter have been physically reunited they remain estranged emotionally on an emotional level.
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2015 Prompt:
The following excerpt is from the opening of *The Beet Queen*, a 1986 novel by Louise Erdrich. Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-developed essay in which you analyze how Erdrich depicts the impact of the environment on the two children. You may wish to consider such literary devices as tone, imagery, selection of detail, and point of view.
• Thesis:

Louise Erdrich’s novel, "The Beet Queen", Erdrich utilizes the literary techniques of specific selection of detail and imagery to depict the bleakness of the environment. As such, the hopelessness and lack of beauty impacts the children negatively towards their environment, leaving them without hope or comfort.

• 2014 Prompt:

The following passage is from the novel The Known World by Edward P. Jones. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze how the author reveals the character of Moses. In your analysis, you may wish to consider such literary elements as point of view, selection of detail, and imagery.

• Thesis:

live, difficult, straddled. The character of Moses from Edward P. Jones' novel The Known World elects to reject this balance completely and immerse fully in the wonder of nature. For him, the power of nature overpowers his bond with his fellow man, overwriting any need to socialize and be within others. If there was ever a man...

• 2013 Prompt:

The following passage is from D. H. Lawrence’s 1915 novel, The Rainbow, which focuses on the lives of the Brangwens, a farming family who lived in rural England during the late nineteenth century. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how Lawrence employs literary devices to characterize the woman and capture her situation.

• Thesis:

'pulling heat of creation'. Through the use of rhetorical questions, repetition, and contrasting imagery, Lawrence effectively demonstrates the woman's novel concept of desire of understanding the unknown and her underlying pursuit of liberation.

• 2012 Prompt:

Carefully read the following excerpt from the novel Under the Feet of Jesus by Helena Maria Viramontes. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the development of Estrella’s character. In your analysis, you may wish to consider such literary elements as selection of detail, figurative language, and tone.
• Thesis:

Within Vioramonte’s novel Under the Feet of Jesus Estrella’s deter-
mined and resilient character comes as a result of prior experiences, and
Vioramonte reveals this through the use of selective detail, figurative
language, and tone.

• 2011 Prompt:

The following passage is from the novel Middlemarch by George Eliot, the pen name of Mary Ann Evans
(1819–1880). In the passage, Rosamond and Tertius Lydgate, a recently married couple, confront financial
difficulties.

Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-developed essay in which you analyze how Eliot portrays these
two characters and their complex relationship as husband and wife. You may wish to consider such literary devices
as narrative perspective and selection of detail.

• Thesis:

Middlemarch, the newly wedded Rosamond and Tertius Lydgate encounter
a real issue—a lack of money. Yet in their argument, as in so
dangerous marriage decisions, money is not the
happy marriage. Rather, by telling detail and omission, perspective, Eliot reveals that the true stumbling block in the Lydgate’s relationship is
their pride—Tertius’s desire to maintain his pride as “pension” for his family,
and Rosamond’s want of a more elegant, self-purifying existence.

• 2010 Prompt:

In the following passage from Maria Edgeworth’s 1801 novel, Belinda, the narrator provides a description of
Clarence Hervey, one of the suitors of the novel’s protagonist, Belinda Portman. Mrs. Stanhope, Belinda’s aunt,
hopes to improve her niece’s social prospects and therefore has arranged to have Belinda stay with the fashionable
Lady Delacour.

Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze Clarence Hervey’s complex character as
Edgeworth develops it through such literary techniques as tone, point of view, and language.
• Thesis:
  Not Clarence Hervey is, by all means, a snob, and he seems constantly on the lookout for other snobs, not to encounter but to avoid. From the point of view that Moria Edgeworth caricatures and detaches the character of Clarence in her novel Belinda, as the cliched rich young man who’s intellect and wealth makes rather pugnacious, Clarence is a man who seems to be made completely out of attitude. Using techniques such as tone, point of view, and irony, Edgeworth develops the complex character of Clarence Harvey.

• 2009 Prompt:

  2009 The following selection is the opening of Ann Petry’s 1946 novel, The Street. Read the selection carefully and then write an essay analyzing how Petry establishes Lutie Johnson’s relationship to the urban setting through the use of such literary devices as imagery, personification, selection of detail, and figurative language.

• Thesis:
  determination of Lutie Johnson. Though the use of chillingly descriptive imagery and vivid personification, the narrative successfully conveys the unpersuasive nature of the cold world in which Johnson’s temporal and sensory experience.

• 2008 Prompt:

  The following passage is taken from Fasting, Feasting, a novel published in 1999 by Indian novelist Anita Desai. In the excerpt, Arun, an exchange student from India, joins members of his American host family for an afternoon at the beach. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the author uses such literary devices as speech and point of view to characterize Arun’s experience.

• Thesis:
  Arun’s perception of new events. Due to the unfamiliarity of the situation, Arun’s uneasy air does not stereotype the audience, however. The characterization of such uncomfortable moments reveals Desai’s words allow for readers a deeper understanding of the character.

• 2007 Prompt:

  Read carefully the following passage from Dalton Trumbo’s novel Johnny Got His Gun (1939). Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how Trumbo uses such techniques as point of view, selection of detail, and syntax to characterize the relationship between the young man and his father.
Thesis:

relationship between father and son. Through precise detail and serene imagery, Trumbo illustrates the importance of the fishing tradition and how the two men value each other's company. Trumbo also divulges to the reader the son's careful contemplation of the simultaneous "ending and beginning," proving that their relationship is one of mutual love and respect as well as thoughtfulness.

2006 Prompt:
The following passage is an excerpt from *Lady Windermere's Fan*, a play by Oscar Wilde, produced in 1892. Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how the playwright reveals the values of the characters and the nature of their society.

Thesis: This is from the S, as far as I can see the 8 has not thesis—it is implied.

Windermere and the Duchess of Berwick. Lord Darlington proved himself to be a worthy and honourable man while the Duchess and lady Windermere appear to be rude, obnoxious individuals.

2005 Prompt:
2005 Printed below is the complete text of a short story written in 1946 by Katharine Brush. Read the story carefully. Then write a 1-page response in which you identify the writer's purpose and show how the author

Thesis:

nameless couples' celebratory dinner date. Though on the surface the story may seem ordinary and typical, through Brush's use of good diction, imagery, abrupt syntax, and third-person objectivity, she achieves a very somber atmosphere and somber mood.

2004 Prompt:
2004 The following passage comes from the opening of "The Pupil" (1891), a short story by Henry James. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the author's description of the three characters and the relationships among them. Pay particular attention to tone and point of view.
Thesis:
characters: Pemberton, Morgan, and Mrs. Norseen. Using multiple rhetorical devices, James assumes a tone of slight mocking and irony. From the perspective of an omniscient narrator and focusing on Pemberton’s reaction, James elaborates a mocking portrait of a man seeking employment.

2003 Prompt:
The following is an excerpt from “The Other Paris,” a short story by the Canadian writer Mavis Gallant. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, explain how the author uses narrative voice and characterization to provide social commentary.

Thesis:
The entire passage ridicule the awkward and misplaced (not to mention ludicrous) stress society and culture places on proper marriage.

2002 Prompt:
In the following excerpt from a recent British novel, the narrator, a young man in his early twenties, is attending a play with his new girlfriend Isabel when she unexpectedly discovers that her parents are in the theater. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the author produces a comic effect.

Thesis:
Isabel. Using believable dialogue; detailed, vivid characterization; and an absurd situation, de Botton creates a scene that brings comic delight out of the universal experience of a child’s humiliation by her parents.

2001 Prompt:
The passage below is taken from the novel Tom Jones (1749) by the English novelist and playwright Henry Fielding. In this scene, which occurs early in the novel, Squire Allworthy discovers an infant in his bed. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze the techniques that Fielding employs in this scene to characterize Mr. Allworthy and Mrs. Deborah Wilkins.

Thesis:
Mr. Allworthy and Mrs. Deborah Wilkins. Through the use of diction, tone, and detail, the reader meets good-natured and even-tempered Mr. Allworthy, and his housekeeper, the prim, proper Mrs. Wilkins.

2000 Prompt:
In the following passage from The Spectator (March 4, 1712), the English satirist Joseph Addison creates a character who keeps a diary. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze how the language of the passage characterizes the diarist and his society and how the characterization serves Addison’s satiric purpose. You may wish to consider such elements as selection of detail, repetition, and tone.
Thesis: Joseph Addison's character represents a remarkable amount of satire and ironic social commentary in the writing of his diary, for it is there that he reveals the true and truly ridiculous nature of the "standard" style of life at the time. Via peculiar juxtapositions of irrelevent and overly-detailed events with world news (and his friends' opinions thereof), Addison makes both his character and his daily schedule seem ridiculous. The detailed accounts of things that anyone else would clearly find arbitrary and irrelevant expose the character's self-absorption and concern with obviously petty issues, and set up the entire idea of keeping this sort of diary for ridicule.

1999 Prompt: In the following passage from Cormac McCarthy's novel *The Crossing* (1994), the narrator describes a dramatic experience. Read the passage carefully. Then in a well-organized essay, show how McCarthy's techniques convey the impact of the experience on the main character.

Thesis: The passage from *The Crossing* conveys a sense of awe and mystery, and in doing so, imparts the depths of the man's emotions towards the wolf. The mourning for the wolf is raised to an elegiac level, as the man reflects upon the wolf, "at once terrible and of a great beauty." Several devices are employed to effectively enhance the tone of reverence and loss, including figurative language.