

Succeeding on the
AP[®] Literature Exam
with College-Level Analysis

Mary Margaret Pryor

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How to Use This Book

This book is for teachers and parents who want to provide a preparation course for Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition from a Christian worldview, and for students who want to know how to prepare for the AP exam and what to expect when they take it. This book is written to students as if they were in my classroom. If you are a parent or teacher, then you may use the book as a model or script. Do not feel bound to say everything the way it is written. Feel free to articulate the concepts in your own way.

Start by reading the information about the AP English Literature and Composition Exam. Then read the Frequently Asked Questions and their answers. After reading these two sections, skip to the Appendix to become acquainted with the materials provided. These pages are the handouts I give to my students at the beginning of the year. We go over them briefly on the first day of class, returning to them whenever needed throughout the year.

The units of study contained in this book will strengthen your understanding of literature, which will not only help you in your endeavors to answer the exam essay questions and multiple-choice questions, but will also help you in college and beyond. My philosophy of teaching AP English is that quality of knowledge is more effective than quantity of knowledge. Learning to understand a few works extremely well will serve you better over time than knowing many works at a superficial level. The techniques you master in these few works of literature may be applied to other readings, and the writing techniques will serve you well as you write for other assignments and courses.

As you complete the reading assignments, you may read the novels with or without the aid of an audio or video version. When my students study the works of Shakespeare, we generally watch the BBC version of the play on DVD as we read through the text looking for literary techniques and deeper meaning. The individual plays are available on DVD from ambrosevideo.com. At last check, an individual BBC version of one of Shakespeare's plays on DVD was \$35, but other sites may offer the individual movies for less. Other versions exist and are available for less, but I prefer the BBC versions because the sets and scenery are not overdone and the dialogue is generally true to the text.

My preference is to show an act or several scenes of an act so that the students can get a feel for the action taking place on the stage. We then read through the text of the viewed scenes for the understanding of the language and for the discovery of tropes, schemes, motifs, and themes. N.B.* You should always preview the entire movie before showing it to your children or your class. I skip the scene in *Macbeth* (1.5) when Lady Macbeth is asking to be made tough by being un-gendered. I feel that the BBC version plays this scene wrong, as if Lady Macbeth is asking to be made more sensual. I simply skip to the next scene because we cover the text in our discussion. If you choose to show the popular version of *Romeo and Juliet*, filmed in 1968, with Michael York as Tybalt, please be aware that there is nudity. Always preview.

*N.B. is an abbreviation for the Latin *Nota Bene*, which literally means, *note well*. It is used to call attention to something important.

Advanced Placement English emphasizes the *how* and *why* of literature. As you read and complete assignments, focus on how and why authors create characters and elements, and why the characters respond the way they do. Don't limit yourself to surface issues such as *what* is happening or *who* is doing something. That is plot summary; it works in the lower grades for book reports but will not score well for Advanced Placement. Instead, for AP English you must focus on concepts like how the setting affects the plot and the theme, and how the characters contribute to theme and affect each other. Allow the assignments to steer you in the right direction as you concentrate on depth of analysis.

I require my students to have three or four *Blue Book Examination Books*—college essay Blue Books—for writing timed essays and for keeping notes while completing journal assignments. *Blue Book Examination Books*, which are becoming *Green Book Examination Books* because of their recycled paper, are available online or from college bookstores and should only cost 20–30 cents. It is not necessary to require examination books, but it is helpful to have all the work contained in one place. You may choose to use a spiral notebook instead. I like examination books because they fit in a binder, and because they prepare my students for college professors who require them. If you order online, be sure you are getting 8.5" x 11". The correct books may say they have 4 sheets (11x17, stapled in the middle) or 8 pages, which means there are 16 useable pages. We punch three holes along the left margin so that two or three examination books, labeled *Essays*, can be stored in the binder section marked *Composition*. A third or fourth one, labeled *Reading Journal*, may be kept in the binder section marked *Reading*. It is handy to have four examination books ready for work.

If you are a student of the Institute for Excellence in Writing (IEW), don't forget to include the dress-ups, sentence openers, and decorations as you write your essays. These stylistic techniques will serve to enhance your essays and boost your writing scores. For those who are familiar with the techniques but may be a bit rusty, see a quick review of IEW's Stylistic Techniques in the Appendix (see A-29). For more thorough instruction, please go to the IEW website at www.excellenceinwriting.com for materials.

Introduction to the AP English Literature and Composition Exam

The Advanced Placement exams are given only at specific times and on specific dates in May. In order to sign up for the test, students must register through a participating test site and pay the fee by the end of March. Each AP exam begins either at 8:00 a.m. or at 12:00 p.m. The AP English Literature and Composition exam is given on Thursday of the first full week of May at 8:00 a.m. The three-hour exam, consisting of a multiple choice section and an essay section, is administered in a very secure setting. All participants must arrive before the 8:00 a.m. start time, and the door is to be shut—with no admittance after this time. Students will need to bring two number two pencils and two black or blue ink pens. **Students should also strongly consider bringing the following items:** a watch, tissues, water, and a small snack. The administrative time it takes to fill out the test form is added to the three hours of actual test time and the ten-minute break, which means that students will not emerge from the test center until approximately noon.

The Multiple-Choice Section

The first portion of the AP English Literature and Composition exam is a multiple-choice test. Students are given one hour to read four or five passages and answer 55 questions based on those passages. Each passage will have eleven to fifteen questions. Students, therefore, have less than one minute to answer each question after reading the passages. With a quick check of the clock every now-and-then, students should pace themselves by taking fifteen minutes per passage for a test with four passages and twelve minutes per passage for a test with five passages. The score from the multiple-choice section of the exam is worth forty-five percent of the overall score of 150 points. Forty-five percent of 150 total points is 67.5. If we divide 67.5 by the total number of questions on the multiple-choice portion of the test (55), we find that each point is worth 1.2273. Therefore, the raw score from the multiple-choice section of the exam is multiplied by 1.2273 to give the weighted score equal to forty-five percent of the total exam. This weighted score is added to the weighted score of the essay section for a total numerical score.

After a brief break following the multiple-choice portion, the exam continues with...

The Essay Section

This portion of the exam consists of three essay questions called, “Free-Response Questions” or FRQs. The English Literature and Composition exam has an FRQ based on poetry, an FRQ based on a prose passage, and an FRQ that asks the student to apply a general literary concept to a book he or she has studied before. Each of the three essays is graded on a scale of zero to nine. Experienced Advanced Placement teachers and college professors from across the nation gather in various locations each June to read the essays from all the AP exams. Literature teachers grade the literature essays according to a specific rubric designed especially for the prompt (see A-33–34 for a general rubric). According to the AP scoring guidelines, “The score reflects the quality of the essay as a whole—its content, its style, its mechanics. Students are rewarded for what they do well. The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by 1 point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than

a 3.” During a one-week period, hundreds of teachers score thousands of essays, spending no more than two or three minutes per essay. The teachers are looking for an overall impression of command of language, as well as correctness and appropriateness of response.

The essay portion of the exam is worth fifty-five percent of the overall score of 150. Fifty-five percent of 150 total points is 82.5. If we divide 82.5 by the number of total essay points possible (27), we find that each essay point is really worth 3.0556. Therefore, the three essay scores are added together and multiplied by 3.0556 to give the weighted score equal to fifty-five percent of the total exam. The essay weighted score is added to the weighted score of the multiple-choice section for a total numerical score on a scale of 0 to 150. This total score is placed within a band of scores to be assigned the single-digit score that each student receives.

According to the Advanced Placement website, “for each AP score there isn't a fixed composite score range that is consistent from year to year, or even from subject to subject.” But the total numerical score is converted to an AP exam score according to a chart that is similar to the one below. The chart is determined by the performance of college students during the pre-testing of AP questions, and by a system called “equating” that relates scores from one year to the next. These two factors cause the score bands to move slightly from year to year.

For inquiring minds who want an approximate score equivalent, here is an estimate:

0–46	= 1	No recommendation
47–74	= 2	Possibly qualified
75–93	= 3	Qualified
94–107	= 4	Well qualified
108–150	= 5	Extremely well qualified

Example of a Student Score:

If a student scores 26 out of 55 on the multiple-choice section, that score becomes 31.9072 when multiplied by 1.2272. This is the weighted score for the student’s multiple-choice section. If the same student scores a 7 on each of his three essays, then his total essay score is 21. When multiplied by 3.0556, this total score of 21 becomes a weighted score of 64.1676. The two weighted scores are then added together and converted on the chart. Did I mention that the chart fluctuates from year to year?

<u>Multiple-choice</u>	+	<u>Essay</u>	=	<u>Total</u>
<u>weighted score</u>		<u>weighted score</u>		<u>AP score</u>
31.9072	+	64.1676	=	96.0748

On our estimate of a conversion chart above, a 96 is equivalent to a 4. Our hypothetical student’s score on this AP is a 4. It is possible, however, that the chart could fluctuate up one year, and this hypothetical student’s score might turn out to be a 3 instead of a 4. On the other hand, if our hypothetical student received a score of 30 on the multiple-choice

portion, he would land pretty solidly in the category of a 4. If the same student hopes to score a 5 on the AP exam, then scoring 8s on each of the three essays and 31 or 32 points out of 55 on the multiple-choice portion would allow him to reach his goal. The good news is that scoring a passing score of 3 is quite do-able, and a score of 4 or 5 is within reach of many students who are willing to work hard.

The one big disappointment of the whole AP system is that no student ever sees his or her individual scores on the multiple-choice section or on the three essays. The only score a student receives from the College Board is a one-digit number after all test portions have been weighted, added, and converted. Hopefully this lack of information will change in the near future. In July 2010, student scores were available online for the first time ever. Because of this advancement in reporting scores, the breakdown of those scores may also some day become a reality.

One side note is that in the summer of 2010, the College Board sent a notice to AP educators stating that, beginning with the 2011 exams, points will no longer be deducted for incorrect answers on the multiple-choice section of the exam. Previously, wrong answers cost one-fourth of a point, but that penalty no longer exists. Students may freely guess at answers on the multiple-choice section of the test. Of course, as always, no points are awarded for answers left blank.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is AP?

AP stands for Advanced Placement. The AP program is sponsored by the College Board®, the non-profit organization that also oversees the SAT® and PSAT/NMSQT®. Advanced Placement courses provide high school students with the opportunity to learn at a college level and to receive college credit. According to the AP website, there are thirty-seven courses and exams offered through the AP program, and more than ninety percent of the nation's colleges and universities offer students some form of credit for successful completion of an AP exam. Of the thirty-seven courses and exams, there are two courses in the category of English: English Literature and Composition, and English Language and Composition.

What is the AP exam?

The Advanced Placement exam is the culmination of an AP course. Students do not have to take an AP course to take an AP exam, but it is very difficult to pass the exam without having had the preparation from a class. Students may receive up to a year of college credit for a passing score on an AP exam.

What is the difference between the English Literature and Composition course and the English Language and Composition course?

English Literature and Composition is a course based on fiction works, including poetry. In fact, poetry makes up approximately forty-three percent of the Literature exam. English Language and Composition is based on non-fiction works and rhetorical, or

persuasive, strategies. The exam for English Language and Composition includes no poetry.

How do students receive college credit?

Students must take the AP exam and pass it according to the standards set by the university they plan to attend. Scores on the AP range from a one to a five, with five being the best. While some universities will only give credit for a four or a five, other universities and smaller colleges will give credit for a three. Some very competitive universities do not give any credit but may require a certain score for acceptance.

What credit can students expect to receive for each of the possible scores?

Some colleges will give a semester of credit for a three and one year of credit for a four or five. Others may require a four or even a five before giving a semester of credit. There is no credit given for a one, and generally no credit given for a two.

How does a student find out what the standards are for receiving credit at his or her college?

Standards may often be found through an online search at the university's admissions webpage. If the student is unable to find the standards, he or she can ask for them by e-mailing the admissions office. It is always better to receive information in writing via e-mail or traditional mail, rather than over the phone. The AP acceptance policy for many universities is listed on the College Board website. To find this listing, go to www.collegeboard.com. Click on *For Students* near the top of the page; then click on the tab for *College Board Tests*, also near the top of the page. On the left side of the page, under the heading *Tools*, click on *AP Credit Policy Info*. Here you may type in the name of a university, and if the school has listed information with the College Board, you will be able to see the list for all subjects.

Does a student have to take an AP course to take the AP exam for that course?

No, any student may take any AP exam, provided he or she signs up through a participating site before the deadline in late March. It will, however, be difficult to pass any AP exam without having taken a course in preparation for that exam.

May any teacher or parent teach an AP course?

While any teacher or parent may teach a course that prepares students for the AP test, only those teachers who have been through the rigorous process of having their AP syllabi audited and approved by the College Board may call their courses AP and be listed in the College Board roster of approved courses.

Does a student have to take the AP exam if he or she takes an AP class?

No, a student does not have to take the exam unless the requirement to do so comes from his or her school or district. The College Board does not require the exam, but colleges and universities will not give any credit for an AP class unless the student takes the exam and passes it. Also, in order to gauge a student's level of motivation and perseverance, some universities look to see whether a student took the exam after completing the

course. Having the courage to take the exam—and scoring well—may be one of the determining factors for acceptance at very competitive universities.

As a student, how can I prepare for the AP exam?

You will need to learn the techniques for responding to literature in an essay format under a timed setting. This book will prepare you for that task. In addition to preparing for the essay section of the test, you will need to prepare for the multiple-choice section. The readings and essay exercises in this book will help you to understand literature more fully, which will help you to do well on the multiple-choice section. Although there is only one multiple-choice practice section in this book, several major companies publish books that contain full-length multiple-choice practice tests. The reference section of your local bookstore should have several AP preparation books. You may use one of these books to prepare primarily for the multiple choice section of the test. In addition, by setting up a mock test for yourself, you may practice the pace of taking the complete AP exam. Set aside three hours to put yourself through the pace of taking a practice AP test. Part of what is being tested on the AP is your mental stamina. The only way to gain the ability to keep going is to practice this.

As a teacher or parent, how can I find additional materials to use with my students?

Because of the valuable multiple-choice test questions they contain, you may want to use one of the AP preparation books found in the reference section of bookstores. Another source that is open to you is the College Board website for AP students, which is located at www.collegeboard.com/apstudents.

Feel free to explore the links on this site. If you click on the box on the left labeled, *Select a Subject*, and select *English Literature*, you will be able to download the official course description. By clicking on the tab on the left labeled, *Sample Questions and Scoring*, you will also be able to access all of the essay questions from every year, starting with 2001 and ending with the test from the previous year. The essay questions from each year are posted two days after the test. You may notice that beginning in 2002, two tests exist for each year. *Form B* exists to preserve the security of the exams that are administered in multiple time zones.

Following the assigned reading of *Great Expectations*, we will apply several of the *Question 3* concepts. Some of the remaining essay prompt concepts will be used with the other novels and plays assigned. Additional *Question 3* concepts may be found in the appendix (see A-36) for further practice. If you wish to see the actual *Question 3* prompts, you may view them by going to the following student-accessible page: http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/english_lit/samp.html?englit. You may type this link into the URL browser, or you may follow the directions in the section above on *additional materials* to get to the same page.

How do homeschool students sign up to take the AP exams?

Once again, go to www.collegeboard.com/apstudents and click on the tab on the left labeled, *Registering*.

This page instructs homeschoolers to contact AP Services no later than March 1st to request a list of AP coordinators in your area. The e-mail address and phone number for AP Services are listed on the right-hand side of the page. The page further instructs homeschoolers to contact local AP coordinators no later than March 15th to request permission to take the exam at his or her testing site. N.B.: Even though the AP program encourages coordinators to accommodate homeschoolers, the coordinators do not have to allow you to test at their site, so the most difficult part of this process might be finding a test provider. The College Board also tells AP coordinators that they may negotiate a higher fee for homeschoolers to cover the additional costs incurred by allowing them to test. The actual exam costs approximately \$90. Be certain to be polite, respectful, helpful, and cheerful in order to have the best chance of getting in to the test site.

Applying the Question Three Prompt to *Great Expectations*

Now that you have read *Great Expectations*, and have taken notes on your reading, we are ready to examine the steps, in depth, for writing an analysis essay based on a prompt. Following this scrutiny of the process, you will be assigned several essays to apply to *Great Expectations*.

Here is the first literary concept that we will apply to *Great Expectations*.

A symbol is an object that takes on meaning beyond what it literally is. Choose a novel or play, and write an essay discussing the use of a symbol in the work and how that symbol enhances the meaning of the work as a whole. Do not limit your discussion to plot summary.

Notice the wording of the prompt. What is it asking you to do? Have you noticed all of the questions within the prompt? Several tasks exist within this one seemingly simple prompt. You are being asked to select a novel or play of literary merit that you have studied well enough to discuss. You are being asked to identify and focus on one symbol—only one. You are being asked to write an essay telling how the symbol functions in the work you have chosen. Finally, you are being asked to discuss what the symbol reveals about the meaning of the work as a whole. Remember that we already noted the words *work as a whole* mean *theme*. For this essay, you have been given a brief definition of a symbol. Always be grateful for any helpful information.

Let's mark the text of the prompt, so that we can see all the pieces of the question. Circle the different tasks as they are presented to you in the prompt so that they stand out, and you are forced to see how many tasks exist. Underline what the tasks must accomplish.

The prompt should look something like this when you are finished marking it:

A symbol is an object that takes on meaning beyond what it literally is. Choose a novel or play, and write a cogent essay discussing the use of a symbol in the work and how that symbol enhances the meaning of the work as a whole.

Literary Analysis Task One

Turning from the prompt to look at the Composition Handout #1, titled “Literary Analysis Essay,” we note that the first task is to narrow the topic of our essay. The prompt has already accomplished the narrowing; we are to discuss one symbol from a novel or play. A symbol that has meaning throughout the novel *Great Expectations* is the file that Pip steals from Joe to free the convict from his leg irons. The file reappears again later in the hands of a stranger who aims his eye at Pip and secretly shows Pip the file. Other symbols exist in the novel and could just as easily be chosen for this prompt—the mist of the marsh, the convict's leg irons, the forge, Miss Havisham's wedding dress, shadows.

Literary Analysis Task Two

Task number two is to write a thesis statement, which will be the final statement of your opening paragraph. Keep in mind that if we write the thesis statement first, we may need to change the wording slightly to make it fit together with the rest of the paragraph once we write the opening. The thesis statement must include a mention of the theme—the work as a whole,—but as you mention theme, you must not mention the characters of the novel. Theme is a universal concept; if you mention the specific characters, the statement is no longer universal.

Let's look at an appropriate thesis statement for this prompt, using the file from *Great Expectations*, so that we can make sense of all the information above. "Dickens chooses a metal file to reveal the struggle within Pip and to illuminate the theme that keeping secrets ultimately brings destruction to relationships." Note that we have excluded character names when discussing theme. We could, however, still say, "Dickens uses Joe's file to reveal the struggle within Pip and to illuminate the theme that keeping secrets ultimately brings destruction to relationships." When discussing theme, what we *should not* say is, "Dickens uses the metal file to reveal the struggle within Pip and to demonstrate the theme that Pip's relationship with Joe is destroyed because of secrets." Do you see the difference? We can mention a character in the thesis statement, but we cannot mention the character as we name the theme; otherwise, the theme is no longer universal.

Literary Analysis Task Three

Task number three on the Literary Analysis page is to write the opening paragraph of the essay. The structure of the opening paragraph is outlined on Composition Handout #3, "Literary Analysis Essay Graphic Organizer" (see A-25–27) This organizer is provided as a guide for the first one or two analysis essays. It is not meant to be used each time an essay is written. Because you have this guide, however, you should never be at a loss for how to begin your analysis essay. You have steps to fulfill to write the opening paragraph.

Note that the graphic organizer says to begin with a general statement, while the analysis page says to begin with something that will grab the attention of the reader. In the best of all situations, and with a day or two to mull the question over, you would, no doubt, think of something witty and creative to write as an opening statement, but on the AP literature exam, you have only forty minutes to write an essay about a symbol in a novel. It will probably take you a minute or two to decide which symbol to use, so time is of the essence, and the pressure is on. Fatigue will, no doubt, have set in by this point because this is the final task of the three-hour exam. We need a default statement that you can use if you draw a blank on a creative opening statement—remember not to use trite or cutesy statements such as, "Easy come; easy go." As a backup plan to the creative general statement, we will use the prompt itself. The prompt discusses the use of symbols in literature; therefore, we will say, "Often in literature an author will use a symbol to bring concreteness to an idea." If you are at a loss for how to begin your essay, always refer to the prompt for a start. Do not rewrite the whole prompt, but you may use pieces of it to

open your essay. Knowing how to begin should help you overcome the “blank page” syndrome.

We follow our opening statement with an elaborative statement as our sample outline says to do. For example, “While the symbol may go unnoticed at first, the symbol’s contribution to the work as a whole becomes more evident as the author mentions it a second or third time.” At this point, we may either write another, more specific, statement, or we may move on to the PATT—**P**eriod, **A**uthor, **T**ype (genre), and **T**itle—statement. Again, because of serious time constraints during the exam, I would suggest moving directly on to the PATT statement and the introduction of the specific novel we will be discussing. For example, “Such is the case with the novel *Great Expectations*, written in 1860, by Charles Dickens.” (**P**eriod—1860, **A**uthor—Charles Dickens, **T**ype—Novel, **T**itle—*Great Expectations*.) Please note that when we type the name of a novel or play, the preferred method is to put the title in italics. If we write the title by hand, we must underline the title.

We may decide to include a Purpose or SOAP—**S**peaker, **O**ccasion, **A**udience, **P**urpose—statement if our thesis does not already include purpose. In this statement, we must also be clear about why we are able to use *Great Expectations* to answer this prompt. For example, “Using a stolen file, Dickens highlights the moment that Pip realizes he is lying to and stealing from the only person who truly loves him. The file symbolizes the beginning of a breach that will form between ‘ever the best of friends’ Pip and Joe.” Notice that we did not need to mention the **S**peaker or the **A**udience—the **S** and the **A** of the SOAP statement—because that information is not necessary. The **S**peaker is the narrator of the novel (Pip), and the **A**udience is the general reader. The **P**urpose and the **O**ccasion, however, are important. Purpose—to highlight the breach, Occasion—to show the first moment Pip feels it.

If we put all these sentences together with our thesis statement, our opening paragraph will read as follows:

Often in literature an author will use a symbol to bring concreteness to an idea. While the symbol may go unnoticed at first, the symbol’s contribution to the work as a whole becomes more evident as the author mentions it a second or third time. Such is the case with the novel *Great Expectations*, written in 1860, by Charles Dickens. Using a stolen file, Dickens highlights the moment that Pip realizes he is lying to and stealing from the only person who truly loves him. The file symbolizes the beginning of a breach that will form between “ever the best of friends” Pip and Joe. Dickens chooses this simple tool to reveal the struggle within Pip and to illuminate the theme that keeping secrets ultimately brings destruction to a relationship.

Literary Analysis Task Four

Task number four of the Literary Analysis page says to write the body paragraphs. Depending on the prompt, we may only need one body paragraph, or we may need three

or four body paragraphs. Avoid writing the formulaic five-paragraph essay, but keep in mind that a well-written five-paragraph essay may occasionally be a viable option.

The graphic organizer (see A-25–27) shows that we need an assertion statement—topic sentence, brief evidence in the form of details, commentary/analysis, and a clincher sentence for each body paragraph. The assertion statement comes from the thesis statement. Everything in the essay must point back to this guiding statement.

The assertion statement must mention the file and needs to include the emotion that is attached to the file. “Early in the novel, Dickens positions the file as a wedge between Pip and Joe.” This is an arguable statement and one that must be backed up with evidence and commentary.

We continue with evidence in the form of brief details. The student’s job is not to retell the story, nor is it to explain who the characters are. The student is to assume that the reader of the essay is familiar with the novel and will understand who has done what. The student must not leave out the important details of the text but must quickly get beyond those details.

We have to give evidence from the novel to back up our claim, and we start by giving brief details supported by commentary and analysis. **Details:** “The first time Dickens introduces the file, it is simply part of a list of demands being made of Pip by the terrifying convict, who claims he will only let Pip live if Pip brings him a file and food.” **Commentary:** “Little emphasis is placed on the file at this moment. With difficulty, Pip begins to gather the food, but with relative ease, Pip steals Joe’s file from the forge.” **Details:** “Pip returns to the marsh with the file and the food.” **Commentary:** “He has met the convict’s demands. Pip escapes unscathed, or so he thinks.” **Details:** “As Pip runs home, he pauses to listen. He can hear the convict filing away at his leg irons.” **Commentary:** “At this moment, the file begins to carry significance. It is the instrument of freedom to the convict; it is quite the opposite for Pip. The sound of the file will be heard as background for the rest of the story. The symbolism is so significant to the story that Dickens does not want the reader to miss it. He allows the narrator, an older, wiser Pip, to directly express that he feels no guilt at stealing the food from his sister, but he feels great guilt at stealing the file from Joe, and heaviness settles over Pip. He feels the weight of his betrayal, but he also feels helpless to resist. This is the first moment of a chain of regret for Pip and the beginning of his inner struggle as the rift in his relationship with Joe is subtly established.

If we put all the sentences together with the assertion statement and make slight changes for transition and flow, the first body paragraph reads:

Early in the novel, Dickens positions the file as a wedge between Pip and Joe. As Dickens introduces the file, it is simply part of a list of demands being made of Pip by the terrifying convict, who claims he will only let Pip live if Pip brings him a file and food. Little emphasis is placed on the file at this moment. With difficulty, Pip begins to gather the food, but with relative ease

Pip steals Joe's file from the forge. Meeting the convict's demands, Pip returns to the marsh with the file and the food. Pip escapes unscathed, or so he thinks. As Pip runs home, he pauses to listen to the convict filing away at his leg irons. At this moment, the file begins to carry significance. It is the instrument of freedom to the convict; it is quite the opposite for Pip. The sound of the stolen file will be heard as background for the rest of the story. The symbolism is so significant to the story that Dickens does not want the reader to miss it. He allows the narrator, an older, wiser Pip, to directly express that he feels no guilt at stealing the food from his sister; but he feels great guilt at stealing the file from Joe, and heaviness settles over Pip. He feels the weight of his betrayal, but he also feels helpless to resist. This is the first moment of a chain of regret for Pip and the beginning of his inner struggle as the rift in his relationship with Joe is subtly established.

About this first body paragraph, please notice a few important things. In the first sentence of details, I used Pip's name several times in order to clarify whether I was writing about Pip or the convict. Additionally, I did not strictly adhere to the pattern of the graphic organizer. I moved back and forth from details to commentary, as needed, with at least twice as much commentary as details. I also did not explain who Pip is, nor did I explain who Joe is. Finally, please notice that I wrote in present tense. Whenever writing about literature, use present tense—*Pip steals the file*, rather than, *Pip stole the file*. Occasionally, you will need to use past tense for something that happened to a character in an earlier moment, but you must return to present tense as soon as possible. You may also successfully use the present perfect progressive tense formed by using *has been* plus an *-ing* form of a verb (a present participle) or *have been* plus an *-ing* form of a verb. For example, *Pip has been feeling* guilty over the theft of the file. This indicates that he has been feeling this way for a while, and he still feels this way. It is, therefore, an acceptable tense to use when writing about literature.

Writing another body paragraph about the file, we will connect more to inner struggle and theme. (Details are underlined; commentary is plain text.)

Pip becomes painfully aware of the breach in his relationship with Joe. The rift grows bigger as Pip realizes that he can never tell Joe the truth about the file. If he tells Joe about his dishonesty, Pip is certain that Joe will never look at him again in the same old trusting way. Pip struggles for some time with his conscience over having lied to Joe. But just as Pip begins to grow complacent, Dickens causes the symbol of Pip's rebellion to resurface in the hands of a man with an 'aiming eye.' Guilt and fear overwhelm Pip. He is suddenly aware that he is not the only one who knows about his deceitful behavior towards loving, faithful Joe. The file not only symbolizes Pip's inner struggle of conscience, but it also represents the loss of innocence in Pip, the simple country boy. Pip now knows about convicts, prison ships, lying, secrets, aiming eyes, guilt, and fear. He also knows the feeling of isolation from Joe as the breach in their relationship grows.

Literary Analysis Task Five

Task number five of the Literary Analysis page says to write the closing paragraph. The information in this paragraph discusses theme, and how it relates to life. Many students fall short in the final paragraph because they feel they have already said everything there is to say in the body paragraphs. The reason people feel this way is because they look at the closing paragraph as a restatement of thesis. To restate the thesis causes students to think in terms of giving more evidence, but the evidence has already been presented. The fallacy in this thinking is in not recognizing that the closing paragraph has its own function. The function is to move beyond the text by relating the text to life. In the final paragraph, demonstrate that the work and its intricacies have meant something to you.

The initial step Pip takes of stealing the file allows Pip to justify his further withdrawal from Joe as opportunities for wealth and status present themselves. Dickens' message is clear. Through the symbol of the file, Dickens is able to portray the struggle Pip undergoes mentally and the decline in Pip and Joe's relationship. Dickens demonstrates the theme that it is possible for people to destroy even the strongest of friendships when they keep secrets from each other. Unfortunately television is full of examples of this capability. Reality shows and talk shows thrive on the revelation of secrets and the damage done by them. Regrettably in life, mercy is sometimes nonexistent, and once-healthy relationships perish. In the story of Pip and Joe in *Great Expectations*, the damage might also have been irreparable if not for Joe's mercy and goodness.

The Complete Essay

We have the whole essay in pieces now. In order for you to see all the pieces together and appreciate the flow, it is reprinted here in its entirety.

Often in literature an author will use a symbol to bring concreteness to an idea. While the symbol may go unnoticed at first, the symbol's contribution to the work as a whole becomes more evident as the author mentions it a second or third time. Such is the case with the novel *Great Expectations*, written in 1860, by Charles Dickens. Using a stolen file, Dickens highlights the moment that Pip realizes he is lying to and stealing from the only person who truly loves him. The file symbolizes the beginning of a breach that will form between "ever the best of friends" Pip and Joe. Dickens chooses this simple tool to reveal the struggle within Pip and to illuminate the theme that keeping secrets ultimately brings destruction to a friendship.

Early in the novel, Dickens positions the file as a wedge between Pip and Joe. As Dickens introduces the file, it is simply part of a list of demands being made of Pip by the terrifying convict, who claims he will only let Pip live if Pip brings him a file and food. Little emphasis is placed on the file at this moment. With difficulty, Pip begins to gather the food, but with relative ease Pip steals Joe's file from the forge. Meeting the convict's demands, Pip returns to the marsh with the file and the food. Pip escapes unscathed, or so he thinks. As Pip runs home, he pauses to listen to the convict filing away at

his leg irons. At this moment, the file begins to carry significance. It is the instrument of freedom to the convict; it is quite the opposite for Pip. The sound of the stolen file will be heard as background for the rest of the story. The symbolism is so significant to the story that Dickens does not want the reader to miss it. He allows the narrator, an older, wiser Pip, to directly express that he feels no guilt at stealing the food from his sister, but he feels great guilt at stealing the file from Joe, and heaviness settles over Pip. He feels the weight of his betrayal, but he also feels helpless to resist. This is the first moment of a chain of regret for Pip and the beginning of his inner struggle as the rift in his relationship with Joe is subtly established.

Pip becomes painfully aware of the breach in his relationship with Joe. The rift grows bigger as Pip realizes that he can never tell Joe the truth about the file. If he tells Joe about his dishonesty, Pip is certain that Joe will never look at him again in the same old trusting way. Pip struggles for some time with his conscience over having lied to Joe. But just as Pip begins to grow complacent, Dickens causes the symbol of Pip's rebellion to resurface in the hands of a man with an 'aiming eye.' Guilt and fear overwhelm Pip. He is suddenly aware that he is not the only one who knows about his deceitful behavior towards loving, faithful Joe. The file not only symbolizes Pip's inner struggle of conscience; it also represents the loss of innocence in Pip, the simple country boy. Pip now knows about convicts, prison ships, lying, secrets, aiming eyes, guilt, and fear. He also knows the feeling of isolation from Joe as the breach in their relationship grows.

The initial step Pip takes of stealing the file allows Pip to justify his further withdrawal from Joe as opportunities for wealth and status present themselves. Dickens' message is clear. Through the symbol of the file, Dickens is able to portray the struggle Pip undergoes mentally and the decline in Pip and Joe's relationship. Dickens demonstrates the theme that it is possible for people to destroy even the strongest of friendships when they keep secrets from each other. Unfortunately television is full of examples of this capability. Reality shows and talk shows thrive on the revelation of secrets and the damage done by them. Regrettably in life, mercy is sometimes nonexistent, and once-healthy relationships perish. In the story of Pip and Joe in *Great Expectations*, the damage might also have been irreparable if not for Joe's mercy and goodness.

The essay is scored based on the understanding that it is a rough draft, written by a student in a forty-minute period. This essay would score well because it answers every aspect of the prompt, with evidence of details from the text and commentary on those details.