AP Literature and Composition
Exam Description

MULTIPLE-CHOICE SECTION (45%): 55-60 questions presented in one hour
These questions test your critical reading of selected passages. No prior knowledge is necessary of the novel, play, or poem from which the passage is taken. This section of the test is purely concerned with testing your critical reading skills. This is where your knowledge of literary terms and language resources will come into play.

The multiple-choice section is difficult and demanding. You must show understanding of organization of a text, use of devices of literature, explication of a line or lines, implication of word choice or image, author's attitude, relationship of different words in a text, etc. Occasionally a question requires you to know a technical term like *apostrophe* in poetry or *denouement* in literature. Passages are often organized to alternate in difficulty, i.e., easy, hard, easy; so it is best to have looked at every question. You are best off passing over questions that are too difficult so as to make better use of your time, BUT make sure you answer all questions.

Multiple-choice scores are based on the number of questions answered correctly. Points are not deducted for incorrect responses and no points are awarded for unanswered questions. Because points are not deducted for incorrect answers, you are encouraged to answer all questions, even if you are simply taking a “wild guess.” On any questions you don’t know the answer to, you should eliminate as many answers as you can, and then select the best answer from among the remaining choices.

FREE-RESPONSE ESSAY SECTION (55%): 3 prompts, 2 Hours

Two of the essay questions will be taken from the first three types of questions below, and the third will be an “open question” as described in #4 below.

1. **Tone Question** - frequently a passage drawn from a novel or play, you must discover the speaker's attitude and demonstrate how the passage's diction, images, sentence structure, details help reveal tone.

2. **Poetry Analysis** - often tied to progression of the speaker's emotion or some change in perception and how this change is made known to the reader by images, diction, allusion, OR a poem’s particular use of a device such as metaphor, imagery or word choice and how this device helps create the poem's meaning

3. **Devices of Narrative**: typically a short story or excerpt that features sharp use of several devices like point of view, characterization, imagery, and conflict which help to show the author or speaker's attitude or reveal a theme of the work

4. **Open Question**: The question is “open” in that you may draw upon any piece of literature in order to give your response. You should familiarize yourself with the open-ended responses from previous exams. Be sure to read through AP Open Questions 1970-2012