

# AP ENGLISH LITERATURE STUDY GUIDE

## 180 High-Yield Concepts

Advanced Placement Course | College Board CED-aligned

---

- All 9 CED units: Short Fiction, Poetry, and Longer Fiction or Drama at three levels
- Every essential: characterization, narration, plot, dramatic technique, poetic form, and the literary argument
- Real CED genre weights (Short Fiction 42-49%, Poetry 36-45%, Longer Fiction or Drama 15-18%) on the section titles
- Perfect for the AP English Literature and Composition exam in May

**TemplateForge | \$19**

PDF Workbook | [templateforge.com](https://templateforge.com) | (c) TemplateForge

# How to Use This Guide

This guide condenses the AP English Literature and Composition course and exam description into high-yield concepts. It is not a textbook replacement -- it is the fastest way to review everything the exam covers and to target your weak skills.

The AP Lit exam is 3 hours: 55 multiple-choice questions (60 min, 45% of the score) and 3 free-response essays (2 hours, 55% of the score): the poetry analysis essay, the prose fiction analysis essay, and the literary argument essay. The 9 units below map to the College Board Course and Exam Description; the CED reports genre weights (Short Fiction 42-49%, Poetry 36-45%, Longer Fiction or Drama 15-18%) across the exam.

## How to use the concepts

- Each concept = term + concise explanation + high-yield exam tip (+ example where useful).
- First pass: read every concept in order. Underline anything unfamiliar.
- Second pass: focus only on the concepts you underlined.
- Two weeks before the exam: rapid-review every tip line (they are the highest-yield).
- Use the Table of Contents to jump straight to your weakest units.

# Table of Contents

---

|   |                                     |             |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Unit 1: Short Fiction I             | 20 concepts |
| 2 | Unit 2: Poetry I                    | 20 concepts |
| 3 | Unit 3: Longer Fiction or Drama I   | 20 concepts |
| 4 | Unit 4: Short Fiction II            | 20 concepts |
| 5 | Unit 5: Poetry II                   | 20 concepts |
| 6 | Unit 6: Longer Fiction or Drama II  | 20 concepts |
| 7 | Unit 7: Short Fiction III           | 20 concepts |
| 8 | Unit 8: Poetry III                  | 20 concepts |
| 9 | Unit 9: Longer Fiction or Drama III | 20 concepts |

**Total: 180 high-yield concepts**

*How to use the TOC: work through the units in order on your first pass, then jump back to your weakest units for review. Each concept includes an Explanation, a high-yield exam tip, and where useful an Example. Mark the concepts you miss with a small dot in the margin and revisit them 48 hours later.*

## Unit 1: Unit 1: Short Fiction I

Foundations of fiction: character, setting, plot, and narration (42-49% of the exam spans Short Fiction units).

### 1 Character

**Explanation:** A character is a person (or personified being) in a story. Characters are revealed through what they say, do, think, and what others say about them.

**AP Lit Tip:** Characterize by *EVIDENCE*: speech, action, thought, effect on others, and appearance (*STEAL*).

**Example:** Scrooge is revealed as miserly through his dialogue, his refusal to give, and his clerk's fear.

---

### 2 Characterization

**Explanation:** Characterization is the technique by which an author creates and reveals characters -- directly (stated traits) or indirectly (shown through details).

**AP Lit Tip:** Direct = told; indirect = shown. The AP exam loves indirect characterization.

**Example:** Instead of 'she was brave,' the author shows her stepping into the burning house.

---

### 3 Protagonist & Antagonist

**Explanation:** The protagonist is the central character whose journey drives the plot. The antagonist opposes or complicates that journey -- not always a villain.

**AP Lit Tip:** The antagonist need not be evil; it can be a rival, society, nature, or the protagonist themselves.

**Example:** In 'The Great Gatsby,' Gatsby is the protagonist and the past itself is his antagonist.

---

### 4 Static vs Dynamic Characters

**Explanation:** A static character stays essentially the same; a dynamic character changes through the story's events, usually learning or transforming.

**AP Lit Tip:** Ask: does the character *CHANGE*? If yes, track the change and what causes it.

**Example:** Elizabeth Bennet changes her judgment of Darcy; Mr. Collins stays absurd throughout.

---

### 5 Flat vs Round Characters

**Explanation:** Flat characters are one-dimensional (one or two traits); round characters are complex, contradictory, and lifelike.

**AP Lit Tip:** Round = complex; flat = functional. Minor characters are often flat by design.

**Example:** Iago is round (his motives are complex); the innkeeper in a quest tale is flat.

---

### 6 Setting

**Explanation:** Setting is the time, place, and social context of a story. It shapes mood, character, and conflict.

**AP Lit Tip:** Analyze setting's *FUNCTION*: how does the time/place create pressure or meaning?

**Example:** The moors in 'Wuthering Heights' mirror the characters' wild, untamed passions.

---

### 7 Atmosphere & Mood

**Explanation:** Atmosphere (or mood) is the emotional quality of a setting -- the feeling it creates in the reader.

**AP Lit Tip:** Setting + diction + imagery = mood. Name the mood and the details that create it.

**Example:** A foggy, lamplit street creates an atmosphere of suspense and unease.

---

### 8 Plot

**Explanation:** Plot is the sequence of events in a story, arranged to create conflict, tension, and resolution.

**AP Lit Tip:** Plot is *CAUSAL* ('this happens because of that'), not just chronological.

**Example:** In 'The Lottery,' the stones are gathered in part one, and the stoning at the end is caused by that beginning.

---

## 9 Conflict

**Explanation:** Conflict is the struggle that drives a plot: character vs character, self, society, nature, or fate.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Name the conflict type and the stakes -- what does the protagonist stand to lose or gain?*

**Example:** In 'The Story of an Hour,' Louise battles society's expectations and her own trapped self.

---

## 10 Exposition

**Explanation:** Exposition is the opening material that establishes characters, setting, and situation before the conflict intensifies.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Watch what the exposition TELLS you -- and what it hides.*

**Example:** The opening of a story that details the family's poverty sets up the conflict over the lottery prize.

---

## 11 Rising Action & Climax

**Explanation:** Rising action builds tension through complications; the climax is the turning point where the conflict peaks.

**AP Lit Tip:** *The climax is the moment of maximum tension and the story's pivot.*

**Example:** In 'The Cask of Amontillado,' the climax is the moment Montresor chains Fortunato to the wall.

---

## 12 Falling Action & Resolution

**Explanation:** Falling action releases tension after the climax; resolution (denouement) ties up or complicates the outcome.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Resolutions can close cleanly or leave things deliberately unresolved (open ending).*

**Example:** After the lottery's stoning, the story's final lines grimly resolve the ritual.

---

## 13 Narrator

**Explanation:** The narrator is the voice telling the story. Narrators are not authors: they are constructed voices with their own limits and biases.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Always distinguish narrator from author; the narrator's reliability is always worth questioning.*

**Example:** A narrator who insists 'I am a truthful man' may be the least trustworthy voice in the story.

---

## 14 Point of View

**Explanation:** Point of view is the perspective from which the story is told: first person, second person, or third person (limited or omniscient).

**AP Lit Tip:** *POV controls what readers know; identify its limitations and advantages.*

**Example:** First person limits us to one mind; omniscient third person can enter every mind.

---

## 15 First-Person Narration

**Explanation:** First-person narration uses 'I' and filters everything through one character's experience and bias.

**AP Lit Tip:** *With first person, ask: what does THIS narrator not know, or not admit?*

**Example:** In 'The Tell-Tale Heart,' the murderer's first-person account is clearly unreliable.

---

## 16 Third-Person Limited

**Explanation:** Third-person limited narration follows one character closely, reporting their thoughts but not others'.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Limited POV creates intimacy with one character and suspense about the rest.*

**Example:** A story told through Elisa's eyes in 'The Chrysanthemums' reveals only her inner life.

---

## 17 Third-Person Omniscient

**Explanation:** Omniscient narration moves freely among characters' minds, offering godlike knowledge.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Omniscience enables dramatic irony: we know what characters do not.*

**Example:** In 'The Necklace,' the omniscient narrator lets us see the irony of the lost necklace early.

---

## 18 Theme

**Explanation:** Theme is the story's central idea or insight about human experience -- usually implied, not stated.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Theme = a statement about life the story supports: 'pride blinds people to their own flaws.'*

**Example:** The theme of 'The Gift of the Magi' is that love values sacrifice over material gifts.

---

## 19 Symbol

**Explanation:** A symbol is a concrete object or image that carries abstract meaning beyond itself.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Trace a symbol across the story; its meaning often grows with repetition.*

**Example:** The green light in 'The Great Gatsby' symbolizes Gatsby's dream of Daisy and the past.

---

## 20 Foreshadowing

**Explanation:** Foreshadowing plants clues or hints about events to come, building expectation and coherence.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Notice details that seem insignificant on first read -- they often pay off.*

**Example:** The early mention of the black box in 'The Lottery' foreshadows the ritual's violence.

---

## Unit 2: Unit 2: Poetry I

Foundations of poetry: speaker, structure, sound, and figurative language (36-45% of the exam spans Poetry units).

### 21 The Speaker

**Explanation:** The speaker is the poem's voice -- a constructed persona, not necessarily the poet. The speaker has a situation, attitude, and audience.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Ask: who is speaking, to whom, under what circumstances, and with what attitude?*

**Example:** In 'My Last Duchess,' the speaker is a Duke revealing his cruelty without realizing it.

---

### 22 Speaker vs Poet

**Explanation:** Distinguish the poet from the speaker. Poets adopt voices to create irony, distance, or effect.

**AP Lit Tip:** *If the speaker seems naive or cruel, suspect the poet is being ironic.*

**Example:** 'Daddy' by Plath has a speaker whose rage is not identical to the poet's public self.

---

### 23 Dramatic Monologue

**Explanation:** A dramatic monologue is a poem spoken by a single character to a silent listener, revealing character through what is said.

**AP Lit Tip:** *In a monologue, what the speaker REVEALS unintentionally is the real subject.*

**Example:** Browning's 'My Last Duchess': the Duke condemns himself while praising his control.

---

### 24 Lyric Poetry

**Explanation:** Lyric poetry expresses the speaker's thoughts and feelings in a musical, condensed form -- not narrative.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Lyrics are about emotion and perception, not story.*

**Example:** A sonnet about grief is lyric; a ballad telling a story is narrative.

---

### 25 Narrative Poetry

**Explanation:** Narrative poetry tells a story with characters, plot, and setting -- in verse.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Narrative poems reward plot tracking; lyric poems reward feeling tracking.*

**Example:** 'The Raven' narrates a descent into madness; 'Beowulf' narrates a hero's deeds.

---

### 26 Stanza

**Explanation:** A stanza is a grouped set of lines within a poem, functioning like a paragraph. Stanza patterns (couplets, quatrains) shape meaning.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Track stanza breaks: each stanza is a unit of thought or a shift in the poem.*

**Example:** A poem in four-line quatrains with a shift after stanza three signals a turn.

---

### 27 Line & Line Break

**Explanation:** The line is poetry's fundamental unit; the line break creates rhythm, emphasis, and meaning at the line's end.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Read the end of every line: the break itself creates pause and emphasis.*

**Example:** 'so much depends / upon a red wheel / barrow' -- the breaks isolate 'depends' and 'barrow.'

---

### 28 Enjambment

**Explanation:** Enjambment runs a sentence across a line break without punctuation, creating flow and suspense.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Enjambment speeds the poem and can surprise at the next line.*

**Example:** In 'This Is Just to Say,' enjambment carries the confession forward breathlessly.

---

## 29 End-Stopped Lines

**Explanation:** An end-stopped line ends with punctuation, creating a pause or completed thought.

**AP Lit Tip:** *End-stopping slows and stabilizes; contrast with enjambment for effect.*

**Example:** 'I have eaten / the plums' is enjambed; 'I have eaten the plums.' is end-stopped.

---

## 30 Rhyme

**Explanation:** Rhyme is the repetition of similar sounds, often at line ends (end rhyme) or within lines (internal rhyme).

**AP Lit Tip:** *Analyze rhyme's FUNCTION: it can unify, emphasize, or create irony.*

**Example:** In 'The Raven,' 'Lenore' and 'nevermore' rhyme to hammer the speaker's obsession.

---

## 31 Rhyme Scheme

**Explanation:** Rhyme scheme is the pattern of end rhymes, labeled by letters (ABAB, AABB, ABCB).

**AP Lit Tip:** *Label the scheme and ask why: regular schemes feel ordered; broken schemes signal disruption.*

**Example:** A Shakespearean sonnet's ABAB CDCD EFEF GG scheme builds to the closing couplet.

---

## 32 Meter

**Explanation:** Meter is the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line. The most common is iambic pentameter: five 'da-DUM' feet.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Scansion (marking stresses) reveals the poem's beat and its disruptions.*

**Example:** 'Shall I comPARE thee to a SUMmer's DAY?' -- five iambs, iambic pentameter.

---

## 33 Iambic Pentameter

**Explanation:** Iambic pentameter is a line of five iambs (unstressed + stressed). It mimics natural English speech rhythm.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Count the feet: 5 iambs = pentameter. A break in the pattern is meaningful.*

**Example:** Shakespeare's sonnets and many of his plays' speeches run in iambic pentameter.

---

## 34 Free Verse

**Explanation:** Free verse has no regular meter or rhyme, using line breaks, rhythm, and sound for structure.

**AP Lit Tip:** *In free verse, the line break IS the main structural device -- analyze it closely.*

**Example:** Whitman's 'Song of Myself' and much modern poetry use free verse.

---

## 35 Figurative Language in Poetry

**Explanation:** Poetry concentrates figurative language: metaphor, simile, personification, and symbolism carry the poem's meaning.

**AP Lit Tip:** *In poetry, every figure earns its place -- explain what each comparison reveals.*

**Example:** Frost's 'The Road Not Taken' uses the fork in the road as a metaphor for life choices.

---

## 36 Imagery in Poetry

**Explanation:** Imagery is language that appeals to the senses, making the poem's world vivid and felt.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Identify the dominant sensory channel: visual, auditory, tactile -- and its effect.*

**Example:** 'The fog comes / on little cat feet' creates tactile and visual imagery of softness.

---

## 37 Sound Devices

**Explanation:** Sound devices -- alliteration, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia -- create music and emphasis in verse.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Sound repetition binds words and underscores meaning; analyze its effect, not just its presence.*

**Example:** 'The silken sad uncertain rustling' uses sibilance to mimic whispering.

---

## 38 Alliteration & Assonance

**Explanation:** Alliteration repeats initial consonant sounds; assonance repeats vowel sounds within words.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Alliteration links words; assonance creates internal music.*

**Example:** 'Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before' -- heavy alliteration.

---

## 39 Repetition & Refrain

**Explanation:** Repetition and refrain (a repeated line or phrase) create rhythm, emphasis, and emotional weight.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Ask what the repeated element accumulates: each return adds meaning.*

**Example:** 'Nevermore' in 'The Raven' gains menace with every repetition.

---

## 40 Tone in Poetry

**Explanation:** Tone is the speaker's attitude toward the subject and audience, created by diction and sound.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Name the tone precisely (bitter, tender, ironic) and cite the words that create it.*

**Example:** The flippant tone of 'This Is Just to Say' makes the apology playful, not sincere.

---

## Unit 3: Unit 3: Longer Fiction or Drama I

*Foundations of novels and plays: structure, dialogue, and dramatic technique (15-18% of the exam spans Longer Fiction or Drama units).*

### 41 Novel

**Explanation:** A novel is an extended work of prose fiction, long enough to develop complex plots, characters, and themes.

**AP Lit Tip:** *With novels, track big patterns: structure, recurring images, and character arcs across the whole work.*

**Example:** In 'Pride and Prejudice,' the novel's length lets Austen develop a dozen characters and a social world.

---

### 42 Novella

**Explanation:** A novella is a work of fiction longer than a short story but shorter than a novel, often focused and intense.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Novellas often compress: one situation, few characters, maximum pressure.*

**Example:** 'The Metamorphosis' uses novella length to sustain one impossible premise.

---

### 43 Drama

**Explanation:** Drama is literature written for performance: dialogue and stage directions carry the entire effect.

**AP Lit Tip:** *When reading drama, visualize the stage: blocking, timing, and props create meaning.*

**Example:** In 'A Raisin in the Sun,' the cramped apartment IS the play's central pressure.

---

### 44 Dialogue

**Explanation:** Dialogue is the characters' speech. It advances plot, reveals character, and creates subtext -- what is NOT said matters too.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Read between the lines of dialogue: evasion, interruption, and silence speak.*

**Example:** In 'Death of a Salesman,' the family's cheerful small talk hides Willy's despair.

---

### 45 Stage Directions

**Explanation:** Stage directions are the playwright's instructions about setting, movement, and delivery. They are part of the text.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Stage directions control what the audience SEES -- analyze them like any other detail.*

**Example:** In 'A Doll's House,' the stage direction of Nora eating macaroons secretly reveals her rebellion.

---

### 46 Dramatic Irony

**Explanation:** Dramatic irony occurs when the audience knows something the characters do not, creating tension or tragic effect.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Track what the audience knows but the characters don't -- that gap is the irony.*

**Example:** In 'Oedipus Rex,' the audience knows Oedipus killed his father; he does not.

---

### 47 Soliloquy

**Explanation:** A soliloquy is a speech delivered by a character alone on stage, revealing inner thoughts to the audience.

**AP Lit Tip:** *A soliloquy is the character's private mind made public -- the most direct access to their truth.*

**Example:** Hamlet's 'To be or not to be' soliloquy reveals his suicidal contemplation.

---

### 48 Aside

**Explanation:** An aside is a brief remark heard by the audience but not by the other characters, revealing private thought.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Asides puncture the surface: the character speaks truth that the scene hides.*

**Example:** In 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' Puck's asides share his mischief with the audience.

---

## 49 Tragedy

**Explanation:** Tragedy is a drama that ends in catastrophe, typically through a protagonist's fatal flaw (hamartia) or inescapable fate.

**AP Lit Tip:** *In tragedy, trace the protagonist's flaw and the reversal (peripeteia) that brings ruin.*

**Example:** Oedipus's pride and determination to know the truth drive him to his own destruction.

---

## 50 Comedy

**Explanation:** Comedy is drama designed to amuse, often ending happily, with wit, misunderstanding, or satire.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Comedy still has serious edges: satire uses laughter to critique.*

**Example:** 'The Importance of Being Earnest' is a comedy whose wit exposes Victorian hypocrisy.

---

## 51 The Tragic Hero

**Explanation:** The tragic hero is a character of high standing whose flaw leads to their downfall, evoking pity and fear.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Identify the flaw (hubris, ambition, indecision) and how it causes the catastrophe.*

**Example:** Macbeth's ambition is his fatal flaw; each murder follows from the last.

---

## 52 Hamartia

**Explanation:** Hamartia is the tragic flaw or error in judgment that brings about the hero's downfall.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Hamartia is not mere weakness -- it is often the same quality that makes the hero great.*

**Example:** Hamlet's overthinking (his hamartia) prevents action until it is too late.

---

## 53 Comic Relief

**Explanation:** Comic relief is a humorous scene or character that lightens tension in a serious work.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Comic relief also deepens the serious material by contrast.*

**Example:** The gravediggers in 'Hamlet' joke about death right before the tragic finale.

---

## 54 Setting in Long Fiction

**Explanation:** In novels and plays, setting is expansive: it creates a social world, historical moment, and moral atmosphere.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Ask how the larger setting constrains the characters' choices.*

**Example:** In 'The Great Gatsby,' 1920s New York's wealth and corruption frame every character's ambition.

---

## 55 Subplot

**Explanation:** A subplot is a secondary storyline that runs alongside the main plot, often mirroring or contrasting it.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Subplots echo the main theme: compare what the subplot repeats or reverses.*

**Example:** In 'King Lear,' the Gloucester subplot mirrors Lear's blindness to his children.

---

## 56 Structure of a Play

**Explanation:** Plays are structured by acts and scenes; each division marks a shift in time, place, or dramatic tension.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Notice what happens AT the act/scene breaks -- they are structural punctuation.*

**Example:** In 'A Raisin in the Sun,' each act ends with a decision that changes the family's direction.

---

## 57 Conflict in Drama

**Explanation:** Dramatic conflict can be external (between characters) or internal (within a character), often intertwined.

**AP Lit Tip:** *In drama, conflict is acted out: every scene stages a clash of wills.*

**Example:** In 'A Doll's House,' Nora's internal conflict with her own conformity becomes external with Torvald.

---

## 58 Foil Characters in Long Works

**Explanation:** A foil is a character whose traits contrast with another's, highlighting the other's qualities.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Foils sharpen characterization through contrast; name what the foil illuminates.*

**Example:** In 'A Raisin in the Sun,' the conservative George contrasts with the dreamer Beneatha.

---

## 59 Theme in Long Fiction

**Explanation:** Long fiction develops themes gradually through repetition, variation, and the accumulation of episodes.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Trace a theme by collecting its evidence across the whole work, then state the insight it builds.*

**Example:** 'Beloved' accumulates scenes of memory and haunting to develop its theme of the legacy of slavery.

---

## 60 The Whole Work

**Explanation:** In longer works, parts create meaning through the WHOLE: a scene matters for what it does to the arc, not just itself.

**AP Lit Tip:** *On essays about novels/plays, connect each example back to the work's overall arc and theme.*

**Example:** Every chapter of 'The Great Gatsby' advances Gatsby's dream and its corruption toward the end.

---

## Unit 4: Unit 4: Short Fiction II

*Developing fiction analysis: narration, structure, and complex characterization.*

### 61 Unreliable Narrator

**Explanation:** An unreliable narrator's account cannot be fully trusted, because of bias, madness, ignorance, or self-deception.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Detect unreliability: contradictions, motives, exaggerations, and other characters' corrections.*

**Example:** In 'The Tell-Tale Heart,' the narrator's claim of sanity is itself evidence of madness.

---

### 62 Naive Narrator

**Explanation:** A naive narrator lacks the experience or intelligence to understand the events they report, creating irony.

**AP Lit Tip:** *The reader understands what the naive narrator does not -- that gap is the point.*

**Example:** Huck Finn's naive acceptance of slavery's norms lets Twain indict them by showing them plainly.

---

### 63 Free Indirect Discourse

**Explanation:** Free indirect discourse blends third-person narration with a character's thoughts and voice, without quotation marks.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Spot the slide into a character's idiom and attitude within narration.*

**Example:** 'She would show them. They would be sorry.' -- the narration merges with Mrs. Mallard's rebellion.

---

### 64 Stream of Consciousness

**Explanation:** Stream of consciousness presents a character's thoughts as they flow, without neat organization, mimicking the mind.

**AP Lit Tip:** *In stream of consciousness, track associations and repetitions rather than plot.*

**Example:** In 'The Jilting of Granny Weatherall,' Granny's thoughts drift between past and present.

---

### 65 In Medias Res

**Explanation:** In medias res opens a story in the middle of the action, then backfills the beginning.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Ask what the opening mid-action establishes: tension, mystery, or stakes.*

**Example:** 'The Lottery' drops us into a sunny day of gathering before revealing the ritual.

---

### 66 Frame Narrative

**Explanation:** A frame narrative wraps one story inside another: an outer narrator introduces an inner tale.

**AP Lit Tip:** *The frame changes how we read the inner story -- question its narrator's motives.*

**Example:** In 'Heart of Darkness,' Marlow's tale is framed by a listener on the Thames.

---

### 67 Flashback

**Explanation:** A flashback interrupts the present to show an earlier event, revealing causes and character.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Ask why the story returns to the past NOW: what does the present need?*

**Example:** In 'The Great Gatsby,' Gatsby's flashback to Daisy's porch reveals the dream's origin.

---

### 68 Epiphany

**Explanation:** An epiphany is a sudden moment of insight when a character sees the truth clearly.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Locate the epiphany: the story often pivots at this moment.*

**Example:** In 'Araby,' the boy's epiphany that his love is vanity ends his romantic quest.

---

## 69 Character Motivation

- Explanation:** Motivation is the inner force -- desire, fear, need -- that drives a character's actions.
- AP Lit Tip:** *Ask of every major action: what does this character WANT, and what are they afraid of losing?*
- Example:** In 'The Necklace,' Mathilde's desire for status drives the story's catastrophe.
- 

## 70 Character Change & Stasis

- Explanation:** Characters either change (dynamic) or remain fixed (static). Change can be growth, decline, or revelation.
- AP Lit Tip:** *A character can change without improving: the change's DIRECTION matters.*
- Example:** In 'The Story of an Hour,' Louise moves from grief to liberation to shock -- a fatal change.
- 

## 71 Motif

- Explanation:** A motif is a recurring image, phrase, or idea that accumulates meaning across a text.
- AP Lit Tip:** *Collect a motif's appearances; its meaning deepens each time it returns.*
- Example:** The repeated 'green light' in Gatsby; the repeated 'white' clothing in 'The Age of Innocence.'
- 

## 72 Archetype

- Explanation:** An archetype is a universal character type or pattern -- the hero, the mentor, the trickster, the quest.
- AP Lit Tip:** *Archetypes carry cultural weight; identify how the story uses or subverts them.*
- Example:** The wise old man, the journey into the underworld, the resurrection -- archetypal patterns.
- 

## 73 Irony of Situation

- Explanation:** Situational irony occurs when events turn out opposite to expectation.
- AP Lit Tip:** *Situational irony often carries the theme: expectation vs reality.*
- Example:** In 'The Necklace,' ten years of sacrifice for a replacement necklace that turns out to be fake.
- 

## 74 Verbal Irony

- Explanation:** Verbal irony says the opposite of what is meant, often with sarcastic edge.
- AP Lit Tip:** *Hear the gap between the words and the tone to catch verbal irony.*
- Example:** 'What a wonderful idea,' said as the plan clearly fails -- verbal irony.
- 

## 75 Suspense

- Explanation:** Suspense is the reader's anxious anticipation about what will happen, built by pacing and withheld information.
- AP Lit Tip:** *Suspense thrives on questions: what does the character not yet know?*
- Example:** In 'The Cask of Amontillado,' Montresor's friendly tone builds dread about Fortunato's fate.
- 

## 76 The Plot Curve

- Explanation:** The plot curve -- exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution -- maps a story's tension.
- AP Lit Tip:** *Plot is a shape: identify where tension peaks and how it resolves.*
- Example:** A mystery's plot curve peaks at the revelation of the murderer, then falls through explanation.
- 

## 77 The Turn

- Explanation:** A turn (or peripeteia) is the story's reversal -- a shift in fortune or understanding.
- AP Lit Tip:** *Mark the turn: the story before and after the turn are different stories.*
- Example:** In 'The Gift of the Magi,' the turn is the discovery that both sacrifices made each gift useless.
-

## 78 Deus Ex Machina

**Explanation:** A deus ex machina is an improbable resolution -- an outside force that suddenly solves the conflict.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Name it when it appears: it usually signals weak plotting, unless used ironically.*

**Example:** A sudden inheritance that saves the family in the final page is a deus ex machina.

---

## 79 Short Story Form

**Explanation:** Short stories are compressed: every detail is load-bearing, and endings resonate disproportionately.

**AP Lit Tip:** *In short fiction, reread the ending against the opening -- the frame often completes the meaning.*

**Example:** 'The Lottery's' final line ('and then they were upon her') redefines the whole story.

---

## 80 Irony in Structure

**Explanation:** A story's STRUCTURE can be ironic: the arrangement of events undercuts what characters believe.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Look for the gap between the story's shape and the characters' understanding.*

**Example:** In 'The Story of an Hour,' the 'joy that kills' structure makes the ending both ironic and tragic.

---

## Unit 5: Unit 5: Poetry II

Developing poetry analysis: form, structure, and meaning.

### 81 Sonnet

**Explanation:** A sonnet is a 14-line poem in iambic pentameter. Italian (Petrarchan) sonnets divide into octave + sestet; English (Shakespearean) into three quatrains + couplet.

**AP Lit Tip:** Name the sonnet type and the *TURN (volta)* -- the shift between its parts.

**Example:** In a Petrarchan sonnet, the octave poses a problem and the sestet resolves or complicates it.

---

### 82 The Volta

**Explanation:** The volta is the sonnet's turn: the shift in argument, tone, or perspective, usually at line 9 (Italian) or the couplet (English).

**AP Lit Tip:** The volta is the poem's hinge -- analyze what changes at the turn.

**Example:** In Shakespeare's Sonnet 130, the volta in the couplet pivots from mockery to genuine love.

---

### 83 Shakespearean Sonnet

**Explanation:** A Shakespearean sonnet: three quatrains (ABAB CDCD EFEF) developing an idea, then a rhyming couplet (GG) that epigrammatically concludes.

**AP Lit Tip:** The couplet often delivers the poem's point -- underline it.

**Example:** Sonnet 18's couplet: 'So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, / So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.'

---

### 84 Petrarchan Sonnet

**Explanation:** A Petrarchan sonnet: an octave (ABBAABBA) presenting a situation or problem, and a sestet (CDCDCD or variation) responding.

**AP Lit Tip:** The octave/sestet split is the Petrarchan volta -- the response to the problem.

**Example:** Wordsworth's 'The World Is Too Much with Us' turns from complaint (octave) to longing (sestet).

---

### 85 Ode

**Explanation:** An ode is a long, formal lyric poem addressing a subject with elevated tone and praise.

**AP Lit Tip:** Odes are ceremonious: analyze the elevated diction and the subject's significance.

**Example:** Keats's 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' meditates on art's permanence versus life's transience.

---

### 86 Elegy

**Explanation:** An elegy is a poem of mourning and reflection, often moving from grief toward consolation.

**AP Lit Tip:** Trace the emotional movement: lament, praise, consolation.

**Example:** Whitman's 'When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd' mourns Lincoln and finds consolation in nature.

---

### 87 Ballad

**Explanation:** A ballad is a narrative poem, often with regular rhythm, rhyme, and a refrain, telling a story.

**AP Lit Tip:** Ballads are song-like: note the refrain's accumulation of meaning.

**Example:** 'La Belle Dame sans Merci' uses ballad form for its eerie tale of enchantment.

---

### 88 Blank Verse

**Explanation:** Blank verse is unrhymed iambic pentameter. It sounds natural while keeping formal rhythm.

**AP Lit Tip:** Blank verse = meter without rhyme; it is the dominant form of Shakespeare's plays.

**Example:** Milton's 'Paradise Lost' and much of Wordsworth's poetry use blank verse.

---

## 89 Terza Rima

**Explanation:** Terza rima links stanzas in interlocking rhyme: ABA BCB CDC. It creates forward momentum.

**AP Lit Tip:** *The interlocking rhyme carries the poem forward; Dante used it in the 'Divine Comedy.'*

**Example:** Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind' uses terza rima for its sweeping motion.

---

## 90 Villanelle

**Explanation:** A villanelle is a 19-line poem with five tercets and a closing quatrain, repeating two refrains in a fixed pattern.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Refrains in a villanelle accrue meaning with each repetition -- analyze the shifts.*

**Example:** Thomas's 'Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night' repeats its two refrains to build defiance.

---

## 91 Sestina

**Explanation:** A sestina uses six six-line stanzas and a three-line envoy, repeating the same six END WORDS in rotating order.

**AP Lit Tip:** *In a sestina, the repeated end words become motifs -- watch their meanings multiply.*

**Example:** Bishop's 'Sestina' repeats 'house,' 'grandmother,' 'child,' 'stove,' 'almanac,' and 'tears.'

---

## 92 Haiku

**Explanation:** A haiku is a three-line poem (traditionally 5-7-5 syllables) capturing a moment of perception, often about nature.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Haiku compress a moment into an insight; the juxtaposition of images carries the meaning.*

**Example:** Basho's frog haiku: old pond, frog leaps, water's sound -- a whole world in three lines.

---

## 93 Conceit

**Explanation:** A conceit is an extended, elaborate metaphor comparing two very unlike things, developed across a poem.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Work through the conceit point by point; the comparison's FIT is the argument.*

**Example:** Donne's compass conceit in 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning': lovers as the compass's two legs.

---

## 94 Persona in Poetry

**Explanation:** Poems adopt personae: speakers who are characters, not the poet, enabling irony and distance.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Ask why the poet chose THIS voice: what can this persona say (and hide)?*

**Example:** In 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,' the timid persona dramatizes modern anxiety.

---

## 95 Diction in Poetry

**Explanation:** Poetic diction can be elevated, plain, archaic, or colloquial. Word choice creates tone and meaning.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Track the diction level: a sudden colloquial word in an elevated poem is a choice.*

**Example:** 'Do not go gentle' mixes elevated address with blunt colloquial force.

---

## 96 Syntax in Poetry

**Explanation:** Poetic syntax may invert, delay, or disrupt ordinary sentence order for emphasis and rhythm.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Inverted or suspended syntax focuses attention on key words.*

**Example:** 'Him the Almighty Power hurled headlong flaming' -- inverted syntax stresses 'him.'

---

## 97 Juxtaposition in Poetry

**Explanation:** Juxtaposition sets contrasting images or ideas side by side, creating tension and meaning.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Name what the two juxtaposed elements represent, and what the contrast implies.*

**Example:** In 'London,' Blake juxtaposes the 'chartered' streets with the 'mind-forged manacles.'

---

## 98 Paradox

**Explanation:** A paradox is a statement that seems contradictory yet reveals a truth.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Paradox demands unpacking: hold both sides, then find the deeper truth.*

**Example:** 'The child is father of the man' -- Wordsworth's paradox about how childhood shapes adulthood.

---

## 99 Symbolism in Poetry

**Explanation:** Poems build symbols from images; a symbol's meaning is created within the poem, not imported whole.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Collect a symbol's appearances and variations before assigning meaning.*

**Example:** Frost's 'The Road Not Taken' makes the road a symbol of life's choices.

---

## 100 The Poem as a Whole

**Explanation:** A poem's parts -- sound, structure, imagery, diction -- work together; analysis should connect each part to the whole effect.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Build a reading that shows how form and content reinforce each other.*

**Example:** In 'Dover Beach,' the withdrawing sea (image), the elegiac tone, and the irregular meter together create the poem's loss.

---

## Unit 6: Unit 6: Longer Fiction or Drama II

Developing analysis of novels and plays: complex characters, themes, and technique.

### 101 Character Foils in Drama

**Explanation:** In drama, foils are often paired explicitly: the play sets two characters side by side to define each other.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Ask what each foil makes visible in the other -- and what the play prefers.*

**Example:** In 'A Raisin in the Sun,' the dreamers (Walter, Mama) contrast with the pragmatists (Beneatha's suitors).

---

### 102 Symbolic Characters

**Explanation:** Some characters function symbolically, representing ideas, classes, or forces beyond themselves.

**AP Lit Tip:** *A character can be both a person and an idea; name both levels.*

**Example:** In 'The Great Gatsby,' Gatsby represents the American Dream's promise and corruption.

---

### 103 The Tragic Arc

**Explanation:** The tragic arc: prosperity -> error (hamartia) -> reversal (peripeteia) -> catastrophe -> recognition (anagnorisis).

**AP Lit Tip:** *Map the arc for tragic heroes: the recognition often comes too late.*

**Example:** Othello's arc: honored general -> jealousy -> murders Desdemona -> recognizes Iago's deceit.

---

### 104 Anagnorisis

**Explanation:** Anagnorisis is the tragic moment of recognition when the hero understands the truth of their situation.

**AP Lit Tip:** *The recognition is the tragedy's intellectual climax -- mark it precisely.*

**Example:** Oedipus's anagnorisis: the moment he realizes he killed his father and married his mother.

---

### 105 Catharsis

**Explanation:** Catharsis is the emotional release -- pity and fear -- that tragedy produces in the audience.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Catharsis is the audience's experience; the tragedy purges rather than merely saddens.*

**Example:** The final scene of 'King Lear' overwhelms and purges: that is catharsis.

---

### 106 Theme Development in Novels

**Explanation:** Novels develop themes through the accumulation of episodes, images, and character arcs across hundreds of pages.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Trace a theme's thread: note each appearance and how it changes.*

**Example:** 'Great Expectations' develops the theme of class through Pip's shifting shame and pride.

---

### 107 Narrative Distance

**Explanation:** Narrative distance is the closeness or coolness between narrator and characters -- near (intimate) or far (detached).

**AP Lit Tip:** *Distance controls sympathy: close narration breeds empathy, distance breeds judgment.*

**Example:** Jane Austen's witty narration keeps ironic distance even while close to Elizabeth.

---

### 108 Scene vs Summary

**Explanation:** Scenes dramatize moments in detail; summary compresses periods of time. The mix controls pacing.

**AP Lit Tip:** *What the author chooses to SCENE (show in full) signals importance.*

**Example:** In 'The Great Gatsby,' the reunion of Gatsby and Daisy is a scene; their months together are summary.

---

## 109 Suspense & Foreshadowing in Novels

**Explanation:** Novels sustain suspense across hundreds of pages with foreshadowing, parallel plots, and withheld knowledge.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Track early hints: rereading reveals the novel's planted future.*

**Example:** In 'The Awakening,' the sea's early presence foreshadows Edna's final swim.

---

## 110 Symbolism in Novels

**Explanation:** Novel-length symbols operate in networks: a symbol gathers meanings as it recurs across the text.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Trace the symbol's whole arc before assigning a final meaning.*

**Example:** In 'Beloved,' the house at 124 is haunted, then exorcised -- the symbol of memory's grip.

---

## 111 Irony in Drama

**Explanation:** Dramatic irony, situational irony, and verbal irony all operate in plays, often simultaneously.

**AP Lit Tip:** *In drama, irony lives in the gap between what characters say/do and what the audience knows.*

**Example:** In 'Oedipus Rex,' every confident speech by Oedipus is laced with dramatic irony.

---

## 112 The Playwright's Commentary

**Explanation:** Playwrights comment through structure, stage directions, and juxtaposition -- not narration.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Look for the play's implicit judgment: who is on stage when, and what follows what?*

**Example:** In 'Death of a Salesman,' the music and lighting cues tell us how to feel about Willy.

---

## 113 Setting as Theme

**Explanation:** In long works, setting can embody the theme: a house, city, or landscape carries the novel's meaning.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Ask what the setting REPRESENTS, not just where events happen.*

**Example:** In 'The Great Gatsby,' East Egg and West Egg embody old money versus new money.

---

## 114 Dialogue as Characterization in Novels

**Explanation:** Novelists characterize through dialogue: idiolect (personal speech habits), topic choice, and silence.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Read dialogue for what characters reveal accidentally -- and what they refuse to say.*

**Example:** In 'Pride and Prejudice,' Mr. Collins's pompous speeches characterize him instantly.

---

## 115 The Novel of Manners

**Explanation:** A novel of manners examines social customs and their pressures on individuals, often with irony.

**AP Lit Tip:** *In novels of manners, social rules are the engine of plot and theme.*

**Example:** Austen's novels and Wharton's 'The Age of Innocence' are novels of manners.

---

## 116 Gothic Elements

**Explanation:** Gothic fiction features gloom, the supernatural, madness, and psychological terror -- often symbolizing inner conflict.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Gothic settings (castles, moors, ruins) externalize the characters' inner states.*

**Example:** In 'Jane Eyre,' Thornfield's secrets and the madwoman in the attic are gothic.

---

## 117 The Problem Play

**Explanation:** A problem play dramatizes a social issue -- marriage, class, justice -- and forces the audience to confront it.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Problem plays end with questions, not tidy solutions.*

**Example:** Ibsen's 'A Doll's House' ends with Nora's door slam -- a question to the audience.

---

## 118 Motif vs Theme

**Explanation:** A motif is a recurring concrete element; a theme is the abstract insight it helps build. Motifs serve themes.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Name the motif, then state the theme it develops: rain -> cleansing -> the theme of renewal.*

**Example:** In 'The Great Gatsby,' eyes and parties are motifs serving themes of judgment and emptiness.

---

## 119 Structural Patterning

**Explanation:** Long works repeat and vary structures: parallel scenes, repeated settings, mirrored beginnings and endings.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Compare paired scenes: the second version comments on the first.*

**Example:** In 'A Raisin in the Sun,' the family's dream deferred at the start returns, transformed, at the end.

---

## 120 The Whole-Arc Essay

**Explanation:** Essays on long works should argue a claim about the WHOLE: a pattern, development, or tension sustained across the text.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Anchor every claim in specific episodes, but connect each to the work's full arc.*

**Example:** An essay on Gatsby's dream can trace it from the porch scene to the final boat image.

---

## Unit 7: Unit 7: Short Fiction III

*Advanced fiction analysis: complex narrators, ambiguity, and style.*

### 121 The Complex Narrator

**Explanation:** Complex narrators are layered: their reliability, motives, and self-knowledge are all in question.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Profile the narrator: what do they know, hide, want, and misunderstand?*

**Example:** In 'The Yellow Wallpaper,' the narrator's 'sane' clinical prose is the record of her breakdown.

---

### 122 Uncertain Reliability

**Explanation:** Reliability is a matter of degree: narrators can be partially reliable, biased, or self-deceiving.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Assemble evidence for and against the narrator's account before deciding.*

**Example:** In 'A Rose for Emily,' the town's collective narrator is reliable about facts but blind to Emily's secret.

---

### 123 Narrative Gaps

**Explanation:** Narrative gaps are what the story leaves out: elisions, silences, and unexplained jumps that the reader must interpret.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Ask what is NOT told, and why the narrator might withhold it.*

**Example:** In 'Hills Like White Elephants,' the couple never names the operation -- the gap IS the story.

---

### 124 Subtext

**Explanation:** Subtext is the meaning beneath the surface of dialogue and action -- what characters really mean.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Read the surface, then the subtext: desire, threat, and fear often hide under small talk.*

**Example:** In 'Hills Like White Elephants,' 'It's really an awfully simple operation' is subtext-laden pressure.

---

### 125 Ambiguity

**Explanation:** Ambiguity is deliberate openness: the story supports multiple readings without resolving them.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Do not force one reading; weigh the strongest alternatives and their evidence.*

**Example:** The ending of 'The Turn of the Screw' -- ghost or madness? -- is famously ambiguous.

---

### 126 Style in Fiction

**Explanation:** Style is the writer's distinctive use of language: diction, syntax, rhythm, and figurative choices.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Describe a writer's style with specific features, then connect them to effect.*

**Example:** Hemingway's minimal style creates distance and understatement; Woolf's flowing style creates interiority.

---

### 127 Diction in Fiction

**Explanation:** Fiction's diction varies by narrator, character, and genre -- from plain to ornate, concrete to abstract.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Ask whose diction it is: narrator's or character's? Register shifts matter.*

**Example:** In 'The Great Gatsby,' Nick's lyrical diction filters Gatsby's world through romantic longing.

---

### 128 Syntax in Fiction

**Explanation:** Sentence patterns create pacing and psychology: long sentences for accumulation, fragments for shock.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Analyze a passage's syntax for its psychological effect on the reader.*

**Example:** In 'The Sound and the Fury,' the fragmented syntax mirrors Benjy's disordered perception.

---

## 129 The Ironic Narrator

**Explanation:** An ironic narrator says one thing while implying another, creating distance between narration and truth.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Track the gap between the narrator's account and the story's implied reality.*

**Example:** In 'A Modest Proposal,' Swift's narrator's calm logic is deeply ironic.

---

## 130 The Implied Author

**Explanation:** The implied author is the sense of the author's values and judgments constructed from the text, distinct from the narrator.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Ask: what does this text IMPLY the author believes, regardless of the narrator?*

**Example:** The narrator of 'A Modest Proposal' is monstrous; the implied author is Swift, who is outraged.

---

## 131 Point of View Shift

**Explanation:** Some stories shift point of view, entering different minds or changing distance.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Mark the shift and its purpose: a new perspective reframes what we know.*

**Example:** In 'The Great Gatsby,' the shift from Nick's narration into Gatsby's memory changes the emotional register.

---

## 132 Second-Person Narration

**Explanation:** Second-person narration addresses 'you,' drawing the reader into the protagonist's position.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Second person collapses distance: the reader experiences the events directly.*

**Example:** In 'How to Date a Brownie,' the 'you' instruction manual implicates the reader in the narrator's choices.

---

## 133 The Reader's Role

**Explanation:** Complex fiction activates the reader: gaps, ambiguities, and unreliable narration require interpretation.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Interpretive work IS the experience; a good reading accounts for the text's difficulties.*

**Example:** In 'The Lottery,' the reader must assemble the hints and feel the horror of the ending.

---

## 134 Narrative Time

**Explanation:** Fiction manipulates time: order (flashback, foreshadowing), duration (scene vs summary), and frequency (repetition).

**AP Lit Tip:** *Ask how time is shaped and why: what does the manipulation reveal?*

**Example:** In 'The Story of an Hour,' the compressed hour of real time makes Louise's brief freedom poignant.

---

## 135 Texture & Density

**Explanation:** A story's texture comes from its density of imagery, allusion, and stylistic detail.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Notice whether the prose is dense or spare, and what that texture does.*

**Example:** Faulkner's dense, allusive prose creates a thick, layered world; Carver's spare prose leaves gaps for the reader.

---

## 136 Reversal of Expectations

**Explanation:** Stories engineer reversals: the reader's assumptions are built up and then overturned.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Locate where the story turns against expectation and what the reversal means.*

**Example:** In 'The Lottery,' the cheerful opening reverses into the stoning -- expectation becomes horror.

---

## 137 The Open Ending

**Explanation:** Open endings withhold resolution, leaving the outcome or meaning for the reader to decide.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Evaluate the ending's effect: ambiguity can be the theme.*

**Example:** 'The Lady with the Dog' ends mid-relationship, unresolved -- the uncertainty is the point.

---

## 138 Tone in Fiction

**Explanation:** Fiction's tone -- the narrator's attitude -- shapes how we judge characters and events.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Name the tone and trace its shifts; tone is created by diction and detail selection.*

**Example:** The cool, clinical tone of 'The Yellow Wallpaper' makes the narrator's descent more chilling.

---

## 139 Fiction and Truth

**Explanation:** Literary fiction explores truths of human experience, not factual accuracy: plausibility, insight, and resonance matter.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Analyze what the story claims about human nature, and how the fiction earns that claim.*

**Example:** 'The Necklace' is 'true' about vanity and pride even though the story is invented.

---

## 140 The Crafted Detail

**Explanation:** In strong fiction, details are chosen, not decorative: each detail carries weight and meaning.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Analyze a telling detail for what it reveals about character, theme, or world.*

**Example:** The one-inch gap in the wallpaper in 'The Yellow Wallpaper' is a crafted detail that becomes the story's symbol.

---

## Unit 8: Unit 8: Poetry III

Advanced poetry analysis: complex forms, intertextuality, and voice.

### 141 Intertextuality

**Explanation:** Intertextuality is a poem's dialogue with other texts: allusion, echo, parody, or response.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Identify the referenced text and ask what the dialogue adds.*

**Example:** Auden's 'Musee des Beaux Arts' responds to Bruegel's painting 'Landscape with the Fall of Icarus.'

---

### 142 Allusion in Poetry

**Explanation:** Allusion references another text, myth, or event, borrowing its associations.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Unpack the allusion: what does the borrowed context contribute?*

**Example:** Eliot's 'The Waste Land' alludes to the Grail legend, Dante, and Shakespeare to build its desolation.

---

### 143 Ekphrasis

**Explanation:** Ekphrasis is a poem that describes or responds to a work of visual art.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Compare the poem's rendering with the artwork: what does the poet emphasize or alter?*

**Example:** Keats's 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' is ekphrastic, meditating on the urn's frozen figures.

---

### 144 Myth in Poetry

**Explanation:** Poems retell or revise myths, using their cultural resonance for new meaning.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Ask what the poet changes in the myth and why.*

**Example:** H.D.'s 'Helen' revises the myth of Helen of Troy to focus on her hated perspective.

---

### 145 Pastoral Poetry

**Explanation:** Pastoral poetry idealizes rural life, often contrasting nature's simplicity with urban complexity.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Pastoral is a posture, not just a subject: ask what the idealization criticizes.*

**Example:** Marvell's 'The Garden' contrasts the garden's peace with the world's noise.

---

### 146 The Anti-Pastoral

**Explanation:** Anti-pastoral poetry exposes rural hardship, undercutting pastoral idealization.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Anti-pastoral reverses the genre's assumptions; compare it with its pastoral source.*

**Example:** Crabbe's 'The Village' insists on the real miseries of rural poverty.

---

### 147 The Sublime

**Explanation:** The sublime is the aesthetic of overwhelming grandeur and terror -- nature that dwarfs the human.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Sublime imagery (mountains, storms, oceans) produces awe mixed with fear.*

**Example:** In 'Mont Blanc,' Shelley confronts the mountain's terrifying, transcendent power.

---

### 148 Romanticism in Poetry

**Explanation:** Romantic poetry values emotion, imagination, nature, and the individual against convention.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Romantic poems often track the self's relation to nature and feeling.*

**Example:** Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey' traces the growth of the poetic mind through nature.

---

## 149 Modernism in Poetry

**Explanation:** Modernist poetry breaks with tradition: fragmentation, allusion, free verse, and the urban present.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Modernist poems reward reassembly: connect the fragments, decode the allusions.*

**Example:** Eliot's 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' is modernist in its fragmentation and interiority.

---

## 150 The Confessional Poem

**Explanation:** Confessional poetry draws on the poet's own life, using the first person with raw emotional exposure.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Confessional poems blur poet and speaker; treat the 'I' with care but read the craft.*

**Example:** Plath's 'Lady Lazarus' uses personal pain to build a mythic performance.

---

## 151 Voice & Register in Poetry

**Explanation:** Poems build a voice through register: formal, colloquial, archaic, mixed. The voice is the poem's personality.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Describe the voice precisely; a register shift is a signal.*

**Example:** In 'Daddy,' Plath mixes nursery-rhyme cadence with brutal diction -- a controlled, explosive voice.

---

## 152 Tone Shifts in Poetry

**Explanation:** Poems pivot in tone: irony to earnestness, grief to rage, detachment to intimacy.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Mark the pivot and what triggers it; the shift is often the poem's argument.*

**Example:** In 'Do Not Go Gentle,' the tender first stanza shifts to fierce command by the last.

---

## 153 Enjambment & Meaning

**Explanation:** Enjambment can create double meanings: a line end completes one thought while the next line revises it.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Read line by line AND sentence by sentence; the gap between them is meaning.*

**Example:** 'so much depends / upon' -- the enjambment suspends 'depends' before revealing the object.

---

## 154 Caesura

**Explanation:** A caesura is a pause within a line, often marked by punctuation, creating rhythm and emphasis.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Caesuras split attention: what is isolated on each side?*

**Example:** 'To err is human, -- to forgive, divine' -- the caesura separates the two clauses' contrast.

---

## 155 Assonance & Consonance

**Explanation:** Assonance repeats vowel sounds; consonance repeats consonant sounds (often at word ends).

**AP Lit Tip:** *Sound repetition bonds words; ask what the bonded words share in meaning.*

**Example:** 'And the silken sad uncertain rustling' -- assonance and sibilance create the rustling.

---

## 156 The Dramatic Situation

**Explanation:** The dramatic situation is the poem's implied scene: speaker, listener, setting, moment, and occasion.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Reconstruct the situation first: who says what to whom, where, when?*

**Example:** In 'My Last Duchess,' the situation is the Duke showing a portrait to an envoy.

---

## 157 Irony in Poetry

**Explanation:** Poetic irony can be verbal (the speaker says the opposite), dramatic (the reader knows more), or structural.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Irony creates distance: the poem's real meaning is under its surface.*

**Example:** In 'Richard Cory,' the speaker's envy is ironic once Cory kills himself.

---

## 158 Structure & Argument

**Explanation:** Poems make arguments through structure: each stanza or section is a step in a line of reasoning.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Outline the poem's argument: how does each part advance or complicate the whole?*

**Example:** In 'The Tyger,' each stanza poses a question; the accumulation builds the poem's awe.

---

## 159 Sound and Sense

**Explanation:** In skilled poetry, sound reinforces sense: harsh sounds for harsh subjects, flowing sounds for ease.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Test the fit between sound and content; a mismatch can be ironic.*

**Example:** 'The curfew tolls the knell of parting day' -- the heavy monosyllables toll like a bell.

---

## 160 Reading a Poem Closely

**Explanation:** Close reading of poetry: notice structure, sound, diction, imagery, and syntax, then synthesize them into an interpretation.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Use the SOAPStone-style frame (speaker, occasion, audience, purpose, subject, tone), then go deeper.*

**Example:** A close reading of 'The Road Not Taken' accounts for its meter, its symbols, and its famous ambiguity.

---

## Unit 9: Unit 9: Longer Fiction or Drama III

Advanced analysis of novels and plays: style, criticism, and sustained argument.

### 161 Style in the Novel

**Explanation:** A novel's style is its consistent use of language -- syntax, diction, imagery -- that creates its world and values.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Characterize the style with evidence, then connect it to theme.*

**Example:** Woolf's lyrical, impressionistic style embodies her characters' inner lives; Baldwin's oratorical style carries his moral urgency.

---

### 162 Narrative Technique in Novels

**Explanation:** Novels deploy a range of techniques: narrative distance, focalization, scene/summary, and temporal shifts.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Name the technique at work in a passage and its effect on the reader.*

**Example:** In 'The Remains of the Day,' Stevens's formal first-person narration reveals more than he knows.

---

### 163 The Polyphonic Novel

**Explanation:** A polyphonic novel gives many characters genuine voices and perspectives, none fully authoritative.

**AP Lit Tip:** *In polyphony, truth emerges from the collision of voices, not any single one.*

**Example:** In 'As I Lay Dying,' fifteen narrators render the Bundren family's story from inside each mind.

---

### 164 The Historical Novel

**Explanation:** Historical novels set fiction in a documented past, using history to illuminate the present.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Ask how the novel interprets history: what does it select, emphasize, or critique?*

**Example:** In 'The Things They Carried,' the Vietnam War setting frames the novel's meditation on memory and truth.

---

### 165 Genre & Its Subversion

**Explanation:** Novels and plays work within genres (gothic, bildungsroman, satire) and often subvert their conventions.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Identify the genre's rules, then find where the work breaks them.*

**Example:** 'Pride and Prejudice' plays with the marriage-plot convention while critiquing it.

---

### 166 The Bildungsroman

**Explanation:** A bildungsroman is a coming-of-age novel tracing a protagonist's moral and psychological growth.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Track the growth: formative experiences, losses, and the final self-understanding.*

**Example:** 'Great Expectations' follows Pip from innocence through disillusionment to maturity.

---

### 167 The Antihero

**Explanation:** An antihero is a central character lacking conventional heroic qualities: flawed, compromised, or alienated.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Analyze the antihero's complexity: what makes them compelling despite their flaws?*

**Example:** Willy Loman in 'Death of a Salesman' is an antihero whose delusions drive the tragedy.

---

### 168 The Absurd in Drama

**Explanation:** Theater of the absurd presents a world without meaning, using illogical plot, repetition, and existential despair.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Absurdist plays frustrate conventional expectations to dramatize meaninglessness.*

**Example:** In 'Waiting for Godot,' nothing happens twice -- that is the point.

---

## 169 Expressionism in Drama

**Explanation:** Expressionist drama externalizes inner states through distorted sets, stylized dialogue, and dream logic.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Expressionist staging renders psychology directly; read the stage directions as the character's mind.*

**Example:** In 'Death of a Salesman,' the shifting sets and music externalize Willy's memories and fantasies.

---

## 170 Symbolism in Drama

**Explanation:** Plays use props, settings, and repeated actions as symbols, made visible on stage.

**AP Lit Tip:** *A prop that recurs (the gun, the flowers) is doing symbolic work -- track it.*

**Example:** In 'A Doll's House,' the Christmas tree's deterioration mirrors Nora's crumbling facade.

---

## 171 The Thematic Essay on a Novel

**Explanation:** A thematic essay argues a claim about the novel's theme, supported by episodes, techniques, and the whole arc.

**AP Lit Tip:** *State a theme as an insight, then prove it with three or more developed examples.*

**Example:** 'Beloved' argues that memory is both wound and cure -- the essay traces both across the novel.

---

## 172 The Character Essay

**Explanation:** A character essay argues a claim about a character's function: what they reveal, change, or represent.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Analyze the character's arc, contradictions, and role in the theme.*

**Example:** An essay on Gatsby as the American Dream traces his invention, pursuit, and collapse.

---

## 173 The Symbol Essay

**Explanation:** A symbol essay traces a symbol's development and argues what it accumulates across the work.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Collect every appearance, note variations, then argue the symbol's full meaning.*

**Example:** The green light in 'Gatsby': hope, then dream, then the unreachable past.

---

## 174 The Technique Essay

**Explanation:** A technique essay argues how a narrative or dramatic technique creates meaning in a work.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Technique essays need precise evidence: quote the technique, explain the effect.*

**Example:** An essay on free indirect discourse in Austen shows how the technique creates irony and intimacy.

---

## 175 The Critical Lens

**Explanation:** A critical lens is a way of reading -- feminist, Marxist, psychoanalytic, postcolonial -- that foregrounds certain questions.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Use a lens to find new questions, but ground every claim in the text itself.*

**Example:** Reading 'The Yellow Wallpaper' through a feminist lens foregrounds gender and medical power.

---

## 176 Thematic Complexity

**Explanation:** Great works sustain complex themes: contradictory impulses, unsolved questions, multiple perspectives.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Do not flatten the work; show how it holds competing truths in tension.*

**Example:** 'The Great Gatsby' simultaneously celebrates and indicts the American Dream.

---

## 177 Arguing About Endings

**Explanation:** Endings are interpretive cruxes: how a work ends shapes what it means.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Weigh alternative readings of the ending; argue which the text supports.*

**Example:** Is Nora's exit in 'A Doll's House' triumph or tragedy? The text supports a complex both.

---

## 178 Evidence Integration

**Explanation:** Literary essays integrate short, precise quotes into the argument's sentences, with commentary after each.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Quote only what you need; follow each quote with 'this shows...' analysis.*

**Example:** 'The bell rang at 7:05' -- one detail, quoted, can anchor a paragraph on routine.

---

## 179 The Literary Argument

**Explanation:** The AP literary argument essay takes a position on a theme or character prompt, using a work of literary merit.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Choose a work you know deeply; build a defensible thesis with three developed examples.*

**Example:** Prompt on 'a character's failure to change' -> argue about Hamlet's paralysis with three acts of evidence.

---

## 180 Writing About Literature

**Explanation:** Strong literary writing: specific evidence, precise terminology, integrated quotes, and an argument that keeps the whole work in view.

**AP Lit Tip:** *Use literary terms accurately and sparingly; the argument, not the jargon, earns the score.*

**Example:** 'Austen's use of free indirect discourse in the proposal scene creates irony that exposes Mr. Collins' -- specific, precise, arguable.

---

## What's Next?

You have now reviewed every unit of the AP English Literature course, from short fiction to poetry to full novels and plays. Go back to the Table of Contents, find the units you marked, and reread just those tip lines. Two weeks out, do a rapid pass over the entire guide; the day before, review only the tip lines. On the exam, read the poem or passage twice: first for the literal situation, then for choices and effects. For the poetry and prose essays, quote specific lines and explain their effects; for the literary argument, choose a work you know deeply, make a defensible claim, and build it with three well-developed examples tied to the whole work.

---

**Pair it with the AP English Language Study Guide (\$19) -- both English exams covered**

**Also available: AP Biology, AP Chemistry, AP Physics 1, AP Psychology, AP Statistics, and more study guides**

[templateforge.com](http://templateforge.com)