**Examples of the Different Argument Essay Types Found on the recent AP Language Exams:**

**Evaluation (Degree to Which) Argument**

**2015** AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS Question 3 An anthropologist studying first-year students at a university in the United States writes that friendly phrases like “How are you?,” “Nice to meet you,” and “Let’s get in touch” communicate politeness rather than literal intent. What, if anything, is the value or function of such polite speech? In a well-written essay, develop your position on the value or function of polite speech in a culture or community with which you are familiar. Use appropriate evidence from your reading, experience, or observations to support your argument.

**2010** AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS In his 2004 book, Status Anxiety, Alain de Botton argues that the chief aim of humorists is not merely to entertain but “to convey with impunity messages that might be dangerous or impossible to state directly.” Because society allows humorists to say things that other people cannot or will not say, de Botton sees humorists as serving a vital function in society. Think about the implications of de Botton’s view of the role of humorists (cartoonists, stand-up comics, satirical writers, hosts of television programs, etc.). Then write an essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies de Botton’s claim about the vital role of humorists. Use specific, appropriate evidence to develop your position.

**Philosophical (this type often has the instructions to agree, refute, or qualify the observation or statement)**

**2011** AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B) Question 3 American essayist and social critic H. L. Mencken (1880–1956) wrote, “The average man does not want to be free. He simply wants to be safe.” In a well-written essay, examine the extent to which Mencken’s observation applies to contemporary society, supporting your position with appropriate evidence

**2013** AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS Question 3 For centuries, prominent thinkers have pondered the relationship between ownership and the development of self (identity), ultimately asking the question, “What does it mean to own something?” Plato argues that owning objects is detrimental to a person’s character. Aristotle claims that ownership of tangible goods helps to develop moral character. Twentieth-century philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre proposes that ownership extends beyond objects to include intangible things as well. In Sartre’s view, becoming proficient in some skill and knowing something thoroughly means that we “own” it. Think about the differing views of ownership. Then write an essay in which you explain your position on the relationship between ownership and sense of self. Use appropriate evidence from your reading, experience, or observations to support your argument.

**2012 A**P® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS Consider the distinct perspectives expressed in the following statements. If you develop the absolute sense of certainty that powerful beliefs provide, then you can get yourself to accomplish virtually anything, including those things that other people are certain are impossible. William Lyon Phelps, American educator, journalist, and professor (1865–1943) I think we ought always to entertain our opinions with some measure of doubt. I shouldn’t wish people dogmatically to believe any philosophy, not even mine. Bertrand Russell, British author, mathematician, and philosopher (1872–1970) In a well-organized essay, take a position on the relationship between certainty and doubt. Support your argument with appropriate evidence and examples.

**Yes/No Pro/Con**

**2008** AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS Question 3 For years corporations have sponsored high school sports. Their ads are found on the outfield fence at baseball parks or on the walls of the gymnasium, the football stadium, or even the locker room. Corporate logos are even found on players’ uniforms. But some schools have moved beyond corporate sponsorship of sports to allowing “corporate partners” to place their names and ads on all kinds of school facilities—libraries, music rooms, cafeterias. Some schools accept money to require students to watch Channel One, a news program that includes advertising. And schools often negotiate exclusive contracts with soft drink or clothing companies. Some people argue that corporate partnerships are a necessity for cash-strapped schools. Others argue that schools should provide an environment free from ads and corporate influence. Using appropriate evidence, write an essay in which you evaluate the pros and cons of corporate sponsorship for schools and indicate why you find one position more persuasive than the other.

**This question combines 2 types: Problem/Solution and a Pro/Con**

**2014** AP ® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS Question 3 Authors Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman published “The Creativity Crisis” in Newsweek.com in July 2010. They reported that the Torrance Test, a test of creativity that has been administered to millions of people worldwide in 50 languages, indicates that the public’s “creativity quotient” has steadily crept downward since 1990. In their article, Bronson and Merryman cite the claim of Professor Kyung Hee Kim at the College of William and Mary: “It’s very clear, and the decrease is very significant.” Kim reports that it is the scores of younger children in America—from kindergarten through sixth grade—for whom the decline is “most serious.” Bronson and Merryman state that “[t]he potential consequences are sweeping. The necessity of human ingenuity is undisputed. A recent IBM poll of 1,500 CEOs identified creativity as the No. 1 ‘leadership competency’ of the future. Yet it’s not just about sustaining our nation’s economic growth. All around us are matters of national and international importance that are crying out for creative solutions, from saving the Gulf of Mexico to bringing peace to Afghanistan to delivering health care. Such solutions emerge from a healthy marketplace of ideas, sustained by a populace constantly contributing original ideas and receptive to the ideas of others.” One possible approach to this reputed decline in creativity is to explicitly teach creative thinking in school. Write to your school board explaining what you mean by creativity and arguing for or against the creation of a class in creativity