**AP Language and Composition – Three Types of Essays**

1. **Synthesis**: For your first essay question, you'll have to put together an argument about a relevant issue (for example: Is it appropriate for libraries to shrink or eliminate their book and print sources in an effort to optimize their space for digital and Web-based research?) based on seven short passages about the topic. Some of the sources provided will take one side of the issue, while some will take the other, and some may not address it directly. The question will require that you use at least 3 of the sources, meaning that you could theoretically choose only sources that support one side of the issue and use them to argue together for the stance that they all share. However, you will score higher on your synthesis essay if you are able to bring together sources that don't take the same position. You should still choose one position to argue, but address at least one of the arguments that comes up in a source for the other side and discuss why it is wrong. And, if you can find a point in one of the neutral sources and explain why it supports your position, that will win you more points as well.
2. **Rhetorical Analysis**: The second essay is about close reading. You will only have one passage to consider for this essay, but you will be expected to comment about in depth. An example prompt is: Write an essay that analyzes what rhetorical strategies Staples uses to convey his view of what it means to be a African American man in society today. The key to doing well on this essay is to develop a strong thesis about what the author's message is. In the case of the example prompt above, it may seem that a test-taker could write about the rhetorical devices in the passage without actually addressing what his view is about being an African American man. However, students who articulate what the author's message is and then show how it is expressed through rhetorical strategies will score much higher.
3. **Argumentative:**The final essay is a position argument like the first one, but without any sources provided. It will present a debatable statement, and then ask you to take one side of the argument, and support your argument with appropriate evidence from your reading, observation, or experience. For this essay, the key to your success is to pay attention to the news and current events before you take the AP English Exam. You can bring up events in your personal life that relate to the question, but you will make a better impression on the graders if you can draw relevant connections to current events in order to make your case.