

Essays: Figuring out what they want and giving it to them.



Who are "they?"



AP: The College Board



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- Website: "We're a not-for-profit membership organization committed to excellence and equity in education. Our mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity."



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- History: In 1900, 12 universities came together to form the College Board to expand access to higher education and to democratize the application process for students — and for the admission offices. With our development of the common entrance exam (later known as the SAT), students could apply to many institutions without having to sit for multiple tests.



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- Translation: "We separate smart students from average students from dumb students with our test."



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- They also write the AP Exam, which is really designed to separate the smart honors student from the average honors student from the dumb honors student (SAT on steroids).



State Ed: Board of Regents



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- According to NYSED: The Regents are responsible for the general supervision of all educational activities within the State, presiding over SUNY and the New York State Education Department. The Regents are organized into standing committees, subcommittees and work groups whose members and chairs are appointed by the Chancellor.
- The Board comprises 17 members elected by the State Legislature for 5 year terms.
- Regents are unsalaried and are reimbursed only for travel and related expenses in connection with their official duties.

State Ed: Board of Regents



- Translation: They set state education policy and write the ever-popular Regents exams.

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- Despite being almost \$16 trillion in debt, Uncle Sam gives schools your tax dollars ("Race to the Top," etc.)
- Of course, if you want "their" money, you have to obey their rules...



The Task: What they want you to do



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- “They” design essay questions which “they” believe test your ability to follow directions, formulate opinions, and write clearly.

Example: What do they want here?

- In many works of literature, a main character has a mentor whose influence dramatically changes how the character not only views himself or herself, but the world in general. Choose a novel or play in which a mentor exhibits such a strong influence, either beneficial or harmful, on one of the main characters. Then, in a well-organized essay, discuss the nature of the mentor's influence and its significance to the meaning of the work as a whole (*actual AP essay question*).

Recommended first step: Underline the verbs in the directions

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Note how the verbs point out the task....

- Choose a novel or play in which a mentor exhibits such a strong influence, either beneficial or harmful, on one of the main characters.
- Then, in a well-organized essay, discuss the nature of the mentor's influence and its significance to the *meaning of the work as a whole* (AKA, *theme*).

Note also the “parts” of the question

- In many works of literature, a main character has a mentor whose influence dramatically changes how the character not only views himself or herself, but the world in general.
- This is the “given,” or the premise—the assumption here is, “We ALL know this is true!” So you’re expected to go along.

The Task

- Choose a novel or play in which a mentor exhibits such a strong influence, either beneficial or harmful, on one of the main characters. Then, in a well-organized essay, discuss the nature of the mentor's influence and its significance to the meaning of the work as a whole.
- This is what you're expected to do to prove the premise or the "given."

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- In this case, you'd better know what a mentor is or you're starting at a disadvantage....
- (So, what's a mentor?)
- What book would you choose?
- Who is the main character in that book? Who is the mentor?
- Was the mentor good or evil? What was his/her effect on the main character?
- Can you support this with details?

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- (Please make sure you state that theme...)

Sounds like a lot to do...



But you'll be okay...

