

S.O.A.P.S.TONE.

SOAPSTONE is a core reading and thinking strategy for AP Language. Critical readers SOAPSTONE their text. This method that helps readers identify and understand the relationships of each part of SOAPSTONE structure. Think of the strategy as a means of breaking down a text to its most basic structure, which is a foundational skill for AP Language. Below are each of the individual elements of the strategy and the questions that critical readers should ask themselves about the text. When discussing or writing about a text, critical responses should include answers to SOAPSTONE questions.

<u>S</u>peaker	Who is the voice that tells the story? Is the author also the speaker? What point of view does the audience get? Is there more than one speaker? Is there a clearly identified speaker? What assumptions can be made about the speaker? What is the age, gender, class, emotional state, and education of the speaker? How does the speaker's background shape his or her point of view?
<u>O</u>ccasion	What is the time and place of the piece—the (rhetorical) context that encouraged this writing to happen? Is it a memory, a description, an observation a valedictory, a diatribe, an elegy, a declaration, a critique, a journal entry, or what? What is the larger occasion, or the environment of ideas that swirl around a broad issue, of the piece? What is the immediate occasion, or the event that catches the writer's attention and triggers a response?
<u>A</u>udience	Who is the audience—the (group) of readers to whom this piece is directed? The audience may be one person, a small group, or a large group; it may be a certain person or certain people. Is there a primary audience? Secondary? Are there multiple audiences or a single audience? Does the speaker identify an audience? What assumptions exist about the intended audience?
<u>P</u>urpose	Why was this text written? What does the speaker want the audience to think about or do as result of reading this text? How is this message conveyed? What is the message/ How does the speaker try to spark a reaction in the audience? What techniques are used to achieve a purpose? How does the text make the audience feel? What is its intended effect? Consider the purpose of the text in order to examine the argument and its logic.
<u>S</u>ubject	What are the general topics, content, and ideas contained in the text? Can you state the subject in a few words or a single phrase? How do you know this? How does the author present the subject? Is it introduced immediately or delayed? Is the subject hidden? Is there more than one subject?
<u>T</u>ONE	What is the attitude of the author? In written works, it is the tone that extends meaning beyond the literal. If the author were to read aloud the passage, describe the likely tone of that voice. It is whatever clarifies the author's attitude toward the subject. What emotional sense pervades the piece? How does the diction point to tone? How does the author's diction, imagery, language, and syntax(sentence structure) convey his or her feelings?