Anatomy of the AP Language and Composition Prompt for Question 1

*The Synthesis Essay*
All Question 1 prompts come in 3 parts.

**The Introduction** The prompt will begin with the context required to complete the assignment. The introduction will give you the overview of the question you are to address, the situation under consideration. The sources will provide you with your evidence.

**The Assignment** The prompt will then guide you to write the essay. The assignment itself has four parts that we will examine after viewing sample prompts.

**The Directions** The directions come in three parts and are the same for all prompts:
- **the recommendation** Make a single argument, use the sources as evidence.
- **the admonition** A reverse-Gaughen: analysis is where the points live.
- **the sourcing** method Cite your sources. No real style required, but be clear.
introduction
Locavores are people who have decided to eat locally grown or produced products as much as possible. With an eye to nutrition as well as sustainability (resource use that preserves the environment), the locavore movement has become widespread over the past decade.

assignment
Imagine that a community is considering organizing a locavore movement. Carefully read the following seven sources, including the introductory information for each source. Then synthesize information from at least three of the sources and incorporate it into a coherent, well-developed essay that identifies the key issues associated with the locavore movement and examines their implications for the community.

directions
Make sure that your argument is central; use the sources to illustrate and support your reasoning. Avoid merely summarizing the sources. Indicate clearly which sources you are drawing from, whether through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. You may cite the sources as Source A, Source B, etc., or by using the descriptions in parentheses.

Source A (Maiser)
Source B (Smith and MacKinnon)
Source C (McWilliams)
Source D (chart)
Source E (Gogoi)
Source F (Roberts)
Source G (cartoon)
introduction The United States Postal Service (USPS) has delivered communications for more than two centuries. During the nineteenth century, the USPS helped to expand the boundaries of the United States by providing efficient and reliable communication across the country. Between 1790 and 1860 alone, the number of post offices in the United States grew from 75 to over 28,000. With this growth came job opportunities for postal workers and a boom in the cross-country rail system. The twentieth century brought substantial growth to the USPS, including large package delivery and airmail. Over the past decade, however, total mail volume has decreased considerably as competition from electronic mail and various package delivery companies has taken business away from the USPS. The loss of revenue has prompted the USPS to consider cutting back on delivery days and other services.

assignment Carefully read the following seven sources, including the introductory information for each source. Then synthesize information from at least three of the sources and incorporate it into a coherent, well-developed essay that argues a clear position on whether the USPS should be restructured to meet the needs of a changing world, and if so, how.

directions Make sure your argument is central; use the sources to illustrate and support your reasoning. Avoid merely summarizing the sources. Indicate clearly which sources you are drawing from, whether through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. You may cite the sources as Source A, Source B, etc., or by using the descriptions in parentheses.

Source A (Stone)
Source B (graph)
Source C (O’Keefe)
Source D (Hawkins)
Source E (McDevitt)
Source F (Cullen)
Source G (photo)
Directions
The following prompt is based on the accompanying six sources. This question requires you to synthesize a variety of sources into a coherent, well-written essay. When you synthesize sources you refer to them to develop your position and cite them accurately. Your argument should be central; the sources should support this argument. Avoid merely summarizing the sources. Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations.

Introduction
Some nations have a defined national school curriculum, while others, such as the United States, do not. As a result, students in high school English classes in the United States can read texts that vary widely from school to school, while students in other countries may all read the same books in high school.

Assignment
Read the following sources (including the introductory information) carefully. Then write an essay that develops a position on whether or not there should be specific texts that all students of high school English must read. Synthesize at least three of the sources for support. You may refer to the sources by their titles (Source A, Source B, etc.) or by the descriptions in the parentheses.

Source A (Landow)
Source B (Table)
Source C (Greer)
Source D (Book cover)
Source E (Pirofski)
Source F (Fowler)
the assignment, unpacked

**Careful Reading** The prompt will instruct you to read all sources, and to do so carefully - like all prompts and AP teachers seem to do. Therefore, they mean it. Read them all. You have 15 minutes, so do not stop when you think you’ve got three bits of information you can use. The introductory material is providing exigency for relevance, reliability, and validity - use it.

- “Carefully read the following (number) sources, including the introductory information for each source.”

**Evidence** The prompt will remind you to provide appropriate evidence. There are two keys in that statement. Actually provide evidence from the sources. And incorporate the source information into your essay as evidence in support of your claim. Consider the type of evidence best suited to the argument (form and function) you are making. Make sure you use three sources. If you have outside evidence, it must be the “4th evidence.”

- “Then synthesize information from at least three of the sources and incorporate it...”

**Essay** The prompt will guide you to write an essay... obviously. However, take that seriously. An essay is a short piece of analytical writing. The points live in the analysis and you have about 40 minutes. Have a thesis, have claims, but focus on analysis of your source evidence.

- “… and incorporate it into a coherent, well-developed essay that…”

**Focus** The prompt will give you the topic of your argument. Each prompt is unique. Some ask you to argue from a specific position. Some ask you to argue from a certain perspective. Some ask you to conduct a problem analysis and provide a solution. Note the specific form of argumentation and the topic you will be writing about. Regardless of the prompt focus, note that you are to argue.

- “… essay that identifies the key issues associated with the locavore movement and examines their implications for the community.”
- “… essay that argues a clear position on whether the USPS should be restructured to meet the needs of a changing world, and if so, how.”
- “… essay that develops a position on whether or not there should be specific texts that all students of high school English must read.”