

AP® Lit Skill Spotlights

Skill Spotlights are free lessons designed for AP® Lit and Pre-AP® students to help practice skills needed for the course. Each lesson begins with a warm-up exercise, usually involving media such as film clips or music. This is followed by a focus text with analytical questions for your students to answer. Each Skill Spotlight ends with a list of suggested texts you can use for further practice with this skill.

Here is the list of each Skill Spotlight, its focus text, and introductory material. **The links in each essential skill below will take you to the Skill Spotlight.** In some of the lessons I link to materials available for purchase from [my store on Teachers Pay Teachers](#), but these are supplementary only. Everything you need to teach these lessons is available for free or online, except for a few which may require a Disney+ subscription.

Skill Spotlights – Poetry

Essential Skill (Taken from the AP Lit CED)	Focused Text	Introductory Materials
CHR 1.A – Identify and describe what specific details reveal about a character, that character’s perspective, and that character’s motives. (Unit 2)	“I, Too” by Langston Hughes	<i>Lou</i> (Pixar short)
STR 3.C – Explain the function of structure in a text. (Units 2, 5, 8)	“Crossing the Swamp” by Mary Oliver	Ted Ed poem lesson
STR 3.D – Explain the function of contrasts within a text. (Units 2, 8)	“Fire and Ice” by Robert Frost	“Odd Couple” clips (<i>New Girl</i> , <i>Schitt’s Creek</i> , and <i>The Odd Couple</i>)
STR 5.A – Explain the function of specific words and phrases in a text. (Unit 5)	“Those Winter Sundays” by Robert Hayden	Clips from <i>Big Fish</i>
FIG 5.B – Explain the function of specific words and phrases in a text. (Units 2, 5, 8)	“Theme for English B” by Langston Hughes	<i>The Sopranos</i> season finale
FIG 5.D – Identify and explain the function of imagery. (Unit 5)	“Dulce Et Decorum Est” by Wilfred Owen, “Blackberry Picking” by Seamus Heaney, and “I Hear an Army” by James Joyce	Scenes from <i>1917</i> , <i>Apocalypse Now</i> , and <i>Ratatouille</i>
FIG 6.A – Identify and explain the function of a simile. (Unit 2)	Sonnet 143 by William Shakespeare	Various songs
FIG 6.B – Identify and explain the function of a metaphor. (Units 2, 5, 8)	“Metaphors” by Sylvia Plath	
FIG 6.C – Identify and explain the function of personification. (Unit 5)	“Plants” by Olive Senior	<i>Riley’s First Date</i> (Pixar Short)
FIG 6.D – Identify and explain the function of allusion. (Units 5, 8)	“Out, Out–” by Robert Frost	Scenes from <i>Interstellar</i>

Skill Spotlights – Prose

Essential Skill (Taken from the AP Lit CED)	Focused Text	Introductory Materials
CHR 1.A – Identify and describe what specific details reveal about a character, that character’s perspective, and that character’s motives. (Units 1, 4)	“The Open Window” by Saki	Opening scenes from <i>Baby Driver</i> , <i>The Social Network</i> , and <i>Spiderman Homecoming</i>
CHR 1.B – Explain the function of a character changing or remaining unchanged. (Unit 7)	“The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin	Scenes from <i>Mad Men</i>
CHR 1.C – Explain the function of contrasting characters. (Unit 4)	“A & P” by John Updike	Clips from <i>The Emperor’s New Groove</i> , <i>Wreck-It Ralph</i> , and <i>Beauty and the Beast</i>
CHR 1.D – Describe how textual details reveal nuances and complexities in characters’ relationships with one another. (Units 4, 7)	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> by Lorraine Hansberry (excerpt)	Clip from <i>Little Women</i>

SET 2.A – Identify and describe specific textual details that convey or reveal a setting. (Unit 1)	“Hills Like White Elephants” by Ernest Hemingway	Scenes from <i>Fargo</i> , <i>Breaking Bad</i> , <i>Gravity</i> , and <i>Wonder Woman</i>
SET 2.B - Explain the function of setting in a narrative.	“Cora Unashamed” by Langston Hughes	Opening scene from <i>Wall-E</i>
SET 2.C - Describe the relationship between a character and a setting. (Units 4, 7)	<i>The Street</i> by Ann Petry (excerpt)	Scenes from <i>Pride and Prejudice</i>
STR 3.A – Identify and describe how plot orders events in a narrative. (Units 1, 4)	<i>Beloved</i> by Toni Morrison (excerpt)	Scenes from <i>Toy Story 2</i> , <i>Wayne’s World</i> , <i>Thor</i> , and <i>Lost</i>
STR 3.B – Explain the function of a particular sequence of events in a plot. (Unit 1, 7)	“Everyday Use” by Alice Walker	Popular short stories from 9-10 grade
3.D - Explain the function of contrasts within a text. (Unit 4)	“A Jury of Her Peers” by Susan Glaspell	Various song covers
NAR 4.A – Identify and describe the narrator or speaker of a text. (Units 1, 4)	“Eleven” by Sandra Cisneros	Clip from <i>Stranger Than Fiction</i>
NAR 4.B – Identify and explain the function of point of view in a narrative. (Units 1, 4)	<i>Misery</i> by Stephen King (excerpt)	Various works of art depicting Daniel in the lion’s den
NAR 4.D – Explain how a narrator’s reliability affects a narrative. (Unit 7)	“The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman	<i>The Open Doors</i> (short film based on “The Open Window” by Saki)
FIG 6.A – Explain the function of a simile. (Unit 7)	<i>A Man Called Ove</i> by Fredrik Backman	Clips from <i>Shrek</i> , <i>Forrest Gump</i> , and <i>A Knight’s Tale</i>
FIG 5.C – Explain the function of personification. (Unit 7)	“There Will Come Soft Rains” by Ray Bradbury	Opening paragraphs from <i>Where the Crawdads Sing</i>



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Other helpful resources:

[LIT & MORE WEBSITE](#)

My blog houses free lesson plans, strategies, and ongoing discussions on engagement and inclusion in AP[®] Lit and ELA classrooms.

[AP LIT[®] FULL COURSE RESOURCE](#)

This best-selling resource offers a full year of short fiction, poetry, prose, and writing lessons to virtually eliminate planning time.

[AP LIT[®] SKILL SPOTLIGHTS](#)

Use these lessons to introduce individual AP[®] Lit skills to your students. Each includes an engaging media clip, sample poetry lesson, and suggested poems for expansion.

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