**Tips to Take for Timed Writings- Compiled from the College Board and Personal Observations**

* **Use Quotations and Explain Them**  
  To score at least a 3, students would be wise to make use of pertinent references from the text. Encourage them to use specific quotations to back up their assertions. However, be sure to explain your quotes clearly and demonstrate how they are relevant to the question. (Make sure that your quotations support your assertions.)
* **Create Variety**

Short, choppy sentences without variety indicate a student who has little background in grammar and style, perhaps someone who has read and written minimally.

* **Your Opinion Isn’t Necessary**

Although your thoughts are valuable, there really isn’t any place for them in a rhetorical analysis. Avoid using personal pronouns or statements like, ‘Smith did a great job writing this essay.” We know he did a great job, in what way? How? Answer those questions should be your focus.

* **Be Specific**

Although your prompt may ask you to consider answer “devices does a writer use to convey a particular idea,” it’s not enough to just say “diction” or “syntax.” Be sure to specify what kind of diction, what kind of syntax, etc. ALL writers use diction, syntax, etc. YOUR job is to tell us what kind is being used, how it is used, and to what extent does it help to convey a particular purpose or idea.

* **Find the Right Word**

An arsenal of appropriate vocabulary and analytical wording reveals a brilliant mind at work, but writers should make certain that the words fit. Some students stick in big words just to sound scholarly. Ironically, some of their papers score only a 2 because they lack clarity and sometimes say nothing of relevance to the prompt.

-“An Exam Reader’s Advice on Writing” – College Board