

The Elusive Sophistication Point: What It Is and How to Get It

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Agenda



- Intro
- Connections to the CEDs
- AP Lit
- AP Lang
- Practice
- Make a Plan

How elusive is the sophistication point?



bit.ly/APScoreDist

All bit.ly links are case sensitive.



How elusive is the sophistication point?

AP Literature Exam

◇	Max Score ◇	Mean		
		Group ◇	MT ◇	Global ^
POETRY ANALYSIS ROW C: SOPHISTICATED	1	0.0	0.0	
PROSE FICTION ROW C: SOPHISTICATED	1	0.0	0.0	
LITERARY ARGUMENT ROW C: SOPHISTICATED	1	0.1	0.1	0.1



How elusive is the sophistication point?

AP Language Exam

Of the 430,139 students who took the exam

- 9% earned the Synthesis SP
- 6% earned the Rhetorical Analysis SP
- 5% earned the Argument SP



What does sophistication mean to you?

Instructions

1. Go to www.menti.com
2. Enter the code **1216 9984**
or use your phone's camera
to access the app using this
QR code



What does the Lit rubric say?

The student who receives the sophistication point

- identifies and explores complexities or tensions in the text
- situates text or interpretation in a broader context
- accounts for alternative interpretations
- writes vividly



What does the rubric mean by each of these?

The student identifies and explores complexities or tensions in the text by ...



“Girl” by Jamaica Kincaid

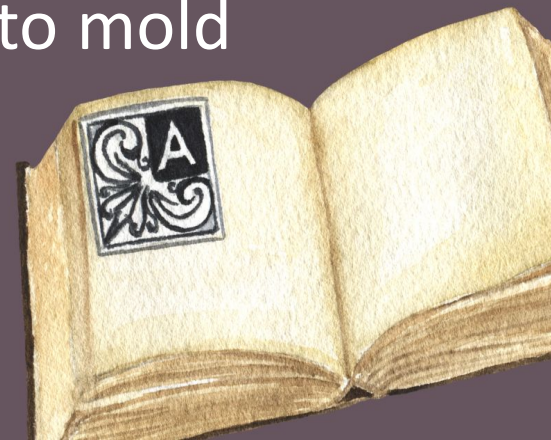
bit.ly/Girl-JKincaid



The student identifies and explores complexities or tensions.

In “Girl,” Jamaica Kincaid shows a mother’s fierce determination to mold her daughter according to the traditions of their community through the dominating presence of first-person narration, a barrage of scolding commands, and a pattern of syntax that emphasizes accepted norms and values.

In Jamaica Kincaid’s “Girl,” a mother’s dominating presence, a barrage of scolding commands, and a pattern of syntax that emphasizes accepted norms and values show the mother’s determination to mold a “girl” into a traditional adult gender role; a closer look, however, reveals a protective mother’s determination to encourage her daughter’s independent spirit.



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What does the rubric mean by each of these?

The student situates the text or an interpretation in a broader context ...



“Woodchucks” by Maxine Kumin

poets.org/poem/woodchucks



The student situates the text or an interpretation in a broader context.

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What does the rubric mean by each of these?

The student accounts for alternative interpretations by ...



The student accounts for alternative interpretations.

Critical Lenses

- psychological
- cultural
- gendered



Critical Lenses - The Basics

bit.ly/SophPt-Lenses



Psychological Lens - The Basics

- investigation of the psychology of a character or the author is key to interpretation of a text



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- characters are driven by unconscious motivations, and their awareness may inform plot or reveal themes



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- characters are driven by unconscious motivations, and their awareness may inform plot or reveal themes
- symbols best understood as expressions of character's unconscious emotions



Cultural Lens - The Basics

- ethnicity, race, social class, gender, and religious affiliation affect production and understanding of texts



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- exploring how power – having it or being denied it – influence a text is valid analysis and interpretation



Cultural Lens - The Basics

- ethnicity, race, social class, gender, and religious affiliation affect production and understanding of texts
- exploring how power – having it or being denied it – influence a text is valid analysis and interpretation
- studying the voices of traditionally marginalized groups is essential to a deeper understanding of literature



Gendered Lens - The Basics

- texts don't exist outside the framework of gender



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- historically, literature has privileged men in its production and interpretation, so it's important to create a tradition balancing or even challenging this conventional view



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- texts don't exist outside the framework of gender
- historically, literature has privileged men in its production and interpretation, so it's important to create a tradition balancing or even challenging this conventional view
- since expectations of roles and behavior are a function of social and cultural values so should be recognized as subjective and impermanent
- stereotyping based on gender is dangerous and should be avoid or confronted



The student accounts for alternative interpretations.

bit.ly/SophPt-AltPerspectives



Trifles by Susan Glaspell

bit.ly/TriflesGlaspell



The student accounts for alternative interpretations.

Identifying with Mrs. Wright, the women withhold judgment and instead try to understand what might have motivated her to kill her husband. In examining her kitchen, they realize how hard life must have been for Mrs. Wright in a house with no children and with Mr. Wright, who was cold and distant. The remote location of the Wrights' house would have contributed to Mrs. Wright's bleak existence. Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters begin to understand how the isolation and sense of entrapment could have led Mrs. Wright to snap, especially following the death of her canary. They can see how the only means of escape might have been to kill Mr. Wright because of his treatment of her as a captive. In seeing ways she could potentially have reached out to Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Hale sympathizes with Mrs. Wright's lonely existence. Mrs. Peters further reinforces their reluctance to judge Mrs. Wright by sharing a time when Mrs. Peters herself felt the desire to hurt a boy who butchered her kitten with a hatchet. Ultimately, the women realize that they, too, might have been driven to violence under Mrs. Wright's circumstances.



The student accounts for alternative interpretations.

On a deeper level, *Trifles* suggests alternative interpretations relevant to gendered and psychological perspectives. For example, the division of investigative labor throughout the play falls along gendered lines with the men centering their efforts elsewhere and leaving the women in the kitchen. That the men view the women's discoveries as trifles that are no more significant than Mrs. Wright's symbolic jars of frozen fruit demonstrates Glaspell's attitudes about the effects a male-dominated society has on women. Furthermore, the expectation at the time that women bear children and center their existence on child care and homemaking would have made the death of Mrs. Wright's canary an even more devastating blow to her already fragile psyche. Additional evidence in the play supports a reading of it through a psychological lens. For example, even though Mrs. Peters remains reluctant to withhold information about Mrs. Wright's likely guilt, her own experiences allow her to work through her repressed anger by shielding Mrs. Wright from legal consequences. Examining the play with these ideas in mind brings to light the complex ways the society in which the characters find themselves influence them in the midst of the moral dilemmas they face throughout the play.



What does the Lang rubric say?

The student who receives the sophistication point

- Explains the significance or relevance of the writer's rhetorical choices (given the rhetorical situation).
- Explains a purpose or function of the passage's complexities or tensions.
- Articulates the implications or limitations of an argument by situating it in a larger context.
- Employs a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.



What does the rubric mean by this?

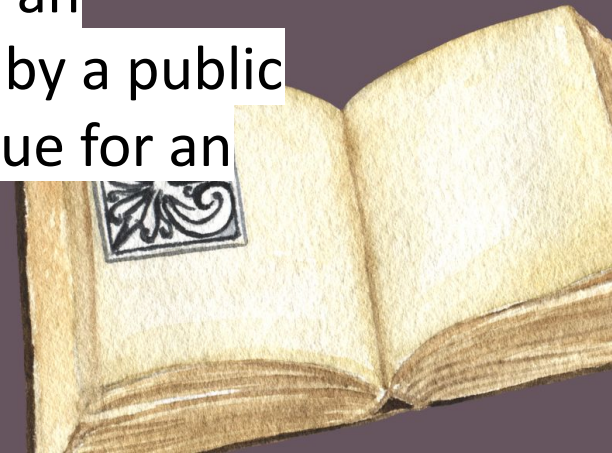
The student explains the significance or relevance of the writer's rhetorical choices (given the rhetorical situation)...



The second thesis statement connects the writer's rhetorical choices with the situation.

In her speech "People and Peace, Not Profits and War," Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm develops her ethos as a citizen, appeals to American values, and uses the language of battle to argue for an immediate end to the Vietnam conflict.

"People and Peace, Not Profit and War" was Shirley Chisholm's first speech in Congress, but it was no freshman effort; in it she uses her experience as an educator to establish ethos, appeals to American values as experienced by a public servant and comes out fighting as she uses the language of battle to argue for an immediate end to the Vietnam war.



What does the rubric mean by this?

The student articulates the implications or limitations of an argument by situating it in a larger context.



The student articulates the implications or limitations.

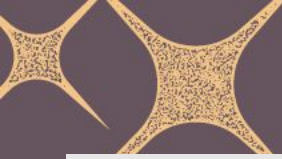
bit.ly/ImplicationLimitation



The second sample body paragraph articulates the implications or limitations of an argument by acknowledging a larger context

OpenThesis: Early start times for American high schools show that convenience and cost are more important concerns than the health and academic growth of our students.

Studies have shown that lack of sleep can affect the health of young people which in turn affects their academic performance. While a student's health certainly depends on many elements—nutrition, environment, and exercise—a foundational piece of human health is sleep. Students learn about the importance of sleep starting in their elementary school health lessons, and they grown up with parents, teachers, and doctors repeating over and over again the importance of getting a good night's sleep. Whether the information is delivered in class or at home, young people are led to view sleep is as important to their health as eating vegetables, drinking water, and exercising. So while we don't expect a student deprived of food, water, or air to do well on a test, why do schools continue to set start times that go against their biological sleep patterns, thereby depriving students of enough sleep? Schools should work to create the best possible environment for students to learn, and that environment must take students' health into consideration as well.



Studies have shown that lack of sleep can affect the health of young people which in turn affects their academic performance. Because it is the charge of every school to support students' best education, the factors that contribute to a healthy and foundational environment for learning must be a priority. While a student's health is certainly comprised of many elements—nutrition, environment, and exercise—a foundational piece of human health is sleep. Scientific and medical research support the integral connection between sleep and learning. Students learn about the importance of sleep starting in their elementary school health lessons, and they grow up with parents, teachers, and doctors repeating over and over again the importance of getting a good night's sleep. Whether the information is delivered in class or at home, young people are led to view sleep as important to their health as eating vegetables, drinking water, and exercising. So while we don't expect a student deprived of food, water, or air to do well on a test, it makes no sense for schools to continue to set start times that deprive them of sleep. The most common teenage sleep pattern makes it difficult for students to fall asleep early even when they try, which defeats most attempts at going to bed early and makes it nearly impossible for students to get the healthy amount of sleep their bodies need. Schools should work to create the best possible environment for students to learn and that environment must take students' health into consideration as well. If we trust that the majority of leaders making decisions in education prioritize students' learning, we know they will agree that schools should work to create the best possible environment for that learning to occur, which means starting school when teenagers' brains and bodies are often at their best.

What does the rubric mean by this?

The student understands a purpose or function of the passage's complexities or tensions.



The student understands a purpose or function of the passage's complexities or tensions.

bit.ly/ComplexityTensions



Lara Nott's "Free Speech isn't Always Valuable. That's not the Point" walks her readers through the complexities and tensions inherent in a discussion of the merits of the First Amendment.

Free Speech Isn't Always Valuable. That's Not the Point

You may think you love the First Amendment. You may get misty-eyed just thinking about it. It calls to mind Woodward and Bernstein unraveling the Watergate scandal, Dr. King leading the March on Washington, Voltaire proclaiming, "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." (Voltaire didn't actually say that, but he probably wouldn't mind that you think he did.)

But sooner or later, you will come across something that will make you wonder just what's so great about freedom of speech.

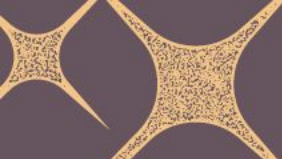
It could be a campus speaker arguing that Hitler might have been onto something. Or a protester burning an American flag. Or your neighbor's teenage son, who just bought a drone on Amazon and is now using it to take pictures of your front yard.

You will not disavow the First Amendment (because you love it, of course). You will squarely place the blame on those idiots who are clearly misinterpreting what it means, who think that free speech is somehow a free pass to be a total jerk. They're the problem, you tell yourself. The First Amendment, when applied *properly*, is great.

Maybe it's time for us to come to terms with the truth: While everybody loves the First Amendment in theory, nobody's all that fond of it in practice.

Consider the massive popularity of partisan media, and, as The Wall Street Journal's "Blue Feed, Red Feed" project has shown, the complete lack of overlap between liberal and conservative Facebook feeds. We love speakers and media outlets that articulate the thoughts that we were already thinking. We can barely tolerate the ones that contradict our world view. As Nat Hentoff argued in his book, "Free Speech For Me But Not For Thee," most of us struggle with the desire to relentlessly censor one another.

Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes understood this back in 1919: "Persecution for the expression of opinions seems to me perfectly logical. If you...want a certain result with all your heart, you naturally express your wishes in law, and sweep away all opposition." Of course, he followed this with an instruction to resist this natural urge, and to think of speech as a marketplace where all ideas should be allowed to compete so that the best ideas can emerge victorious.



It's nice to think about a bustling marketplace of ideas, but it might be a little tough to hold that cheery picture in your mind when you think about, say, the First Amendment right to sell dog-fighting videos, or to hold up a "Thank God for dead soldiers" banner outside a military funeral. When you picture a marketplace, you can't help but assess the value of the goods for sale. Do we really have to make space for the vendors selling rotten fruit, or that candy that contains trace amounts of lead?

Hate speech may be protected by the First Amendment, but what benefit do we actually derive from it? How much did Milo Yiannopoulos's controversial campus visits contribute to intelligent debate when his speeches primarily revolved around publicly ridiculing audience members and basking in his own outrageousness? If the point of free speech is to encourage that intellectual marketplace, to make us a better society, why should we care about defending speech that we find intellectually worthless?

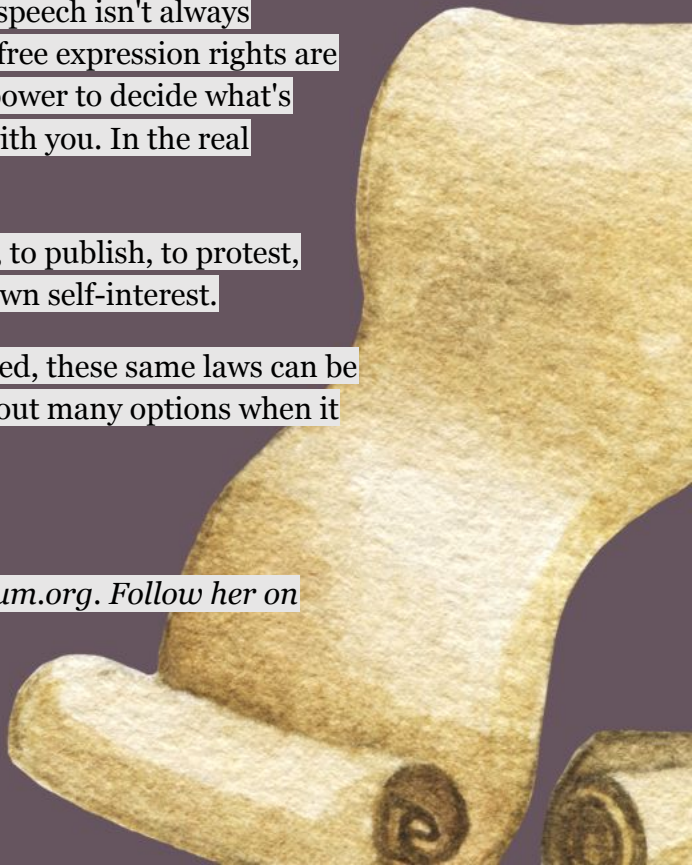
But there's another way to look at the First Amendment. Maybe we shouldn't think about free expression in terms of value. Free speech isn't always valuable, no matter how loosely you define that word. Sometimes it's hurtful, or nonsensical, or idiotic. What's important is that free expression rights are always indivisible. Remember: The First Amendment protects your speech from government censorship. It's meant to keep the power to decide what's valuable expression and what isn't out of the hands of public officials. You are not in competition with the people who disagree with you. In the real conflict, all of us are on the same side: How much control over speech do we want to cede to the people in power?

In other words: Your rights are my rights. This is true even if I hate you. Nevertheless, I have to stand up for your rights to speak, to publish, to protest, even if I think your opinions are junk and you are wrong about everything. Not just in service of a lofty ideal, but also out of my own self-interest.

The same holds true for you, for all of us. You may advocate for hate speech policies that will silence bigots, but once they're passed, these same laws can be used to silence you. You may support laws that are intended to restrict and neuter public protests, but you will find yourself without many options when it comes time to stand up for a cause that you believe in.

You don't have to love the First Amendment. Just acknowledge that we all need it.

Lata Nott is executive director of the First Amendment Center of the Newseum Institute. Contact her via email at lnott@newseum.org. Follow her on Twitter at [@LataNott](https://twitter.com/LataNott).



Using AI-generated text to teach students sophistication of thought in writing



CHATGPT

 OpenAI



Q3 Sample A

1 of 1

In William Golding's imaginative dystopia wherein a group of young boys are stranded and left to fend for themselves, many of said boys must undergo a transformation in order to preserve not only their lives, but also their learned morality and social behavior. Specifically, Jack Meridew intentionally adopts a new identity to prove himself and carry his weight on the island. Jack Meridew's desire to transform himself in *The Lord of the Flies* illustrates the destruction and downfall of mankind when left to their own devices (original sin), as well as the inherent evil that resides in man.

Jack's original reinvention into an avid hunter is solely to support the others and himself. He is courageous and wants to help out and "be good" by stepping up and taking a critical role in their island survival, but it is clear to the audience that these actions are not without their own ulterior motives. Jack's failure to kill a simple animal leaves him questioning his abilities (and masculinity), as well as resulting in group disappointment from wasted effort and resource, but he quickly undergoes a transformation to combat this. Jack's new identity kills first and questions later. He transforms from a young boy hesitant and unable to kill a small creature to a hunter with excessive and aggressive hunting procedures. His treatment of the mother pig shows his abandonment of learned social behavior to be well-mannered and "good", as he exhibits overkill with phallic interpretations toward a maternal figure. Instead of a timid and hesitant young boy, Jack has devolved into someone relying solely on primal instinct of man to hurt others for self gain.

Not only does Jack transform, but he becomes the leader of a new regime. His tribe rebels against the original attempt at civilization, in which Jack and his hunters provide food, but rather Jack distinguishes himself separately from Piggy, Ralph, and Simon. As a physical indicator of a transformation, the hunters start wearing tribal "makeup" on their skin; not to protect from harsh light and other jungle conditions, but rather to declare a new identity. Jack and the hunters care less for practicality and civility, and more for danger, cruelty, and their primitive nature. Body paint symbolizes their regression and embracing of their primitive thoughts and ideas that they become compelled to act on. Jack and hunters kill Simon without much of a second thought and little to remorse in the aftermath because they have fully embraced their regression into the "evil" side that man is born with.

In the final act, with the boys at war and Jack leading the charge, he is ready to spear Ralph in order to gain full control of an island he has embraced as his new home. Ralph, being the personification and symbolism of democracy and learned good moral behavior within the group of boys, has no option left but to get chased and eventually maimed by Jack, whose new identity becomes the symbol of innate human evil. Golding contrasts between Jack's original character and Jack's new identity in the final hunt as an illustration of mankind's regression from learned good to innate evil. It is not until rescue men come to save the boys that Jack realizes the scope of his actions, which begs the question: Was Jack's new identity truly a new reinvention of his character or was it hiding underneath the surface of learned goodness?

Jack Meridew intentionally creates a new identity in *The Lord of the Flies* to free himself from cowardice and insecurity he feels, but Golding ultimately uses him as a vessel to demonstrate the regression of man from learned good to an innate evil.

AP Literature Prompt, 2023

In many works of literature, characters choose to reinvent themselves for significant reasons. They may wish to separate from a previous identity, gain access to a different community, disguise themselves from hostile forces, or express a more authentic sense of self.

Either from your own reading or from the following list, choose a work of fiction in which a character intentionally creates a new identity. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the character's reinvention contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Provide evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

AP Language Prompt, 2022

Colin Powell, a four-star general and former United States secretary of state, wrote in his 1995 autobiography: “[W]e do not have the luxury of collecting information indefinitely. At some point, before we can have every possible fact in hand, we have to decide. The key is not to make quick decisions, but to make timely decisions.”

Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Powell's claim about making decisions is valid.

1.

M

Colin Powell, a four-star general and former United States secretary of state, wrote in his 1995 autobiography: “[W]e do not have the luxury of collecting information indefinitely. At some point, before we can have every possible fact in hand, we have to decide. The key is not to make quick decisions, but to make timely decisions.” Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Powell’s claim about making decisions is valid.

2.

M

Add evidence to the essay that you generated



Title: The Value of Timely Decision-Making: Validating Colin Powell's Perspective



Introduction:

In his autobiography, Colin Powell, a distinguished former Secretary of State, emphasized the significance of timely decision-making. Powell's assertion that decisions should be made promptly rather than indefinitely collecting information remains highly relevant even in today's complex world. This essay examines the validity of Powell's claim by examining the bene...

3.

M

make the essay sound like it was written by a high school student



Title: The Importance of Making Timely Decisions: Colin Powell's Perspective



Introduction:

In his autobiography, Colin Powell, who was a super cool general and stuff, talked about how making decisions in a timely manner is super important. He said that we can't keep collecting information forever, and we have to decide at some point. I totally agree with him, and in this essay, I'll explain why Powell's claim about making decisions is totally valid and stuff.

Read one of the essays
generated by ChatGPT.

Discuss: How does this
essay **lack** sophistication?





**With a partner,
write two questions
that coach the
student toward
earning the
sophistication point.**

QUESTIONS:

- Do you really want to use the phrase “totally valid”? (absolutes)
- How would you define the argument of someone who disagrees with you?
- What do you see Colin Powell’s statement that you find valid, and how can you use that kind of language?
- How can you take the last sentence in the third paragraph and turn it into a topic sentence for a new/separate paragraph?
- How is Powell both right and wrong? And, then, which side do you believe is stronger?
- What’s the difference between a ‘quick’ decision and a ‘timely’ decision?

In F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel "The Great Gatsby," the protagonist Jay Gatsby changes his identity on purpose. It's kind of a big deal in the story and it makes us think about stuff. In this essay, we'll talk about how Gatsby's reinvention contributes to the overall meaning of the book. We'll look at things like the American Dream, social acceptance, and the difference between real and fake identities. The way Jay Gatsby reinvents himself in "The Great Gatsby" represents the American Dream, the desire to fit in with high society, and the consequences of pretending to be someone you're not.

F. Scott Fitzgerald's masterpiece, "The Great Gatsby," delves into the captivating narrative of Jay Gatsby, a character who deliberately orchestrates a transformation of his identity. Gatsby's intentional reinvention reverberates throughout the novel, offering profound insights into the complexities of the American Dream, the allure of social acceptance, and the consequences of constructing a façade rather than embracing one's authentic self. Jay Gatsby's deliberate reinvention in F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" serves as a powerful metaphor, intricately exploring the illusory nature of the American Dream, the inherent human longing for social acceptance, and the tragic consequences of constructing an identity rooted in deception rather than self-actualization.



**With a partner,
write one question
to prompt discussion
about the two
introductory
paragraphs.**

Thank you for your time!

Robin Aufses (robinauf@gmail.com)

Kate Cordes (katecordes@gmail.com)

Megan Harowitz (meganteaches@gmail.com)



Canva Design at

https://www.canva.com/design/DAFmoijYeLk/kXn7tT0e7_LM_ZQpBKHR2A/edit?utm_content=DAFmoijYeLk&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton