

General Instructions: The multiple choice section of the recent exams consists of 50-55 questions on four to six passages which have to be answered in one hour. Strategies that help students consist of reading comprehension practices and familiarity with the exam structure.

1. Quickly survey ALL of the reading passages and note the number of questions attached to each one. Start with the passage that you think you might understand the best AND has a significant number of questions attached to it. After you have worked through that passage, attack the passage that is your second favorite, and so on. This means that you might complete the last passage first if you think that is your best passage, while leaving the first passage for last (because you feel it is your weakest).
2. Skim the questions, not the choices or distracters, to identify what the constructors of the test think is important in the passage.
3. The directions are always the same for each section: "Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answer." **Remember** that the questions that say "Not, Least, and Except are really well crafted true/false or yes/no questions which are **time bandits**.
4. Aggressively attack the questions. Remember that questions do NOT become more difficult as they progress.
5. Don't be afraid to use the test as a source of information. Sometimes, another question will help you answer the one you are stuck on.
6. Read the questions CAREFULLY! Many wrong answers stem from misreading the question; know what is being asked.
7. Read the introductory paragraph and the last paragraph and mark the key topic.
8. Mark any rhetorical shifts usually indentified with conjunctions such as But, Although, Since, etc.
9. Read the passages actively by circling the items that seem to be addressed in the questions. Draw lines from the question to the line reference in the passage to save time finding the lines later.
10. Read a few lines before and a few lines after a line question (usually a sentence) to make sure your inference is correct.
11. Be deliberate in your reading; words are there for a reason. Do not imagine what isn't there.
12. Read the questions crossing out obvious wrong answers: a question that contradicts the passage, is irrelevant to the passage, or repeats the same information in more than one question. Remember: Read all the choices, but there is only **one right answer**: mark and move on.
13. All questions follow the order of appearance in the passage; nothing is out of sequence.
14. In paired passages the first questions address the first passage; then, the second passage is addressed. Questions that deal with both passages are at the end of the selection.

15. Watch your time by avoiding a re-reading the passage. READ CAREFULLY the first time.

16. Do not linger, obsess, or dither over any one question. You should move at a brisk, but comfortable pace throughout the questions.

17. Go over the test when you are finished. When you go over the test, make sure you read the question correctly and that you answered what it asked. Do not change answers unless you are certain that you made a mistake. If you are not absolutely sure the answer you want to change is incorrect, go with your first impression. Almost without fail, first associations are correct.

18. With approximately 90 seconds left to go in this one-hour section, pick a letter and bubble in any remaining answers. You should complete the test as thoughtfully as possible for 58-59 minutes and then fill in any remaining empty bubbles in the last 90 seconds.

Since this is a **skill-based test**: there is little chance that you will have seen the passages before, but the questions the test asks focus on **higher-level reading skills**.

Helpful Reminder: Until your brain is warm and focused, you will have a tendency to miss questions. So, be very careful with your first few questions of the test and your first couple of questions on a new passage.

Reminder Two: Students tend to lose focus and confidence during this section of the test. As a result, students will miss a series of questions because of lost concentration and internal doubts.

For this first section of the AP Literature exam, you are allotted 1 hour to answer between 45 and 55 objective questions on five to seven prose and poetry selections. The prose passages may come from works of fiction or drama. You can expect the poems to be complete and from different time periods and of different styles and forms. In other words, you will not find two Shakespearean sonnets on the same exam.

These are not easy readings. They are representative of the college-level work you have been doing throughout the year. You will be expected to:

- Follow sophisticated syntax
- Respond to diction
- Be comfortable with upper-level vocabulary
- Be familiar with literary terminology
- Make inferences
- Be sensitive to irony and tone
- Recognize components of style

The multiple choice questions are designed to assess your understanding of:
The meaning of the selection,
Your ability to draw inferences,
Your ability to see implications,
How a writer develops ideas;
Therefore, the questions will be **factual, technical, analytical, and inferential**

Some Other Tips for Multiple-Choice Tests

Multiple choice items consist of a question or an incomplete statement, called the "stem," followed by five choices. Most often only one is the correct or "best" answer and the others are called distracters or decoys. A few strategies can help you do your best on multiple choice tests.

First, cover the answers to an item and read only the stem of the question. See if you can provide the correct answer without having to be prompted by the choices. If an answer comes to mind, then look at the choices and select it if it is listed there.

If you apply the first strategy and no answer pops into your head, try the second: join each choice to the question or the stem and consider it as a true/false item. The answer that sounds most valid or "most true" should be your choice.

And third, test designers are often limited in their "supply of decoys," and as a result will make up terms to use for that purpose or utilize obscure terms. If you have been studying regularly and have done a good job of preparing for the test, you should not choose an answer that sounds totally new to you.

Remember that the "distracters" are usually written as almost correct. It is your task to effectively think through the question to make sure that you select the correct answer.

If you find yourself having to guess on multiple-choice items, you might keep the following tip in mind.

If two of the choices have balanced phrasing or echo each other, choose one or the other. Again, human nature comes into play in this tendency. If the correct answer on a nursing test on the effect of a given drug is "lowers body temperature," it might be logical for the first decoy item that pops into the teacher's mind to be "raises body temperature." When researchers analyzed a wide range of teachers' tests, they found that the correct answer is often one of the phrases that has a parallel or "echoed" decoy item.

Rhetorical Terms from Released AP Language Exams

<u>1982 Exam</u>	<u>1987 Exam</u>	<u>1991 Exam</u>
Metaphor Allusion Parallelism Shifts Allusion Anecdote Analogy Generalization Paradox Rhetorical question Diction Irony Slang Tone Compare/contrast Cause/effect Question/answer	Metaphor Parallelism Extended definition Concession Cause/effect Tone Paradox Analogy Generalization Syllogism Understatement Irony Appeals to authority <i>Ad hominem</i> argument Diction Simile	Allusion Personification Paradox Circumlocution Diction Tone Overstatement Generalization Parallelism Balanced sentence structure Metaphor Understatement Syllogism Allegory Analogy
<u>1996 Exam</u>	<u>2001 Exam</u>	<u>2007? Exam</u>
Metaphor Paradox Analogy Irony Understatement Punning Allusion Tone Parallelism Alliteration Onomatopoeia Generalization Image Colloquial expression Parody Personification Juxtaposition Diction Simile Apostrophe Antithesis	Metaphor Analogy Antithesis Repetition Appeal to authority Paradox Overstatement Understatement Anecdote Tone Imagery Diction Parallelism Alliteration Onomatopoeia Oxymoron Irony Juxtaposition Anecdote Allusion Abbreviated, staccato phrases	Tone Diction Metaphor Slang Generalization Rhetorical question Syllogism Analogy Compare/contrast Narration/analysis Irony Paradox Personification Anecdote Parody Definition

Rhetorical Strategies (Devices, Techniques) **(Werkenthin's Essential List)**

Diction

Details (or lack of)

Imagery

Figures of speech

Syntax—repetition, omission, reversal;

sentence lengths, complexity, parallelism;

rhetorical question, rhetorical fragment

Tone

Anecdote

Analogy

Hyperbole (exaggeration, overstatement)

Understatement

Irony

Antithesis, juxtaposition

Paradox

Point of view

Appeals (emotional, logical, ethical)

Organization

Shift(s)

AP Multiple-Choice Test-Taking Strategies

I. Time management

- A. **Scan the entire test** to see how many passages there are. Usually there are four, two pre-20th and two 20th-21st century passages. **Number** the passages.
- B. **Circle** the question ranges for each passage, i.e., *Questions 43 – 57*.
- C. Allot **1 minute per question** for each passage, including reading time. Write the Start and End time at the top of each passage. If there are 11 questions for the first passage and your exam began at 9:00 a.m., write 9:00 – 9:11 at the top. Write 9:12 – 9:?? for the next passage, etc.
- D. **Number** the paragraphs. **Draw lines** between paragraphs.
- E. **Circle** or **mark** italicized information, footnotes, dates, etc.
- F. **Skim the first few lines and the questions** (but not the answers) to determine the subject and what you'll need to look for when you read the passage. Unlike for the SAT, you really must read the passage.

II. First Reading

- A. **Underline every other sentence**. This helps visually by breaking up long chunks and also helps you locate the shortest sentences which usually carry the main points.
- B. **Circle all semicolons**. Read the words between them as separate units. (19th century writers use semicolons differently than we do—they use many more, and they don't always mean "stop.")
- C. **Circle unfamiliar words**—use context clues or word prefixes/roots/suffixes to help you grasp the meaning.
- D. In the margin beside each paragraph write a **brief summary** of it.
- E. Write a **one-sentence summary** of the entire passage.
- F. Do not spend too much time on trying to answer any question—about **30 seconds**. Mark any you skip.
- G. **Keep your thumb or finger beside the line(s)** (or a pen, pencil, or eraser) where you found the answer to the previous question—the questions go in order of the passage. Keeping your thumb (or an object) there will help you keep your place and save time.
- H. **Skip** questions with Roman numeral combination questions or that say "EXCEPT." These take much longer, and all the questions are of equal value. Come back to these when you finish your first pass-through.

III. Second Reading

- A. Determine whether the passage is **positive or negative in tone**. Eliminate the answers that don't fit the tone.
- B. Check whether the answer fits the **sentence structure** of the question stem.
- C. Also, check whether the **number (singular/plural)** is the same as the question stem.
- D. If you are pressed for time and have skipped questions, go back to those that ask you to **define a word** and/or to the **ones that point you back to one line** to find the answer. You need to read some of what comes before and after the cited material in line-referenced questions.
- E. Answer questions that refer to the passage as a whole last.
- F. The penalty for wrong answers no longer exists so take an educated guess.

Tips from the College Board Regional Conference in Albuquerque, NM, 2001:

Preview the passage

- Read the introduction (the material in italics).
- Read the first 5 lines of the passage (or the first few sentences).

Preview the questions

- Read the questions without looking at the answer choices.
- Underline the important words in the question stems.

Mark the passage

- As you read the questions, bracket or mark the lines in the passage to which the question refers.

- Put the question number next to the brackets.
- If a question includes a quote from the passage, underline the quoted material in the passage.
- If the question is a vocabulary-type question, circle the word in the passage.

Read the entire passage very carefully and answer the questions as you go.

Note: You are expected to be able to read and interpret footnotes in one of the passages. Below are samples.

Chicago Documentation Style:

1. Peter Burchard, *One Gallant Rush: Robert Gould Shaw and His Brave Black Regiment* (New York: St. Martin's, 1965). 85.
2. Jack Hurst, *Nathan Bedford Forrest: A Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1993), 8.
3. *Ibid.*, 174.
4. Burchard, *One Gallant Rush*, 31.

Ibid means "in the same place."