**AP Language**

**Tackling Multiple Choice Passages**

**4 TYPES OF AP MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FACTUAL** | **TECHNICAL** | **ANALYTICAL** | **INFERENTIAL** |
| Words refer to | Sentence structure | Rhetorical strategy | Effect of diction |
| Allusions | Style | Shift in development | Tone |
| Antecedents | Grammatical purpose | Rhetorical stance | Inferences |
| Pronoun referents | Dominant technique | Style | Effect of description |
|  | Imagery | Metaphor | Effect of last paragraph |
|  | Point of view | Contrast | Effect on reader |
|  | Organization of passage | Comparison | Narrator’s attitude |
|  | Narrative progress of passage | Cause/effect | Image suggests |
|  | Conflict | Argument | Effect of detail |
|  | Irony | Description | Author implies |
|  | Function of… | Narration | Author most concerned with |
|  |  | Specific-general | Symbol  |
|  |  | General-specific |  |
|  |  | How something is characterized |  |
|  |  | Imagery |  |
|  |  | Passage is primarily concerned with |  |
|  |  | Function of… |  |

**AP Multiple choice questions will include some of these same types of questions but will also include others. The majority of APMC questions are**

* Comprehension question -- can you read & understand what this is saying?
* Author’s purpose or intention – this is sometimes “hidden” as an “effect on the reader or audience” question
* Identifying how a text appeals to logos, pathos, or establishes ethos.
* Inference question – can you deduct what the author is saying, implying?
* Function question – how is an author using a rhetorical strategy or device, what is the author achieving with that use?
* Reference or antecedent question – to what does this (word, phrase, paragraph, idea) refer?
* Shift or transition questions – can you see how the author transitions from one idea or block of text to another; can you identify when a shift in tone, style, or purpose occurs?
* EXCEPT questions – requires “the flip” from looking for what is there to what isn’t there
* Roman Numeral questions—asks you to determine which of three choices pertain to a passage.
* Questions will address different amounts of text

1. “Close Shots” –a word, phrase, rhetorical device, a small amount of text

2. “Medium Shots” –a few sentences, paragraph, or paragraphs, medium amount of text

3. “Long Shots” –a whole passage, often about tone or purpose

**TRICKS TO HELP YOU FOCUS**

* **Go through each question and note the questions that refer to a specific line. Mark those lines before you begin to read, taking note of those lines as you read.**
* **Before you read the choices, try to answer the stem in your own words. Choose the answer that comes closest to your own interpretation of the question.**

*Adapted from Valerie Stevenson College Board Consultant English Language and Composition 5/24/2010*

**AP Exam Multiple Choice Test Taking Strategies**

1. If a question refers to a specific line, choose the answer that pertains only to that line.
2. Read each question all the way through before looking at the answer choices.
3. Try to answer the question before reading the choices. If you know generally what is happening in the passage it will make eliminating incorrect answer choices easier.
4. Remain consistent in your answers. If the answer to a mode question is exemplification, then the answer to the author’s purpose will be to explain.
5. Make educated guesses; eliminate the obvious incorrect answer choices right away and use reasoning to find the best possible answer choice through the process of elimination.
6. Determine precisely what the question is asking; one answer will be the best choice, so read through all answer choices since the best answer could be the last choice in the list.
7. Do not spend too much time on any one question; skip more difficult questions and go back to those once all other questions have been answered. The Roman numeral questions are time wasters. Answer them last. You are not penalized for guessing so if you are running short on time, these are the ones to guess on.
8. Do not change an answer-unless the question was misread; your first answer is usually the correct choice.
9. When one of the answer choices is “all of the above” and one of the statements is unquestionably false, do not choose “all of the above.” Conversely, when “none of the above” is an answer choice and one of the statements is unquestionably true do not choose “none of the above.”
10. If you are trying to guess an answer or decide between multiple answers, a response that repeats key words from the text is likely to be correct.
11. Eliminate answers excluded buy other answers. If answers mean basically the same thing, and there is only ONE correct answer, neither can be correct.
12. Make sure to look out for the word ***EXCEPT***.
13. Just because you know what a words means on vocabulary questions, remember, you must define the word in context.
14. The passages are self-contained. You don’t need prior knowledge about the content of the readings to get the answers right.

What if More than One Answer Seems Correct?

When it seems like more than one answer is correct there are some strategies for narrowing down the choices in order to find the right choice.

* Examine the answer being considered and determine whether it is only partly true when addressing the question (Think about tone questions, both choices must be correct for the answer to be right), or if it would only be true under certain circumstances. If this is the case, it is probably not the correct answer.
* On the A.P. test, one answer will always be “more” correct. Always choose the dominant rhetorical strategy in the specific portion of the reading that is addressed.

Others Things to Think About:

* At least one of the readings will contain some type of citation, attribution, footnote, and so on. You will be expected to be able to determine HOW this citation, etc., is employed by the author to further his purpose. You will NOT be asked about specific formats such as MLA or APA.
* Guess, but make educated guesses. Eliminate all the answers you can. Once you have answered, leave the question alone.
* Try to answer all the questions. If you are running low on time, at least choose options that are reasonable.
* Don’t cram the night before the test. You know what you need to know, and if you don’t, you won’t learn it the night before.

*John Cain, Harrison High School 4/26/2013*