

AP EXAM STRATEGIES FOR MULTIPLE CHOICE TESTS

1. Skim the MC section in a minute. **Decide which passage is the easiest** for you and start there! Save the MEANY for last. If you run out of time, at least you will have accumulated more points. (If you go out of numerical order, however, **double-check your answers carefully to make certain that you don't fill in the wrong slots on the answer sheet!**)
2. Read for the whole context first. Try reading the first one or two sentences and the last one or two to get an idea of the **scope of the passage**. Skim over the wording looking for **TEXTURE--** places where you will find such things as REPEATED DICTION, SYNTAX CLUMPS and/or an abundance of IMAGERY. Remember the **FIVE senses!!** Identify connotative wording at the beginning and at the end. Does the passage change in any way? After examining the beginning and end, skim for overall texture. Where do you see syntax clumps, for example?
3. **Annotate!** Draw quick lines between connecting ideas that you see immediately on the page. Underline, circle, or star key areas, just as you would on a passage for an essay.
4. After you read and annotate briefly, quickly move through the questions, making **temporary guesses on questions you're not sure about**. Star difficult questions and come back only if you have time. You have approximately 15 minutes to read a passage and answer from 10 to 16 questions. Don't waste time on something that is mind-boggling. With high essays, you can pass the exam with 30 of the approximate 55 questions answered correctly. (30 points)
5. Realize the questions are your allies--they will help you determine where to go back and **reread certain parts of the passage** (the clues and the line numbers).
6. Read for implications--**suggested meanings** behind the words.
7. Analyze and interpret sections of the passage with the questions as guides, keeping the context in mind. Make sure you understand what the **verbs** mean in each question—infer, evaluate, identify, etc.
8. **Master literary and rhetorical terms in advance**. If you can't recognize a crucial word, you may not be able to answer a question!
9. Reasonable guesses (certainty between one of two answers) are wise.
10. **Pace yourself**, and don't try to read the passage word for word. You won't get through. Bring a wristwatch to help you keep up with the timing in case the proctor doesn't do it.

***NOTE:** Some people have success skimming the questions first before attacking the passage itself. Sometimes clues to overall meaning are conveniently conspicuous. **Try this approach, but only use if it works.** Different strategies work for different students! **Find what works for you.**