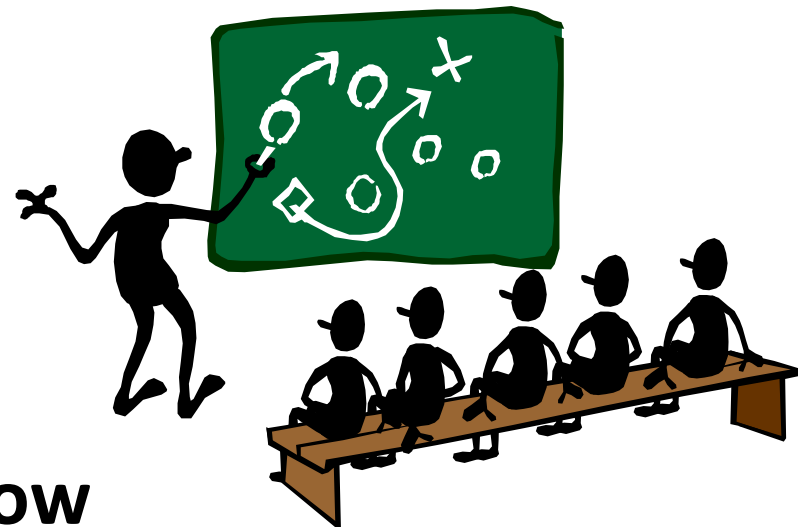


# **Coaching Students to Tackle the AP English Literature Exam Multiple-Choice Section**

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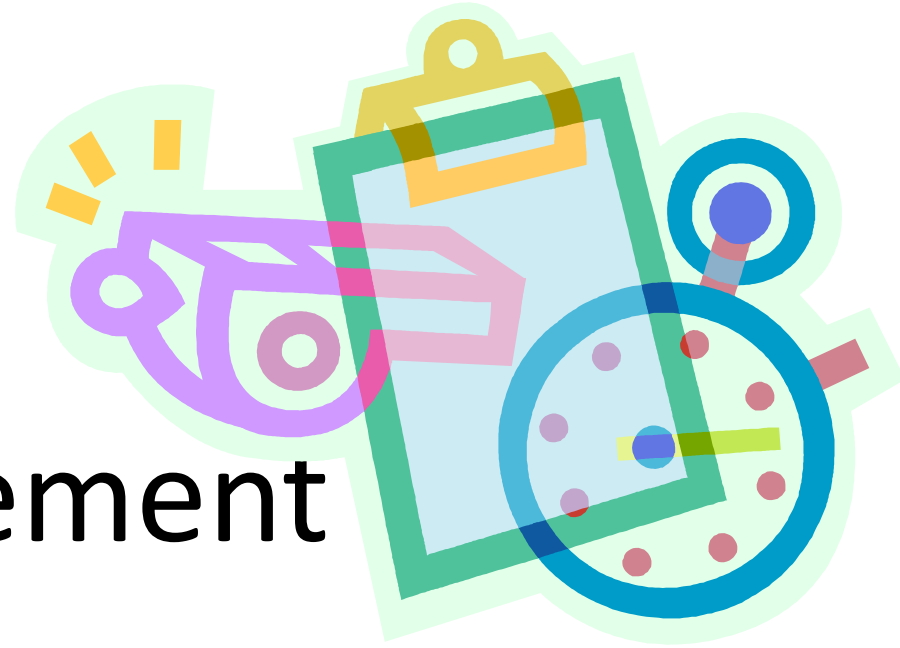
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# Coaching Strategies

- 1) test analysis
- 2) time management
- 3) close reading



# Pre-Game Pep Talk

- **Allow questions to guide reading.**

Questions contain clues as to passage's topic, focus, tone, and patterns.

- **Answer out of order.**

Some questions require little in-depth reading; some require much.

Questions are in order of their appearance in the passage—not in order of difficulty. Use your time economically.

- **Guess wisely.**

Determine your own answer before examining the choices OR—more typically—use process of elimination (and cross out the choices you know are wrong). Focus on the question's wording.

- **Read all the choices.**

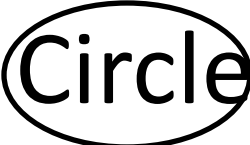

Don't select the first right answer when a later option is better. Choose the best not simply a correct answer.

- **Be aggressive.**

There's no longer a penalty for guessing, so be confident.

# The Game Plan: first quarter

*Read questions first (but not choices).  
Identify crucial information.*

-  verbs—and their modifiers.
- Underline the focus.
- Draw  around literary terms.
- Double-underline NOT, LEAST, and EXCEPT.

# Reading the Play Book

Pay particular attention to the verb of the question:

- *asserts*
- *assumes*
- *describes*
- *compares*
- *contributes*
- *distinguishes*
- *draws attention to*
- *emphasizes*
- *employs*
- *evokes*
- *functions*
- *implies*
- *infers*
- *is characterized by*
- *is concerned with*
- *is interpreted to mean*
- *is understood as*
- *means*
- *paraphrases*
- *perceives*
- *presents*
- *refers*
- *represents*
- *reveals*
- *stands for*
- *suggests*
- *serves*
- *states*
- *uses*
- *views*

# Reading the Play Book

Pay particular attention to the modifiers of the question:

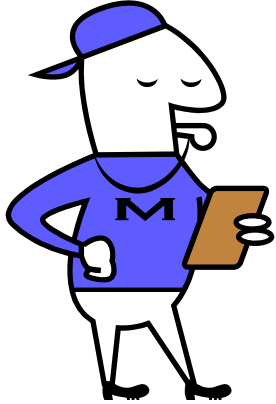
- *clearly*
- *chiefly*
- *comparatively*
- *directly*
- *explicitly*
- *extensively*
- *figuratively*
- *in context*
- *most*
- *obviously*
- *probably*
- *primarily*
- *strongly*
- *EXCEPT*
- *LEAST*
- *NOT*

# The Game Plan: second quarter

*Read and mark the passage.*

- Underline or bracket sentences, phrases, or words specifically identified in questions.
- Write reading clues in the margins.
- Contemplate central meaning of text after reading.

# The Game Plan: third quarter

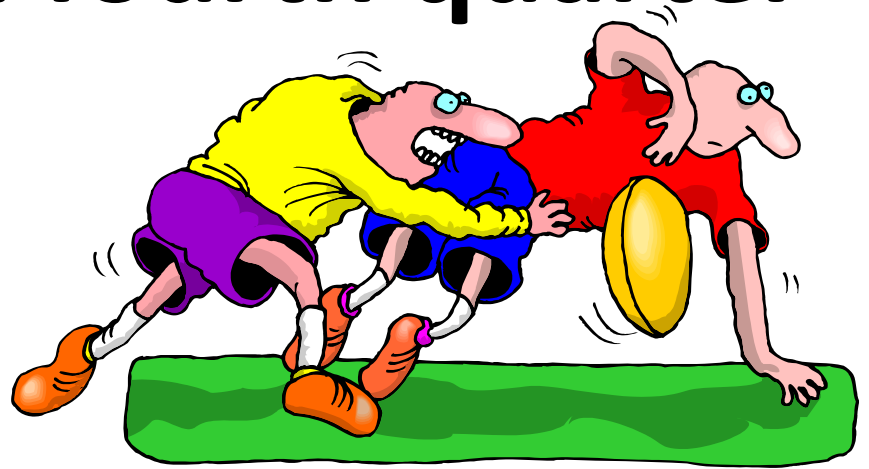


*Choose the order.*

- Identify the questions that can be answered quickly.
- Save whole-passage questions for last.



# The Game Plan: fourth quarter



*Tackle the questions.*

- Answer questions as you encounter them in text.
- Use process of elimination actively.
- Realize that you don't have to read the entire passage to answer most of the questions.

# Consider the choices line-up.

- a) distractor*
- b) literalist misread*
- c) careless misread*
- d) almost right*
- e) best*



# Select the MVP answer

- *Look for distractors.*
- *Exclude irrelevant options.*
- *Focus on central word (often noun) of answer choice.*
- *Notice choices that are opposing.*
- *Eliminate choices that are synonyms.*
- *Half wrong is all wrong.*
- *Note + or – connotation of answer choices.*
- *Distinguish between what's stated and suggested.*



# Question Line-Up

## Detail Questions

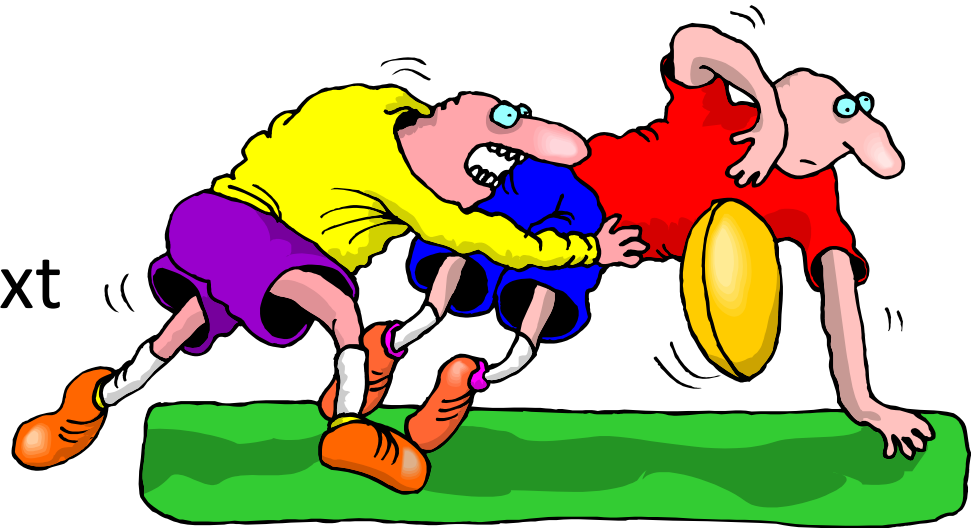
- *focus on specific sentences, phrases, or words*
- *focus on particular literary devices and rhetorical strategies*

## General Comprehension Questions

- *overall tone*
- *passage is primarily concerned with*
- *throughout the passage*
- *speaker's character throughout*
- *central idea*
- *primary literary device*

# Question-Type Rankings

1. meaning (*inferred or interpreted*)
2. characterization
3. speaker's identity, perceptions, or attitude
4. literary techniques
5. tone
6. vocabulary in context
7. rhetorical purpose
8. diction
9. organization (*order or structure*) and shift/change
10. pronoun/object reference
11. syntax



# Watch the Game Clock

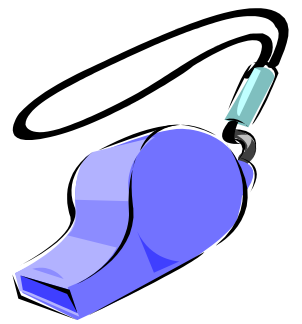


*60 minutes total*

*4 or 5 passages*

- Knowing the test format and learning time-management skills are crucial for a high score on the AP exam!

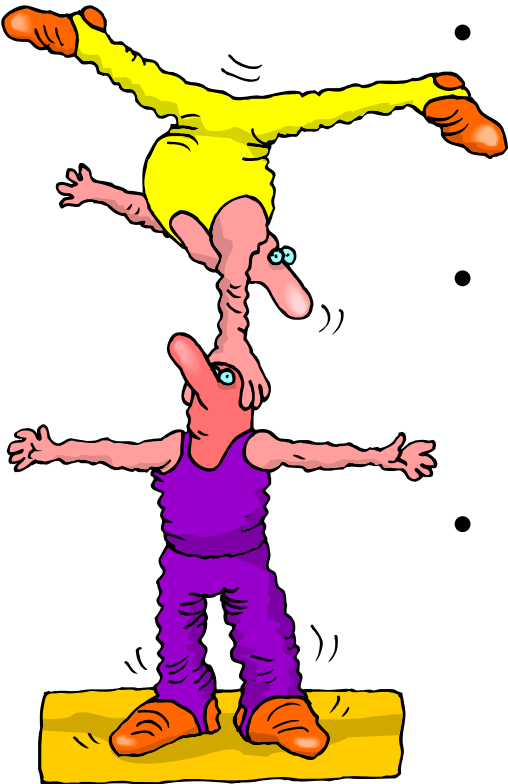
# One-Passage Sprints



- 1 minute: Mark questions and passage. (Answer questions for homework.)
- 2 minute: Mark questions and passage; record 2 clues/ideas gleaned from questions.
- 3 minute: Mark questions and passage; choose order in which to answer questions.
- 5 minutes: Mark questions and passage; answer 2-3 questions (that don't require reading the whole passage).
- 15 minutes: Mark questions and passage; answer as many questions as possible within time limit.

# Teamwork for Higher Scores

- **20 minutes (small group):**  
Work cooperatively to mark and answer questions for one passage. Everyone in the group must be able to explain the reasoning and evidence for each answer choice.
- **10 min. (individual) + 10 min. (small group):**  
Answer questions for one passage. Then, come to consensus as to best answer.
- **20 minutes (small group):**  
Start with the correct answers. Find evidence in passage to prove that correct answers are the best.
- **60 minutes (small group):**  
Choose a passage from current text and write twelve AP questions, including verb, question type, and modifiers.





# Scorekeeping

*Students log their progress with M-C questions. Guide students to know what types of passages they answer well and which are more challenging.*

- date
- type of passage (prose or poetry)
- time period of passage
- # correct/total #
- percentage
- strategies employed
- difficulties encountered
- changes planned for improvement



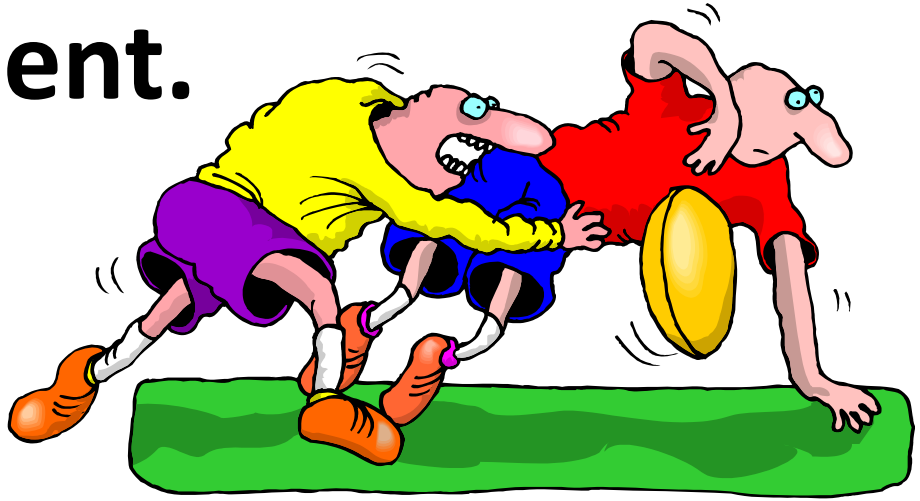
# Training Tips

*Students self-assess to determine strengths and weaknesses AND practice to improve.*



- Keep an individualized vocabulary log.
- **Create multiple-choice questions.**  
**Revise multiple-choice so that assessment is a learning experience;** prove the best answer with textual evidence.
- Work as a team in Socratic seminar; explain thinking process to teammates; convince each other with textual evidence.

# Know the opponent.

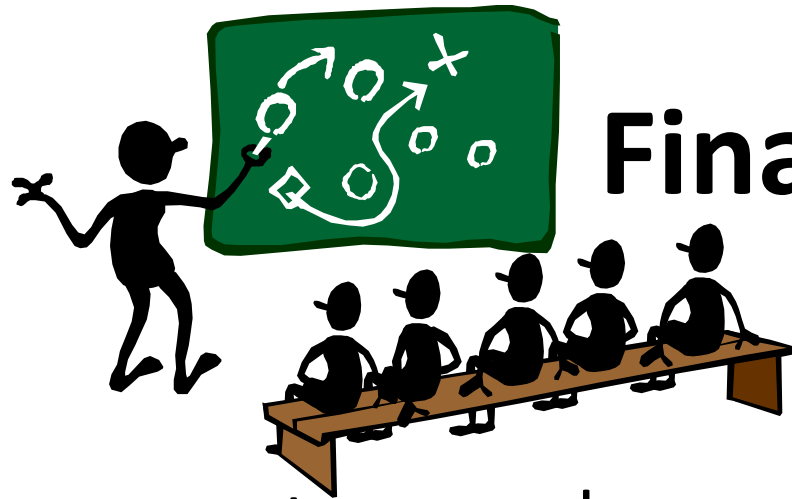


- Coach students to understand the test by writing their own questions.
- Consider this individual or group activity as an effective reading check or analysis assignment for novel and play reading.
- Teacher assigns verb, question type, and modifier.

# Revise to improve game strategy.

2009 AP Exam question 25:

“The Albuquerque Graveyard” is a reflective narrative that comments on thematic issues of identity, social isolation, and bitter grief. By *recounting* one of the speaker’s repeated trips to visit the burial plots of members of his black community, Wright highlights how the speaker *identifies himself* with “the familiar names” whom he “recognize[es]” as “small heroes” for the role that they played in shaping his character. *Contemplating* his own seclusion which parallels that of the “dead” he *travels* to visit, the speaker describes the setting details of his trip as he “wake[s] before sunrise, take[s] three buses,” and “walk[s] two blocks” to find the graves of those he mourns who lie “at the rear of the cemetery.” Describing the plot of his physical *journey* as he walks and “stop[s]” at specific graves to remember the individuals buried there—mirroring his *emotional voyage*—the speaker *reflects* upon his and his fellow African-Americans’ inability to escape the cycle of social segregation. He *thinks* about the fact that he has made this trip for “so many years,” emphasizing that time has not changed his desire “to curse and rage” about their shared separation, which he “call[s] [his] own.” Though the poem is elegiac in nature, it is set in an urban rather than a pastoral environment, and it is a lyric rather than a dramatic poem because it is focused not of the interaction between characters but on the *introspection* of the speaker.



# Final Coaching Tips

- Encourage teamwork—especially first semester.
- Build towards independence.
- Practice often: twice a month first semester, weekly second semester.
- Use questions beyond College Board (*Applied Practice, D & S Marketing, 5 Steps to a 5, Cliff's, Barron's, Princeton Review*).
- Administer 2-3 full multiple-choice tests so that students are comfortable on the playing field.