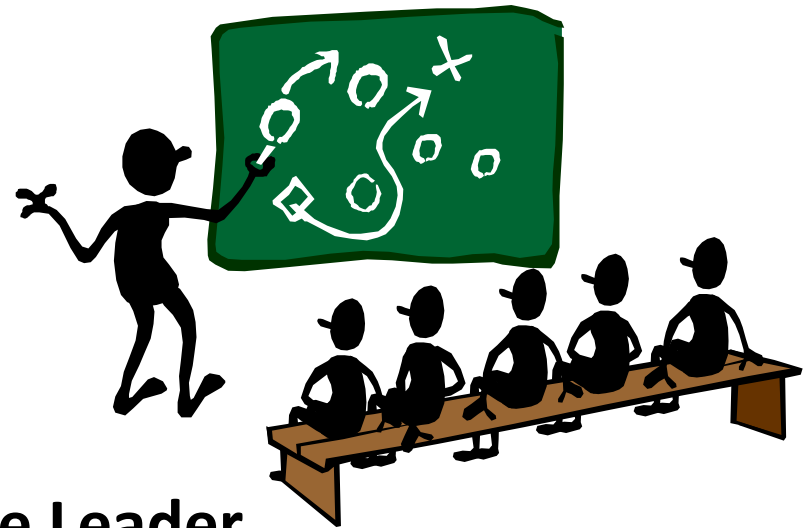


Coaching Students to Score on the AP Literature Exam Multiple-Choice Section



Lisa Boyd

Instructional Lead Teacher

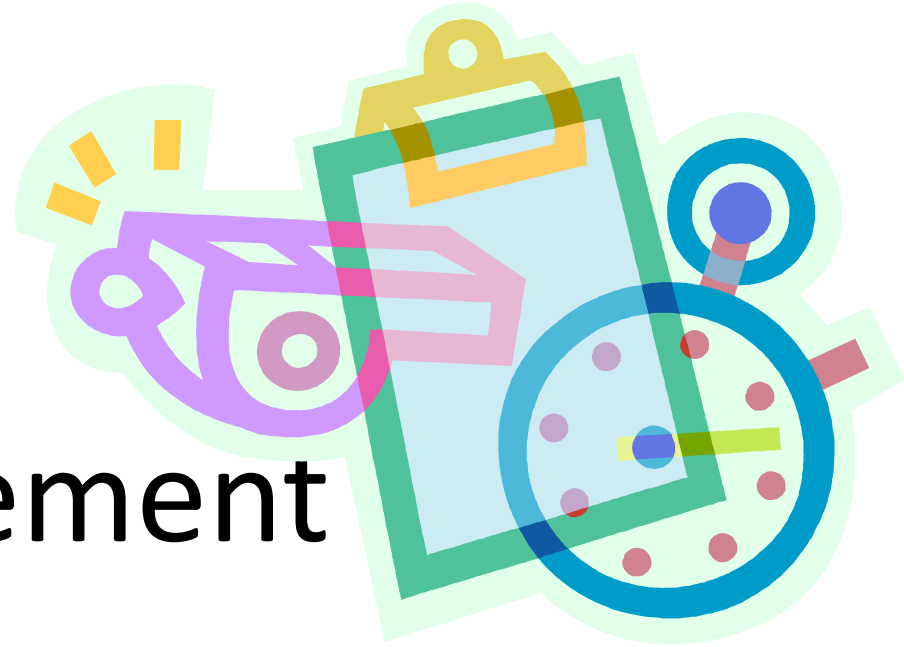
College Board AP Literature Exam Table Leader

2012 Georgia Teacher of the Year Finalist

Luella High School

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.*

- **Circle** verbs—and their modifiers.
- Underline the focus.
- Draw **rectangles** 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:

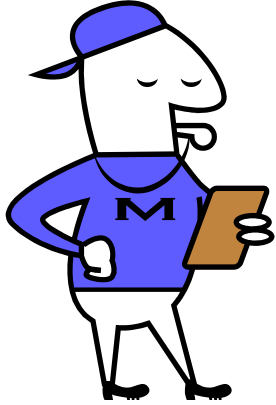
- *clearly*
- *chiefly*
- *comparatively*
- *directly*
- *explicitly*
- *extensively*
- *figuratively*
- *in context*
- *most*
- *obviously*
- *probably*
- *primarily*
- *strongly*
- *EXCEPT*
- *LEAST*
- *NOT*

The Game Plan: second quarter

Mark the passage.

- Underline or bracket sentences, phrases, or words specifically identified in questions.
- Write reading clues in the margins.

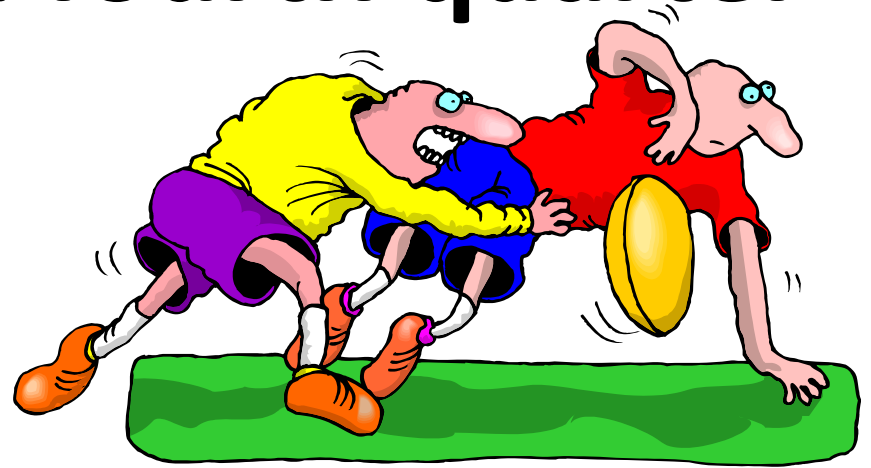
The Game Plan: third quarter



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.

Select the MVP answer

- *Look for distractors.*
- *Notice choices that are opposing.*
- *Exclude irrelevant options.*
- *Eliminate choices that are synonyms.*
- *Half wrong is all wrong.*
- *Distinguish between what's stated and suggested.*



Question Line-Up

Detail Questions

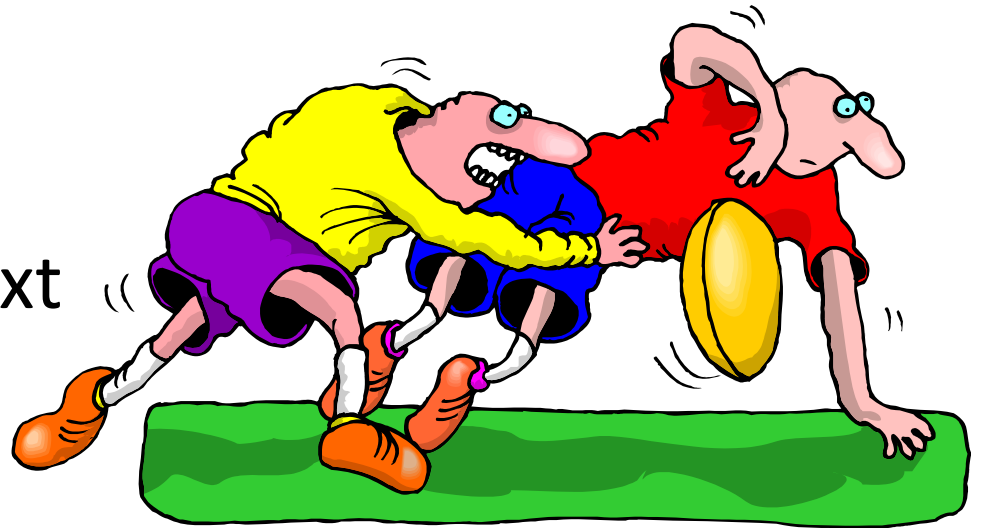
- *focus on specific sentences, phrases, or words*
- *focus on particular literary devices and rhetorical strategies*

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 Clock

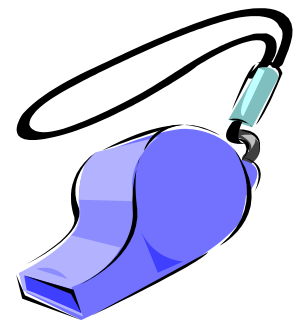


60 minutes total

4 or 5 passages

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

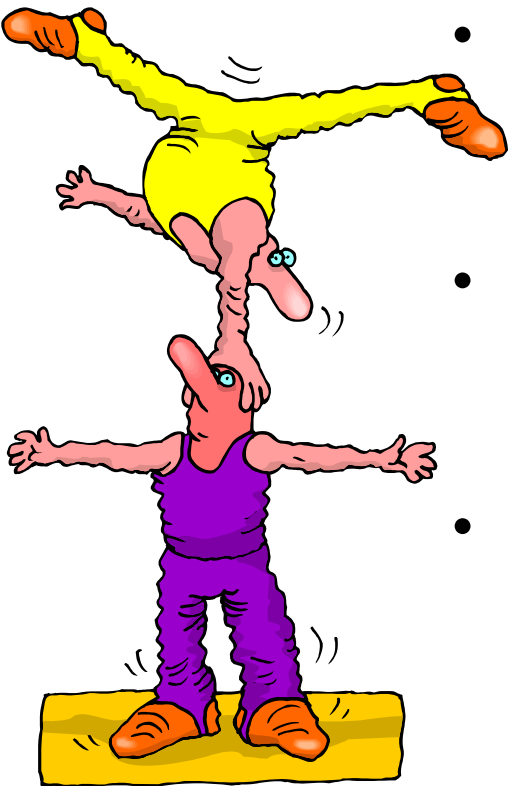
One-Passage Sprints



- 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

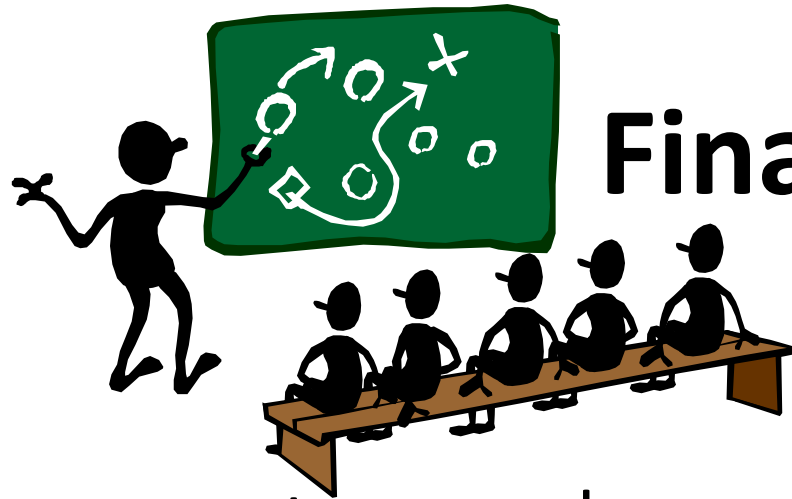


Training Tips

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



- Keep an individualized vocabulary log.
- Create multiple-choice questions.
Teacher assigns verb, question type, and modifier.
(effective reading check assignment)
- Prove that the best answer with textual evidence.
- Revise multiple-choice so that assessment is a learning experience.
- Work as a team; explain thinking process to teammates; convince each other with textual evidence.



Final Coaching Tips

- Encourage teamwork—especially first semester.
- Build towards independence.
- Practice often: 2-3 times 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.