

# Chapter 3

## ABOUT THE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS RELATED TO POETRY

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### Test-Taking Strategy

*To earn an overall score of at least 3, you only need to answer 50 to 60 percent of the multiple-choice questions correctly (depending on the total number of questions).*

As you learned in Chapter 2, Section I of the Advanced Placement test asks 50 to 55 multiple-choice questions about prose and poetry. Many people, not just students, shy away from poetry because they think it is too difficult, too obscure, too irrelevant, or too emotional. However, poetry shares many characteristics with prose. Both create an imaginative statement through language. Both have certain elements in common, such as speaker or narrator, point of view, tone, style, and theme.

However, there are important differences between the two forms of literature. Economy of words, imagery, rhythm, and sound define poetry. Because of these elements, you must read poetry differently. This chapter presents strategies for reading a poem so you can understand it and answer questions about it correctly. In addition, the chapter will remind you of the strategies for answering multiple-choice questions that you learned in Chapter 2, which you can also apply to the questions about poetry selections.

At least two selections in Section I will be poems. The poetry you will find on the examination will probably be more difficult than the prose selections. (For that reason alone, you may wish to answer the prose selections first, saving the poetry for later.) However, by using the suggestions offered here about reading poetry and answering questions about it, you may find the poetry questions easier than you anticipated.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACING POETRY QUESTIONS

### READING A POEM—CAREFULLY

- Remember that the language of poems is compact and economical, with every word of a poem carrying part of the impact and meaning.
- You must bring your own experience to a poem as well as what you know about literature.
- If possible, read a poem four times.

- The first two times you read a poem, read it sentence by sentence, not line by line. If you focus your reading on line endings and ignore a poem's syntax (word arrangement), you may become confused.
- The first time, read it straight through. You might consider this your skimming stage. Do not worry about strange words or difficult passages. You are looking for the "layout" of the poem.
- When you read the poem the second time, take more time and care. Now deal with obscure language and confusing sentences. After you have finished this second reading, you should have a good understanding of what the poet is saying.
- As you read the poem a second time, highlight words, phrases, and sentences that seem significant. However, do not spend a lot of time at this.
- The third time, read the poem aloud, that is, aloud in your mind since you will be in a test situation. Hear the music of the poem and evaluate the contribution of the rhythm, rhyme, and sound to the meaning. This information will deepen your understanding of the poem.
- Finally, during your last read you should paraphrase the poem. Again, in a test situation you cannot take the time to write out your paraphrase, but you can "write" it in your mind. This will help you solidify your understanding of the poem.

## UNDERSTANDING THE POEM

### Note

*Most of the multiple-choice questions test how carefully you read and how well you interpret.*

- If a poem has a title, consider it carefully. Some titles may tell you nothing, while others tell you exactly what the poem is about. A third type of title hints at the content or the setting. You may not be sure what the theme will be, but a title might suggest the subject the poet has chosen to write about. Think about what the title tells you about the selection.
- Use the footnotes. They may help you understand an archaic word or explain a difficult reference.
- Ask yourself what the individual words mean and what each word suggests. This is important for words that are unfamiliar or words used in unfamiliar ways. Consider the implications of familiar words used in unfamiliar ways. How do they contribute to the imagery and impact of the poem?
- Figure out *who* or *what* is speaking. Rarely are the speaker and the poet one and the same. Ask yourself who is inside and who is outside the poem. Notice how pronouns are used. Is the poem written in the first person, second person, or third person?

- Quickly establish the poem's setting and situation. Always figure out as much as you can about the *where* and the *when* of a poetry passage.
- Determine the subject of the poem. In other words, figure out the general or specific topic that the poem presents.
- Figure out the theme (main idea). Ask yourself what general or specific ideas the poem explores. Decide what the writer is trying to tell you.
- Identify the conventions of poetry used in the selection. Determine how the poet uses literary devices and figurative language. Understanding these will help clarify meaning for you.

Determining the information as suggested in these eight steps can prove difficult, and a great deal of thoughtful work can be involved. However, if you follow these steps as you read a poem, you will have an excellent understanding of that poem. Practicing the steps in this book will make unraveling the meaning of poems easier on the day of the test.

## ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

The following two strategies are especially effective when working with a poem.

- When reading a poem to find an answer, read the phrases around the reference. A line or two before and a line or two after should be sufficient to understand the context.
- Do not be too concerned about scansion since there are only a few questions about it on the test. Check "meter" and "feet" in the *Quick Review of Literary Terms*, p. 217.

Virtually everything we said in Chapter 2 about multiple-choice questions for prose can be applied to poetry questions.

- Remember to scan the selections to prioritize the order in which you choose to tackle them.
- There are six types of multiple-choice questions: main-idea, detail, inference, definition, tone or purpose, and form. You may also find one or two questions about grammar and culture.
- When answering a main-idea question, the correct choice must be entirely true and include as much relevant information as possible. The answer that is most complete is the one to choose.

- You must be able to find evidence in the selection or cited portions to support your answer.
- When answering questions about the meaning of words or phrases, substitute your choice in the sentence or line.
- Answer questions in the order you wish. If you are not confident, skip difficult questions, and answer the easier ones first.
- Be sure to mark the questions you skip so you can find them later if you have time. Also, be sure to skip the answer oval for that number on the answer sheet.
- Look for consistency in the answers to the questions about a passage. If a choice seems contradictory to other answers you have given, rethink that choice.

**Study Strategy**

*Read all the explanations in the “Answer Key and Explanations” sections in this book. You may learn something new about the test or about a piece of literature.*

- Many times, the key to finding the correct answer is to narrow down the choices and make an educated guess. Eliminate some answers by finding those that are obviously unrelated, illogical, or incorrect. Having reduced the number of choices, you can make an educated guess from among the remaining possibilities. Use the techniques presented in the chart below to reduce the number of choices.

| <b>STRATEGIES FOR ANSWERING OBJECTIVE QUESTIONS/<br/>MAKING EDUCATED GUESSES</b> |  |
|--|--|
| <b>ANSWER CHOICE</b>   | <b>REASON TO ELIMINATE</b>   |
| 1. too narrow  | too small a section of the selection covered, based on the question  |
| 2. too broad   | an area wider than the selection covered, based on the question  |
| 3. irrelevant  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nothing to do with the passage</li> <li>• relevant to the selection but not the question</li> </ul>           |
| 4. incorrect   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• distortion of the facts in the selection</li> <li>• contradiction of the facts in the selection</li> </ul>    |
| 5. illogical   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not supported by facts in the passage</li> <li>• not supported by cited passage from the selection</li> </ul> |
| 6. similar choices   | <b>GO BACK AND REVIEW 1-5 TO TEASE OUT THE DIFFERENCES.</b>  |
| 7. <i>not/except</i>   | answers that correctly represent the selection   |

The *not/except* questions are tricky. As you go through each answer, ask yourself, “Is this statement true about the selection?” If yes, cross it out, and keep going until you find a choice that you can answer “no” to.

## **PRACTICING**

Read the poem “La Belle Dame Sans Merci” by John Keats. Jot down your answers to the questions in the margin or on a separate piece of paper. In choosing answers, apply the recommendations and strategies you have just learned.

If you do not understand a question, check the explanation immediately. You may refer to the answers question by question, or you may wish to score the entire section at one time. No matter which method you choose, read all the explanations. The reasoning involved may point out concepts or details that you missed, and the explanations will show you how the strategies can work for you. This poem is not easy, so you may not be able to answer every question correctly. That is why it is good practice.

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS ON POETRY

**Directions:** This section consists of selections of literature and questions on their content, style, and form. After you have read each passage, choose the answer that best answers the question.

### Test-Taking Strategy

*Review the directions each time you begin a Practice Exercise so you will not have to spend time puzzling over them on the day of the test.*

Questions 1 through 12 refer to the following poem. Read the poem carefully and then choose the answers to the questions.

### La Belle Dame Sans Merci

- Line O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,  
Alone and palely loitering?  
The sedge has withered from the lake,  
And no birds sing.
- 5 O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,  
So haggard and so woe-begon?  
The squirrel's granary is full,  
And the harvest's done.
- I see a lily on thy brow,  
10 With anguish moist and fever dew,  
And on thy cheeks a fading rose  
Fast withereth too.
- I met a lady in the meads,\*  
Full beautiful—a faery's child,  
15 Her hair was long, her foot was light,  
And her eyes were wild.
- I made a garland for her head,  
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone,\*\*  
She looked at me as she did love,  
20 And made sweet moan.
- I set her on my pacing steed,  
And nothing else saw all day long,  
For sidelong would she bend and sing  
A faery's song.
- 25 She found me roots of relish sweet,  
And honey wild, and manna dew,  
And sure in language strange she said—

\* meadow

\*\* sweet-smelling plant

“I love thee true.”

She took me to her elfin grot,  
30 And there she wept, and sighed full sore,  
And there I shut her wild wild eyes  
With kisses four.

And there she lullèd me asleep,  
And there I dreamed—Ah! Woe betide!  
35 The latest dream I ever dreamed  
On the cold hill’s side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,  
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;  
They cried—“La Belle Dame Sans Merci  
40 Hath thee in thrall!”

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,  
With horrid warning gaped wide,  
On the cold hill’s side.

And this is why I sojourn here,  
45 Alone and palely loitering  
Though the sedge has withered from the lake,  
And no birds sing.

—John Keats

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|--|---|
| <p>1. What is one of the themes of this poem?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(A) Experience destroys innocence.</li><li>(B) One should not trust magical beings.</li><li>(C) Death is similar to a nightmare or unpleasant dream.</li><li>(D) Medieval women had no pity.</li><li>(E) Beauty enslaves men.</li></ul> <p>2. Which of the following does not characterize the lady?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(A) She is extremely beautiful.</li><li>(B) Her hair is very long.</li><li>(C) She sings enchanting songs.</li><li>(D) She is the daughter of a heavenly being.</li><li>(E) The lady has bedecked herself with flowers.</li></ul> | <p>3. In the context of the poem, what is “relish”?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(A) Condiment</li><li>(B) Enjoyment</li><li>(C) A food stuff</li><li>(D) Magical potion</li><li>(E) Faery poison</li></ul> <p>4. When the poet writes “manna dew,” he is using what type of literary device?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(A) Metaphor</li><li>(B) Cacophony</li><li>(C) Apostrophe</li><li>(D) Hyperbole</li><li>(E) Allusion</li></ul> |
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5. How does setting reinforce the meaning and the mood of the poem?
- (A) The knight's gambol in the woods creates a sense of playfulness.
  - (B) Autumn suggests decay and decline.
  - (C) Pale knights, princes, and kings imply death.
  - (D) Flowers, woods, and herbs create a sense of nature, and thus a romantic mood.
  - (E) Warriors and knights are soldiers, and the implication is violence.
6. How do the people in the knight's dream relate to his present condition?
- (A) The people are earlier victims of the lady and demonstrate his condition as a new victim.
  - (B) They represent the end of the chivalric hierarchy.
  - (C) The people represent rejected suitors for the lady's hand.
  - (D) They are her guardians.
  - (E) They are foils for the knight by contrasting with his youth and vigor.
7. Why is the knight "alone and pale"?
- (A) The knight is terrified by his experiences in the woods.
  - (B) He is dead.
  - (C) He is heartbroken because the lady rejected him.
  - (D) The knight is shocked by the lady's cruelty.
  - (E) He believes that he has seen ghosts.
8. This selection is an example of which two kinds of poetry?
- (A) Narrative and ballad
  - (B) Elegy and lyric
  - (C) Romantic and narrative
  - (D) Ballad and elegy
  - (E) Sonnet and lyric
9. Stanzas in this poem are
- (A) tercets
  - (B) couplets
  - (C) quatrains
  - (D) septets
  - (E) cinquains
10. The meter of the poem is
- (A) iambic pentameter
  - (B) iambic tetrameter
  - (C) iambic trimeter
  - (D) alternating iambic pentameter and tetrameter
  - (E) alternating iambic tetrameter and iambic trimeter
11. What is indicated by the change in person between stanzas 4-6 and 7-9?
- (A) The speaker of the poem changes.
  - (B) The switch foreshadows doom.
  - (C) The lady's point of view is intriguing.
  - (D) Humans need to believe in the occult world and mythical beings.
  - (E) The change indicates that control has switched from the knight to the lady.
12. The repetitions in the first, second, and final stanzas serve what purpose?
- (A) The repeating phrases indicate that the knight understands his predicament.
  - (B) They serve no actual purpose.
  - (C) The repetitions add to the musicality.
  - (D) They are examples of symbolism.
  - (E) They are the refrain.

**Turn to the next page. There you will find the explanations clarifying the reasoning behind the correct answers and showing you why the other choices are incorrect. Notice the techniques used to answer each type of question.**



## ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATIONS

| Quick-Score Answers |      |      |       |
|---------------------|------|------|-------|
| 1. A                | 4. E | 7. B | 10. E |
| 2. D                | 5. B | 8. A | 11. E |
| 3. D                | 6. A | 9. C | 12. A |

### Test-Taking Strategy

*This is a main-idea question so you need to look for the most complete answer.*

### Test-Taking Strategy

*For not/except questions, ask if the answer is true. If it is, cross it out. It's not the right answer.*

### Review Strategy

*See the "Quick Review of Literary Terms," p. 217.*

- The correct answer is (A).** This is a surprisingly difficult question because all the answers, except the correct one, have some words similar to those in the poem. Magic, choice (B); dreams, choice (C); medieval people, choice (D); and beauty, choice (E); all appear directly or indirectly in the piece. The key is to recognize that a "theme" question is asking for a response that is pertinent to all elements of a poem. The only response that meets that criterion is choice (A).
- The correct answer is (D).** First, notice that this is a "not" question. That means that all the answers will be *true* except for the *correct* one. A quick scan of the poem shows that there are references to her beauty, choice (A); long hair, choice (B); singing, choice (C); and flowers, choice (E). The only answer that is *not true* is the *correct* one, choice (D).
- The correct answer is (D).** The first thing to do is to find the reference. It is in the first line of the seventh stanza. If it is not immediately apparent that the answer is a magical potion, then try substituting the answers to eliminate those that do not fit the lines or image. Although relish is a condiment, food products, choices (A) and (C), are not suitable for the image that Keats is creating. Enjoyment, choice (B), does not fit the line if you substitute the answer in the line. The author is not trying to kill the speaker, choice (E).
- The correct answer is (E).** This is a reference to a literary and religious fact (food from heaven) that you would be expected to know; hence, it is an allusion. Metaphor, choice (A), states that something is something else. Cacophony, choice (B), is a harsh or dissonant sound. Apostrophe, choice (C), is directly addressing an imaginary, dead, or absent person. Hyperbole, choice (D), is exaggeration for humor.

5. **The correct answer is (B).** To select the correct answer, you need to bring together two items. First, you know that the poem has a somber, as opposed to a cheerful, mood. Second, the last two lines of the second stanza define the setting as autumn (“harvest’s done”). The first piece of information eliminates choices (A) and (D). The second piece eliminates choices (C) and (E) because they do not mention the setting. The only response remaining is choice (B).
6. **The correct answer is (A).** The simplest way to address this question is to review the section of the poem dealing with the dream. Beginning with the ninth stanza, the speaker describes his dream. You will quickly see that choice (A) is the only one of the five possibilities that reflects the thoughts of the closing stanzas. Choice (B) is irrelevant to the poem. There is no indication that the lady rejected the other people, choice (C), but rather that she treated them as she has treated the speaker. Choices (D) and (E) contradict the poem.
7. **The correct answer is (B).** At no time does Keats say outright that the knight is dead, and yet it is important for you to recognize that is what the author is saying. He does so by references to the knight’s being alone and pale. Do not get tripped up because you gave only a cursory look at the poetry selections. If you did so in this case, it would be easy to select one of the other answers, because each has some relation to Keats’ wording, but not his meaning.
8. **The correct answer is (A).** In this selection, the poem is a type of narrative called a ballad. A ballad is a long narrative poem covering a single dramatic episode. An elegy is a formal poem focusing on death or mortality, and a lyric is a melodious, imaginative poem, usually short and personal, choice (B). This poem is about death, but it is not formal, rather it is fanciful. Romantic, choice (C), is a description of a style but not a type. Only part of choice (D) is correct, ballad, while none of choice (E) is correct.
9. **The correct answer is (C).** Again, this question involves literary terms that should be familiar to you. Some of these terms may require that you review your literature textbooks. This poem has four-line stanzas called quatrains. A tercet, choice (A), is three lines. A couplet, choice (B), is two lines. A septet, choice (D), is seven lines. A cinquain is five lines.

### Test-Taking Strategy

*Do not rely on your memory.  
Go back to the selection.*

### Test-Taking Strategy

*In an answer with two parts,  
be sure both parts are  
correct. A partially correct  
answer is a partially  
incorrect answer—and a  
quarter-point deduction.*

10. **The correct answer is (E).** This is the third consecutive question about literary elements. You do not need to remember the meaning of *iambic* (one unstressed syllable followed by one stressed syllable) to answer this question since all choices include it. The lines are of different lengths, so that eliminates the first three choices, which indicate every line in the poem is one length. From your knowledge of Latin prefixes, recall that *tri-* means three, *tetra-* means four, and *penta-* means five. The lines have three and four beats, so that eliminates choice (D).
11. **The correct answer is (E).** Stanzas 4–6 explain what the knight did. In stanzas 7–9 the lady begins to act. The speaker does change in this poem, but that switch occurs between stanzas 3 and 4, so choice (A) is incorrect. Doom is foreshadowed throughout the poem, so choice (B) is incorrect. The lady's viewpoint is not presented, choice (C), because she never functions as speaker. Choice (D) is an incorrect reading of the poem.
12. **The correct answer is (A).** Make an educated guess on this question. Eliminate choice (B) because a question would not be posed if there were no purpose. Eliminate choices (D) and (E) since there is little symbolism and no refrain in the poem. The antecedent of *I* in the final stanzas is the knight who recognizes in the final lines what has happened. Choice (C) is irrelevant.

### Study Strategy

See "Practice Plan for Studying for the AP English Lit Test," p. 7.

Now that you have a sense of the logic involved inacing Section I of the test, try *Practice Exercise 1* and *Practice Exercise 2*. Study the explanations for choosing the correct answers. If you are still unsure of your multiple-choice skills with poetry, continue with *Practice Exercise 3* and *Practice Exercise 4*.

**PRACTICE EXERCISE 1****MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS**

**Directions:** This section consists of selections of literature and questions on their content, style, and form. After you have read each passage, choose the answer that best answers the question.

**Test-Taking Strategy**

*Review the directions each time you begin a Practice Exercise so you will not have to spend time puzzling them out on the day of the test.*

**Questions 1 through 10** refer to the following poem. Read the poem carefully and then choose the answers to the questions.

**The Chambered Nautilus**

- line This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,  
Sails the unshadowed main—  
The venturous bark that flings  
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings  
5 In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,  
And coral reefs lie bare,  
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.
- Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;  
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!  
10 And every chambered cell,  
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,  
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,  
Before thee lies revealed—  
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!
- 15 Year after year beheld the silent toil  
That spread his lustrous coil;  
Still, as the spiral grew,  
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,  
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,  
20 Built up its idle door,  
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.
- Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,  
Child of the wandering sea,  
Cast from her lap, forlorn!

25 From thy dead lips a clearer note is born  
 Than ever Triton blew from wreathèd horn!  
 While on mine ear it rings,  
 Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings:

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
 30 As the swift seasons roll!  
 Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
 Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
 Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
 Till thou at length art free,  
 35 Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

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|---|---|
| <p>1. What message does the speaker take from the shell?</p> <p>(A) The sea is a beautiful place.<br/>             (B) Strive to live in a manner that makes tomorrow better than today.<br/>             (C) Birth, death, and rebirth is the cycle of life.<br/>             (D) A nautilus can circumnavigate the globe.<br/>             (E) People need to protect themselves from the problems of the world.</p> <p>2. What does the word “bark” (line 3) mean?</p> <p>(A) Flotsam<br/>             (B) Sea foam<br/>             (C) The sound of surf, similar to a dog’s cry<br/>             (D) Jetsam<br/>             (E) A type of boat</p> <p>3. What does the speaker imagine when he sees the shell?</p> <p>(A) The voice of God speaking to him<br/>             (B) The creature’s slow death<br/>             (C) The marvels of nature<br/>             (D) The oceans of the world<br/>             (E) Places where the nautilus lived</p> | <p>4. What is it about the chambered nautilus that makes it appropriate for this poem’s message?</p> <p>(A) The sea creature has died.<br/>             (B) The clearly defined chambers mark the progress of the animal’s growth.<br/>             (C) The nautilus is indigenous to oceans near the poet’s home in Massachusetts.<br/>             (D) The nautilus was highly prized for its beautiful shell.<br/>             (E) As a scientist, as well as a writer, Holmes was particularly interested in marine life.</p> <p>5. Based upon the author’s words, which of the following is the best description of the shape of the chambered nautilus?</p> <p>(A) Elongated tube<br/>             (B) Irregular<br/>             (C) Oblong<br/>             (D) Spherical<br/>             (E) Flat</p> |
|---|---|

6. How does Holmes compare the growth of the nautilus to the development of human beings?
- (A) The nautilus creates a new chamber every year; humans do not.
  - (B) The voice tells the speaker to build more mansions.
  - (C) People's souls should outgrow their constraints and expand until completely free.
  - (D) The death of any of God's creatures, in this case the nautilus, is as important a loss as the death of a person.
  - (E) Even in death, the nautilus speaks to the soul.
7. Oliver Wendell Holmes would agree with which of the following statements?
- (A) It is important to keep growing throughout life.
  - (B) Study and appreciate creatures from nature.
  - (C) Build greater and more elegant personal edifices.
  - (D) Listen to the inner voice represented by the shell.
  - (E) Love all God's creations, including human beings.
8. Which of the following is not true regarding the meter of the first stanza?
- (A) The stanza is composed in iambic pentameter.
  - (B) The first line includes a trochee.
  - (C) Lines 4 and 5 are composed in iambic pentameter.
  - (D) Line 6 is composed in iambic trimeter.
  - (E) Line 7 is composed in iambic hexameter.
9. What figure of speech is found in this line from the second stanza: "As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell"?
- (A) Simile
  - (B) Metaphor
  - (C) Hyperbole
  - (D) Oxymoron
  - (E) Personification
10. What are the two classical allusions found in this poem?
- (A) A Jules Verne ship and a Greek sea god
  - (B) Holy scripture and enchanting sea nymphs
  - (C) A rainbow and the sun god
  - (D) A Greek god of the sea and Roman architecture
  - (E) Enchanting sea nymphs and a Greek sea god

## ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATIONS

| Quick-Score Answers |      |      |      |       |
|---------------------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. B                | 3. E | 5. D | 7. A | 9. E  |
| 2. E                | 4. B | 6. C | 8. A | 10. E |

### Test-Taking Strategy

*This is a form of main-idea question.*

### Test-Taking Strategy

*Sometimes reading the words around a reference will help you figure out what the cited word or phrase means.*

### Test-Taking Strategy

*Do not rely on your memory. Go back to the poem.*

- The correct answer is (B).** Themes or messages are often contained in the first or last stanzas of lyric poetry. In the last stanza of this poem, the lines express the point of striving for continued improvement day to day. Choices (A) and (C) may be true, but they are not relevant. Choices (D) and (E) may or may not be true, but they are also irrelevant.
- The correct answer is (E).** Do not get caught choosing a simple definition like a dog's cry, choice (C). If you read above and below the line, you would see a parallel reference to a ship and a reference to purple wings, possibly sails. Then try eliminating answers by substituting the choices until you can select one that makes sense. Flotsam, choice (A), is the wreckage of a ship or odds and ends. Jetsam, choice (D), is equipment or cargo tossed overboard when a boat is in danger. Choice (B) might be correct, but foam does not have wings.
- The correct answer is (E).** The answer to this question is found in the first stanza. For the casual reader, all of the answers appear to have some relation to the subject of the poem. A careful reading will show you that only choice (E) is actually addressed by the poet.
- The correct answer is (B).** An understanding of the theme of the poem that you were asked about in question 1 will quickly lead you to the correct answer to this question. Some of the answers have elements that are true, but Holmes selected this shell because its various compartments make his point that we should strive to improve.
- The correct answer is (D).** You could use your knowledge of marine life and the appearance of a chambered nautilus to answer this question. Or you could check the poem (line 17) for the direct answer.

**Test-Taking Strategy**

*Look for consistency in your answers in a series of questions dealing with the same topic.*

**Test-Taking Strategy**

*See the "Quick Review of Literary Terms," p. 217.*

**Test-Taking Strategy**

*Be sure both parts of an answer are correct. A partially correct answer is a partially incorrect answer—and a quarter-point deduction.*

6. **The correct answer is (C).** This question has similarities with questions 1 and 4. An understanding of the poem's theme will direct you to the correct answer. Note that this is true even if you do not recall the specific reference in the question (lines 34–35). The only response consistent with the theme is choice (C). Choices (A) and (D) are not relevant. Choice (B) is too literal a reading, and choice (E) is too interpretative.
7. **The correct answer is (A).** The need to understand a poem's message is reinforced in this question. Holmes is speaking of the continuous growth of an individual throughout the individual's life. None of the remaining responses is closely allied with the poem's theme.
8. **The correct answer is (A).** Questions such as this test your ability to apply literary terms and conventions. In this case, the author uses iambic pentameter through much of his work.
9. **The correct answer is (E).** Holmes asks the reader to picture the actions of the chambered nautilus as if it were human. This is personification. A simile, choice (A), compares items using *as* or *like*. A metaphor, choice (B), states that something is something else. Hyperbole, choice (C), is the use of exaggeration to create humor. Oxymoron, choice (D), uses contradictory words or phrases.
10. **The correct answer is (E).** The author alludes to Sirens, who are sea nymphs, and Triton, a Greek sea god. These are both classical allusions. Do not get caught by choice (A). Jules Verne's ship, the *Nautilus*, is an allusion, but would not be considered a *classical* allusion. The Bible, choice (B), is not mentioned in the poem, nor is a rainbow or a sun god, choice (C). None of choice (D) is included.