

AP Literature & Composition

SSS#1

Multiple Choice



NATIONAL
MATH + SCIENCE
INITIATIVE



THE
COLORADO
EDUCATION
INITIATIVE

Wordsworth's "There Was a Boy"

and

Baldwin's *Go Tell it On the Mountain*

AP English Literature Mastering Multiple Choice

Part 1: 52-55 multiple-choice questions (45% of score) done in one hour.

Step One: Quickly survey **ALL** of the reading passages and count the number of questions attached to each one. Start with the passage that you feel you understand the best. Then, after you have worked through that passage, attack the passage that is your second favorite, and so on. This means that you may complete the last passage first if you think that is your best passage, while leaving the first passage for last (because you feel it is your weakest). If you choose to skip passages, pay very careful attention to your bubbles on your scantron – make sure you are bubbling the correct answer for the correct question. Check often!

Step Two: Read the question stems (but not the answers) for the passages you will do first. (This works for some, not all.)

Step Three: Read the passage with pencil in hand to mark things like:

- The main point
- Significant shifts in tone or subject
- Key verbal markers (but, although, for example, now, thus, first)
- Telling supporting examples
- Examples of literary devices

You need to read actively. Keep your pencil engaged and the mind will focus.

Step Four: Aggressively attack the questions. Mark out obviously wrong answers and process of eliminate down to the BEST answer. It is a skill-based test: there is little chance that you will have seen the passages before, but the questions the test asks focus on higher-level reading skills.

Step Five: Do not linger, obsess, or dither over any one question. You should move at a brisk, but comfortable pace throughout the questions.

Step Six: With 90 seconds left to go in this one-hour section, pick a letter and bubble in any remaining answers. You should complete the test as thoughtfully as possible for 58-59 minutes and then fill in any remaining empty bubbles in the last 90 seconds. Do not leave any answers blank.

Helpful Reminder One: Until your brain is warm and focused, you will have a tendency to miss questions. So, be very careful with your first five questions of the test and your first couple of questions on a new passage.

Helpful Reminder Two: Students tend to lose focus and confidence during this section of the test. As a result, students will miss a series of questions because of lost concentration and internal doubts. Remember, nobody thinks the test is easy. Your job is to get as many answers right and minimize your misses.

AP English Literature Multiple-Choice Questions - Strategies for Passages

Below are 16 strategies you can use to hone in on the right answer for multiple-choice questions. Remember – the passages on the test will be new to you, but the types of questions asked about those passages will seem very familiar after you practice with the next two activities.

Strategy 1: Read the first and last lines to see how the writer opens and closes the door to the passage’s core concern.

Strategy 2: Pay attention to punctuation to note how the writer has organized the flow of ideas within stanzas/ paragraphs.

Strategy 3: Read around the line number indicated in the question – two lines below if at the start of stanza/ paragraph; one line above and below if in the middle; two lines above if at the end of a stanza/paragraph.

Strategy 4: Play positive and negative with the poem and eliminate the choices that are the opposite of your choice. Example: the speaker’s note is positive, so eliminate all negative tone words like “critical.”

Strategy 5: Play too broad, too narrow, or not mentioned in the passage to eliminate choices.

Strategy 6: Ask “Why would the author write _____? What is she trying to accomplish by _____?”

Strategy 7: How is the passage organized? Where are the shifts in subject or tone that might help me follow the writer’s ideas?

Strategy 8: What words are used in an unusual way or are new to me? Can I use the sentence above and/or below the word to figure it out? Can I substitute choices provided to figure out which choice best replaced an unusual word OR which choice best fills in a gap left between two words in a sentence?

Strategy 9: Look for extremes in the answers (always, never, universally) or “loaded” words and be suspicious of selecting that answer.

Strategy 10: For antecedent questions, look in the middle of the line numbers suggested: often the answer is neither the farthest nor the nearest to the pronoun in the question.

Strategy 11: Make sure ALL parts of your answer are true. Some answers might contain two ideas, one of which is not supported in the passage.

Strategy 12: Rephrase, restate, paraphrase, summary – all are useful to capture the basic thrust of an author’s writing.

Strategy 13: What are the core literary devices used in the passage? How can I use my knowledge of AP vocabulary to quickly eliminate three or even four possible answers?

Strategy 14: Are there any core ironies in the poem? What is the central metaphor of the passage?

Strategy 15: Can I use the title of the passage to give me a sense of the subject or tone of the passage?

Strategy 16: Are there patterns or significant repetitions that I can use to get to the complexity of the poem’s meaning(s)?

Strategizing the Multiple Choice

For this set of questions, you will work in reverse. Reference the strategies on the previous page to complete this assignment. Follow the steps below.

1. Read the question stem and answer choices.
2. Decide which of the AP multiple-choice strategies you should use, given what type of question it is.
3. Identify AT MOST three strategies to correctly answer the question.
4. Read the poem and refine your strategies based on your reading of the poem.
5. Answer the questions.

Use the number of the strategy to fill in the blank space beneath each question.

Example: If the question asks about literary terminology, write 13 on the lines beneath the question.

Questions 1-10 are based on *There Was a Boy* by William Wordsworth.

1. The speaker recounts the experiences of the boy in the poem with
 - A. mock heroic tones
 - B. resentful disdain
 - C. nostalgic reverence
 - D. gently controlled pity
 - E. faint satiric humor

Strategy Used: _____

2. Which of the following illustrates the rhetorical device of apostrophe?
 - A. "ye knew him well, ye cliffs" (line 1)
 - B. "when the earliest stars began/To move" (lines 3-4)
 - C. "with fingers interwoven" (line 7)
 - D. "they would shout/Across the watery vale" (lines 11-12)
 - E. "the voice/Of mountain-torrents" (lines 20-21)

Strategy Used: _____

3. The phrase "Rising or setting" (line 5) modifies which of the following?
 - A. "evening" (line 3)
 - B. "stars" (line 3)
 - C. "edges" (line 4)
 - D. "hills" (line 4)
 - E. "he" (line 5)

Strategy Used: _____

4. As determined by context, which of the following would best fit between “owls” (line 10) and “That” (line 11)?
- A. until
 - B. in
 - C. when
 - D. so
 - E. if

Strategy Used: _____

5. Which of the following is the best rendering of the phrase “concourse wild/Of jocund din” (lines 15-16)?
- A. A deafening clatter of wings
 - B. A tumultuous, loud, gleeful noise
 - C. A painful mixture of sharp sound
 - D. An aggressive, threatening, vocal attack
 - E. A witty and mocking conversation

Strategy Used: _____

6. The word “din” (line 16) is most strongly reinforced by which of the following pairs of lines?
- A. 3 and 4
 - B. 5 and 6
 - C. 9 and 10
 - D. 14 and 15
 - E. 20 and 21

Strategy Used: _____

7. In context, the word “baffled” (line 17) is best interpreted to mean
- A. defied
 - B. confused
 - C. reflected
 - D. strengthened
 - E. induced

Strategy Used: _____

8. The phrase “his best skill” (line 17) is an oblique reference to which of the following?
- A. “To move along the edges” (line 4)
 - B. “would he stand alone” (line 5)
 - C. “with fingers interwoven” (line 7)
 - D. “as through an instrument” (line 9)
 - E. “Blew mimic hootings” (line 10)

Strategy Used: _____

9. The heaven is “uncertain” (line 24) in the sense that it
- A. is a reflection that moves
 - B. is of doubtful existence for the speaker
 - C. is a metaphor for fate
 - D. threatens the speaker
 - E. reflects various colors

Strategy Used: _____

10. The speaker’s experience described in lines 19-25 (“a gentle shock . . . the steady lake”) is best characterized as
- A. A delusion induced by a powerful artist
 - B. A mystical experience resulting from prayer
 - C. A heightened consciousness of the beauty of nature
 - D. An indifference to a force that no longer responds to him
 - E. A growing resentment at his own insignificance

Strategy Used: _____

Now, read the poem slowly and see if there are additional strategies you would want to use to answer the questions based on your reading of the poem. Then, go back and answer the questions.

There Was a Boy

William Wordsworth

- There was boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander! – many a time,
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
5 Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake;
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
10 Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him. – And they would shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call, -- with quivering peals,
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
15 Redoubled and redoubled; concourse wild
Of jocund din! And, when there came a pause
Of silence such as baffled his best skill:
Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
20 Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain-torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
25 Into the bosom of the steady lake.

This passage and the questions that follow it are set up to help you see how to answer multiple-choice questions effectively and efficiently. First, read the passage and mark moments of interest – look for glimpses of the larger purpose. Then, read the questions and the “Attack the Question This Way” suggestions to answer the questions correctly.

The Sunday morning service began when Brother Elisha sat down at the piano and raised a song. This moment and this music had been with John, so it seemed, since he had first drawn
5 breath. It seemed that there had never been a time when he had not known this moment of waiting while the packed church paused – the sisters in white, heads raised, the brothers in blue, heads back; the white caps of the women
10 seeming to glow in the charged air like crowns, the kinky, gleaming beards of the men seeming to be lifted up – and the rustling and the whispering ceased and the children were quiet; perhaps someone coughed, or the sound of a car
15 horn, or a curse from the streets came in; then Elisha hit the keys beginning at once to sing and everybody joined him, clapping their hands, and rising, and beating the tambourines.

The song might be: *Down at the cross where*
20 *my Saviour died!*

Or, Jesus, I'll never forget how you set me free!
Or Lord, hold my hand while I run this race!

They sang with all the strength that was in them, and clapped their hands for joy. There
25 had never been a time when John had not sat watching the saints rejoice with terror in his heart, and wonder. Their singing caused him to believe in the presence of the Lord; indeed, it was no longer a question of belief, because they
30 made that presence real. He did not feel it himself, the joy they felt, yet he could not doubt that it was, for them, the very bread of life – could not doubt it, that is, until it was too late to doubt. Something happened to their faces and

35 their voices, the rhythm of their bodies, and to the air they breathed; it was as though wherever they might be became the upper room, and the Holy Ghost were riding on the air. His father's face, always awful, became
40 more awful now, his father's daily anger was transformed into prophetic wrath. His mother, her eyes raised to heaven, hands arched before her, moving made real for John that patience, that endurance, that long suffering, which he
45 had read of in the Bible and found so hard to imagine.

On Sunday mornings the women all seemed patient, all the men seemed mighty. While John watched, the Power struck someone, a man or
50 woman; they cried out, a long, wordless crying, and, arms outstretched like wings, they began to Shout. Someone moved a chair a little to give them room, the rhythm paused, the singing stopped, only the pounding feet and the
55 clapping hands were heard; then another cry, another dancer, then the tambourines began again, and the voices rose again, and the music swept on again, like fire, or flood, or judgment. Then the church seemed to swell with the
60 Power it held, and, like a planet rocking in space, the temple rocked with the Power of God. John watched, watched the faces, and the weightless bodies, and listened to the timeless cries. One day, so everyone said, this Power
65 would possess him; he would sing and cry as they did now, and dance before his King.

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For each question, read the “Attack the Question this Way” to help you find the correct answer. You should cross out the letters of the choices eliminated and then circle your final answer.

1. The passage is primarily concerned with
 - A. John’s attitude toward the Sunday service
 - B. John’s theories about the power of the Lord
 - C. The impact of music on John’s church
 - D. John’s relationship with his parents
 - E. The role of John’s church in his future

Attack the Question this Way: *You should love this type of question because the answer will be in a couple of places. First, read the first and last sentences of the passage. Most of the time, the author will include the MAIN TOPIC in the introduction and conclusion. If you can’t get it from those places, check out the first and last sentences of each paragraph. Remember, standardized tests love to include answers that are too narrow, too broad, or not supported by the reading. You should be able to **process of eliminate (POE)** to get the right answer.*

2. In lines 13-15, the words “perhaps someone coughed, or the sound of a car horn, or a curse from the street came in” have which of the following?
 - A. They **retard** the tempo of the speaker’s prose
 - B. They **satirize** the faith of the churchgoers
 - C. They **highlight** the distractions that spoil the audience’s concentration
 - D. They **change**, for a moment, the point of view of the speaker
 - E. They **emphasize**, by contrast, the hushed silence in the church

Attack the Question this Way: *You should be able to POE (process of elimination) two of the choices because they are not supported by even a superficial reading of the passage. Then, look at what comes before and after this section of the text. You will see that it separates “like” imagery and details. Finally, check out the verbs for each choice to see if you can eliminate some choices based on verbs alone.*

3. Which of the following best describes the effect produced by the repetition of the phrase “there had never been a time” in lines 5-6 and 24-25.
 - A. It signals to the reader that attending church is an unpleasant event for John
 - B. It emphasizes how vague John’s memory of his youth is
 - C. It establishes the contrast between John’s past and future
 - D. It emphasizes the pervasiveness of the Sunday service in John’s memory
 - E. It alerts the reader to John’s naiveté.

Attack the Question this Way: *Look at the language directly after the mention in lines 5-6. From that, you should be able to POE at least three of the choices. Do the same for the language directly after the mention in lines 24-25. Your answer is staring you in the face.*

4. It can be inferred from the phrase “with terror in his heart, and wonder” (lines 26-27) that John
 - A. dreaded attending church services on Sunday
 - B. responded strongly but ambivalently to the church service
 - C. found the music mystifying and unpleasant
 - D. was indifferent to the emotional force that lay behind the singing
 - E. was disturbed by the insincerity of those singing

Attack the Question this Way: *You have two phrases here (1. terror in his heart and 2. wonder) that will have different, somewhat opposite, effects. So, you are looking for the choice that reflects the dual nature of the two phrases. Eliminate any answer that offers a single effect on John.*

5. In line 32, the pronoun “it” in the phrase “it was for them” refers to
- “wonder” (line 27)
 - “singing” (line 27)
 - “question” (line 29)
 - “joy they felt” (line 31)
 - “bread of life” (line 32)

Attack the Question this Way: *This is a pronoun reference question. The “it” is going to take the place of a noun or noun phrase that usually comes before the pronoun. For this question, substitute each phrase in place of the “it” to see which one makes sense. You can also read the following 3-4 lines to see if the imagery in those sentences makes the answer clear.*

6. The depiction of John’s “prophetic wrath” and his mother’s “long suffering” (lines 41-44) serves what specific function in the narrative progress of passage?
- It **diverts** the reader’s attention from John’s point of view.
 - It **retards** the pace of the narration prior to the climax.
 - It **provides** a specific example of a preceding general description.
 - It **counters** earlier references to the demeanor of the congregation.
 - It **offers** a parallel to the transformation John undergoes in the passage.

Attack the Question this Way: *This really is a flow of ideas question. Because these references come at the end of the paragraph, read the sentence before the section to see how the author has used the examples within that 2 to 3—sentence unit. Look at the verbs in the question: two of the choices could be candidates for POE based on the verbs alone.*

7. In context “the saints” (line 26), “bread of life” (line 32), and “arms outstretched like wings” (line 51) serve to
- evoke** an otherworldly atmosphere resonant of the Bible
 - situate** the passage within a socially conservative framework
 - highlight** the bitter, sardonic humor of the passage
 - mask** the passage’s truly secular emphasis
 - endorse** a particular approach to spiritual matters

Attack the Question this Way: *The connotations of the quoted words are particularly significant here and will let you POE at least three of the choices. Also, back to the verbs in the answers: two of the verbs used indicate that they are unlikely choices.*

8. The qualifiers “for them” (line 32) and “so everyone said” (line 64) suggest that
- John is **confident** that he will replace his doubt with joy and ecstasy
 - John **shares** the experience of those around him sympathetically
 - John feels himself to be **isolated** from the rest of the congregation
 - The speaker views the congregation as the **ultimate authority** over John
 - The speaker is **more interested** in the experience of the congregation than in that of John

Attack the Question this Way: *Notice that you seem to have a set of answer choices divided against each other. Playing the odds, I would look to rationally knock away the ones with “The speaker” as the lead. Then, playing close attention to the quoted text, POE among the remaining three choices. Also, take a look at the bolded key words and phrases to see if those are true for the passage.*

9. The image of “a planet rocking in space” (lines 60-61) suggest all of the following EXCEPT the
- A. energy generated by the worshippers
 - B. power of God in the heavens
 - C. swaying of the congregation to the music
 - D. cohesiveness and unity of the congregation
 - E. despair of those who are bound to earth

Attack the Question this Way: *You need to read the sentence before and after this image. Then, the one that does not belong is easy to spot. Also, just play the positive and negative game – if you have four positive choices and one negative, you might be on to something: the answer.*

10. The attention the speaker pays to the details of sound serves primarily to
- A. distract the reader from the disconcerting issues raised in the passage
 - B. offer the reader a physical sense of the church service
 - C. construct a metaphor for John’s position in the congregation
 - D. entertain the reader prior to the presentation of more challenging material
 - E. complement the attention paid to the visual and tactile

Attack the Question this Way: *It is time to return to Basic Literature 101. Why did the author write this passage? Which choice best serves the purpose?*

11. The style of the passage as a whole is characterized by
- A. simple declarative sentences containing a minimum of descriptive language
 - B. complex sentences interspersed with short, exclamatory sentences
 - C. sentences that contain several modifying phrases and subordinate clauses
 - D. sentences that grow progressively argumentative as the passage continues
 - E. expository sentences at the beginning that give way to interpretive at the end

Attack the Question this Way: *If you do not see a change in the style, then two of the choices are poor ones. Notice that some of the remaining choices have two stylistic devices mentioned – find evidence to contradict one and you eliminate the choice.*

12. The irony in the passage as a whole rests chiefly on the conflict between
- A. the solemnity of the occasion and the joy of the worshippers
 - B. John’s father’s prophetic wrath and his mother’s long suffering
 - C. the air of expectancy prior to the morning service and the sounds of the street
 - D. John’s acute observation of religious ecstasy and his inability to participate in it
 - E. the change that takes place in the churchgoers on Sunday and their daily appearance and demeanor

Attack the Question this Way: *The question uses “passage as a whole” as a way to guide you to a more general irony. POE choices that are too specific or have little relevance to the meaning of the passage as a whole.*

13. The point of view in the passage is that of a
- A. participating observer who is partial to John.
 - B. third-person narrator who is aware of John's thoughts.
 - C. nonparticipating spectator who is unfamiliar with John's thoughts.
 - D. first-person narrator who chooses to speak of himself in the third-person.
 - E. third-person narrator who provides insight into the thoughts of several characters.

Attack the Question this Way: *Look to eliminate the highly unlikely and the downright kooky. You should be left with a choice between two choices.*

14. Which of the following best describes the effect produced by the repetition of the words "seeming" and "seemed" throughout the passage?
- A. It serves to emphasize John's particular, individual perspective on the events described.
 - B. It functions as a reminder to the reader that the speaker is only telling a story.
 - C. It suggests that John's memory of the events described is vague and indistinct.
 - D. It provides support for the extended allegory developed in the passage.
 - E. It highlights the speaker's capacities as an omniscient narrator.

Attack the Question this Way: *Even a surface reading should let you eliminate three of the choices (your answer on the previous choice can help here too). Take a look at the first three sentences in the passage – the first instance of the repetition helps if you are having trouble.*