

Types of Multiple-Choice Questions

Is the Structure the Same for All of the Multiple-Choice Questions?

No. There are several basic patterns that the AP test makers employ. These include:

1. The *straightforward question*.
 - The passage is an example of
C. a contrast/comparison essay
 - The pronoun “it” refers to
B. his gait
2. The question that refers you to specific lines and asks you to *draw a conclusion* or *interpret*.
 - Lines 52–57 serve to
A. reinforce the author’s thesis
3. The ALL . . . EXCEPT *question* requires more time, because it demands that you consider every possibility.
 - The AP English Language and Composition exam is all of the following except
A. It is given in May of each year.
B. It is open to high school seniors.
C. It is published in the *New York Times*.
D. It is used as a qualifier for college credit.
E. It is a 3-hour test.
4. The question that asks you to *make an inference* or to *abstract a concept not directly stated in the passage*.
 - In “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” the reader can infer that the speaker is
E. religious
5. The question related to the rhetorical situation: This question deals with context, purpose, audience.
 - Which of the following is the major strategy the author uses to support the thesis of this passage?

This is the type of question that requires you to consider the rhetorical situation of the passage and HOW the writer addresses it. For example: Which of the following is not an assumption the author makes about the audience?
6. The question that asks you to act in the role of the writer during the writing process.
 - The writer is considering adding the following sentence to the end of paragraph 5:
Driving more defensively, I move from the fast lane into the middle lane.
Should the writer make this revision?
A. Yes, because the reader wants to know what the driver does next.
B. No, because it is off topic.
C. No, because it doesn’t really relate to the topic sentence of the paragraph.
D. Yes. This sentence adds to the reader’s understanding of the writer.
E. No. This sentence adds nothing to the information in the paragraph and begs for an answer to what happens when the driver moves into the middle lane.
7. The question that asks you to become involved in the revision process.
 - Which item could most appropriately be added to end the series in paragraph 2 beginning with, *My ancestors for over a hundred planted the sugarcane here . . .*
A. and, when it was time, profited nothing from it.
B. and, when it was time, left the plantation to pursue new lives.
C. and, when it was time, were buried next to those fields.
D. and, when it was time, bought their freedom.

E. and, when it was time, reseeded the land for new crops.

What Kinds of Questions Should I Expect on the Exam?

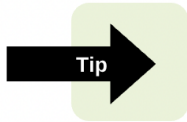
The multiple-choice questions center on form and content. Naturally, the test makers are assessing your understanding of the meaning of the selection as well as your ability to draw inferences and perceive implications based on the given work. They also want to know if you understand HOW an author develops his or her ideas, and CHOICES the author could make when revising the text.



The questions, therefore, will be *factual*, *technical*, *analytical*, and *inferential*. The brief chart below illustrates the types of key words/phrases in these four categories you can expect to encounter.

Note: THERE IS NO NEED TO MEMORIZE THIS CHART. Likewise, do not panic if a word or phrase is not familiar to you. You may or may not encounter any or all of these words or phrases on any given exam. You can, however, count on meeting up with many of these in our practice exams in this course.

FACTUAL	TECHNICAL	ANALYTICAL	INFERENTIAL
Words refer to	Sentence structure	Rhetorical strategy	Effect of diction
Allusions	Style	Shift in development	Tone
Antecedents	Grammatical purpose	Rhetorical stance	Inferences
Pronoun referents	Dominant technique	Style	Effect of description
	Imagery	Metaphor	Effect of last paragraph
	Point of view	Contrast	Effect on reader
	Organization of passage	Comparison	Narrator's attitude
		Cause/effect	Image suggests
	Narrative progress of passage	Argument	Effect of detail
		Description	Author implies
	Conflict	Narration	Author most concerned with
	Irony	Specific–general	Symbol
	Function of . . .	General–specific	Purpose
		How something is characterized	Intended audience
		Imagery	Exigence
		Passage is primarily concerned with	
		Function of . . .	



A WORD ABOUT JARGON: Jargon refers to words unique to a specific subject. A common language is important for communication, and there must be agreement on the basic meanings of terms. Although it is important to know the universal language of a subject, it is also important that you NOT limit the scope of your thinking to a brief definition. All of the terms used in the above chart are categorized only for easy reference. They also work in many other contexts. In other words, THINK OUTSIDE OF THE BOX.

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