Multiple Choice Strategies for Passages

*Use the strategies below to focus how you attack multiple-choice questions.*

**Strategy 1**: Read the first and last paragraphs of the passage.

**Strategy 2**: Read the first and last sentence of each paragraph.

**Strategy 3**: Read around the line number indicated in the question.

**Strategy 4**: Play positive and negative with the passage and eliminate the choices that are the opposite of your choice. Example: the speaker’s tone 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 he/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 below the word to figure it out?

**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: rarely is the answer the nearest or the farthest away from 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, summarize—all are useful to capture the basic thrust of an author’s writing.

**Strategy 13**: Are there patterns or significant repetitions that I can use to get to the complexity of the passage’s meaning(s)?

**Strategy 14**: Pay attention to punctuation to note how the writer has organized the flow of ideas within paragraphs.

**Strategy 15**: What type of writing is it? What are the conventions of that type of writing?

**Strategy 16**: What are the core devices used in the passage? How can I use my rock-solid knowledge of AP examination vocabulary to eliminate three or even four possible answers?
“True Satire,” John Dryden

Before you interact with the passage, read the questions and list 2-3 strategies from the list that will help you identify the correct answer. Do not answer the questions until you have completed identifying strategies and you have read the passage.

1. In the first two sentences of the passage (lines 1-4), the speaker draws a distinction between
   a. Obvious invective and direct satire
   b. Esoteric knowledge and common understanding
   c. Coarse speaking and inferior painting
   d. Speaking and writing
   e. Wit and humor

   Strategy#: ___________ ___________ ___________ Answer: ___________

2. In the sentence beginning “To spare” (lines 4-7), the speaker makes use of
   a. Understatement
   b. Hyperbole
   c. A syllogism
   d. An allegory
   e. An analogy

   Strategy#: ___________ ___________ ___________ Answer: ___________

3. In line 8, “that noble trade” refers to which of the following?
   a. “to call rogue and villain” (line 7)
   b. “to employ any depth of shadowing” (line 7)
   c. “the scholar” (line 9)
   d. “fineness of raillery” (line 11)
   e. “The occasion of an offense” (line 13)

   Strategy#: ___________ ___________ ___________ Answer: ___________

4. The sentence “Neither...offensive” (lines 10-11) does which of the following?
   a. Undercuts a point made previously
   b. Contradicts the thesis of the passage
   c. Answers a possible objection
   d. Offers an opposing point of view
   e. Presents an authoritative example

   Strategy#: ___________ ___________ ___________ Answer: ___________
5. The contrast drawn between the witty man and the fool (lines 11-13) emphasizes the witty man’s
   a. Self-confidence and the fool’s lack of self knowledge
   b. Appreciation and the fool’s lack of comprehension
   c. Justified anger and the fool’s innocence
   d. Sense of humor and the fool’s resentment
   e. Ability to retaliate and the fool’s lack of wit

   Strategy#: ___________ ___________ ___________ Answer: ______________

6. In the sentence “If…place” (lines 14-20) the author does which of the following?
   a. Distinguishes an explanation of a timeworn idea from a common occurrence.
   b. Raises an objection and then overrides it with an assertion.
   c. Presents a dilemma and then explains its difficulties.
   d. Offers a contrasting examples and then dismisses it.
   e. Cites an exaggeration and then minimizes it.

   Strategy#: ___________ ___________ ___________ Answer: ______________

7. Which of the following best describes the speaker’s professed attitude toward the reputation of Jack Ketch?
   a. Admiration verging on envy
   b. Thinly veiled contempt
   c. Sympathy bordering on pity
   d. Respect tinged with impatience
   e. Repugnance combined with jealousy

   Strategy#: ___________ ___________ ___________ Answer: ______________

8. In the context of the passage, the author probably intends the reader to find the words of Jack Ketch’s wife
   a. sobering
   b. deceptive
   c. horrifying
   d. humorous
   e. compassionate

   Strategy#: ___________ ___________ ___________ Answer: ______________

9. The speaker draws on contrasts between all of the following EXCEPT
   a. wit and dullness
   b. ordinariness and excellence
   c. maliciousness and compassion
   d. coarseness and refinement
   e. skill and ineptitude

   Strategy#: ___________ ___________ ___________ Answer: ______________
“True Satire,” John Dryden

Now that you have strategized, read the passage and answer the questions.

How easy is it to call rogue and villain, and that wittily! But how hard to make a man appear a fool, a blockhead, or a knave without using any of those opprobrious terms! To spare the grossness of the names, and to do the thing yet more severely, is to draw a full face, and to make the nose and cheeks stand out, and yet not to employ any depth of shadowing. This is the mystery of that noble trade, which yet no master can teach to his apprentice; he may give the rules, but the scholar is never the nearer I his practice. Neither is it true that this fineness of raillery is offensive. A witty man is tickled while he is hurt in this manner, and a fool feels it not. The occasion of an offense may possibly be given, but he cannot take it. If it be granted that in effect this way does more mischief; that a man is secretly wounded, and though he be not sensible himself, yet the malicious world will find it out for him; yet there is still a vast difference betwixt the slovenly butchering of a man, and the fineness of a stroke that separates the head from the body, and leaves it standing in its place. A man may be capable, as Jack Ketch’s* wife said of his servant, of a plain piece of work, a bare hanging; but to make a malefactor die sweetly was only belonging to her husband. I wish I could apply it to myself, if the reader would be kind enough to think it belongs to me.

*A notorious public executioner
“True Satire,” John Dryden
Multiple-Choice Answer Key

1. ANS: A MSC: 52% answered correctly
2. ANS: E MSC: 39% answered correctly
3. ANS: D MSC: 44% answered correctly
4. ANS: C MSC: 50% answered correctly
5. ANS: B MSC: 50% answered correctly
6. ANS: B MSC: 38% answered correctly
7. ANS: A MSC: 66% answered correctly
8. ANS: D MSC: 40% answered correctly
9. ANS: C MSC: 42% answered correctly