

Strategies for Practice with Multiple-Choice Questions

from the Electronic Discussion Group

Give the students the MC questions and in groups of two have them answer the questions. The catch - don't give them the piece until *after* they have answered the questions. It teaches the kids to use logic and to think critically to eliminate answers and make intelligent guesses. I passed out the piece after and we discussed their thought processes.

Pat Allison

The multiple choice test is essentially a vocabulary test; if they know the vocabulary, they will be fine. I have my students take a practice test and write down every word they don't know in a question or an answer. That is our vocabulary list for the next two weeks; then we do it again. Make every multiple-choice practice test that you use a vocabulary lesson.

Have students talk about systems: Do you read the questions first? Do you scan them? Do you do all the really easy ones first and return to the others? Different test coaches have different preferences. Discuss these strategies, have students try them out, and find the method that works best for each of them.

Donna Anglin

Have students individually complete one passage of an AP multiple choice practice (around 15 questions). Then have them work in teams; each team must come to consensus on each question.

Hand each team laminated answer choice cards different color background for each choice. Have "A" on a red card, for example. As you read out the question stem, the teams raise their answers. Call on teams randomly for brief explanations. Finally, tally the score for each team.

Jodi Grimes

Work with students to group the questions according to what the questions are looking for (word or phrase whose closest meaning is — ; antecedent is ; main point of passage is; etc.). That exercise alone made the overall multiple choice section more manageable.

Give students a copy of a past test. In small groups they come up with 10 to 12 kinds of questions that the test asks. List those on the board, and then have the class come up with a master list. Occasionally have them make up one good multiple-choice question based on a reading they're doing. You might specify what *type* of question they are to write, so that they don't stay with only one. Collect them and distribute the best for the class to do or put them on an overhead that they work on together. They come to see that if they make up easy, surface type questions, theirs won't be "chosen" as examples-- they have to dig deeper.

Marcia Gregorio

Start with easy multiple choice questions that we as teachers could make up for them and gradually building in difficulty to the College Board tests. Have the students do the tests for practice only and keep their scores in a notebook. Let them use dictionaries and AP terms lists when they take the tests. After they finish, give them the answers, and have them work in small groups to determine why the right answer was right. Do not let them waste time arguing why their wrong answer *should* be right. Then have the class convene and go over whatever they couldn't resolve in the groups. Consider, too, having the kids make up their own multiple choice tests.

Betty Montague