



Strategies for Answering Multiple-Choice Questions

The College of Saint Rose
Lee Geiselmann
Amber O'Sullivan

Reading Tips

- Focus on what is in the text
 - Try to set aside any previous knowledge you may have about the subject
 - Inferences not assumptions
- Identify thesis/main idea
- Identify central themes
- Pay attention to word choice/tone
 - Ex: The effects of such a decision on food prices, however, could be nothing short of disastrous.
- Consider purpose and audience
- Notice construction

Reading Strategies

- Skim the text
- Read the questions
- Read the sections of text relevant to
specific questions

Questions Focus on:

- Main idea
 - Purpose
 - Point of view or attitude
- Vocabulary
 - Meaning of word or phrase
- Organization
- Details
 - Supporting or missing details
 - Focus on only what is in the text

Example (Detail)

Which of the following is a physical description of the calculator as described in the passage?

- The color of the screen
- The size and shape of the calculator
- Why calculators are better than pencils
- The calculator was a direct descendant of the abacus

Multiple-Choice Tips

- Pay attention to the title
- Keywords
 - “Which of the following passages **best** shows an **opposing** view to a **prior** statement?”
- “Signpost words (explain, analyze, demonstrates, conveys, describes, etc.)”
 - “In Paragraph 1, the **repetition** of the phrase “well-rounded, prosperous” **emphasizes:**”
- *Italics* or **bold** text

Multiple-Choice Tips (Cont'd)

- If you don't know
 - Eliminate wrong answers
 - Make an educated guess
- Follow your gut

Narrow versus Broad Answers

- Eliminating answers that are either too broad or too narrow in focus

Too Narrow...

“The sentence below appears in Paragraph 4:

‘The composition of this war,’ Stein wrote, ‘was not a composition in which there was one man in the center surrounded by many others but a composition that had neither a beginning nor an end, a composition in which one corner was as important as another corner, in fact the composition of Cubism.’

In this sentence, Stein's comparison of World War I and Cubism **conveys**:

- the political realignment and upheaval caused by the war
- the change in European cultural values as a result of the war
- the impact that the war had on artists and writers
- the effect that this war had on class structures”

Too Broad...

"The sentence below appears in Paragraph 4:
'You are, all of you, a lost generation,' Stein told Hemingway when he showed up in Paris after the war. The quotation in this sentence is most closely connected with which idea in Paragraph 4:

- the emergence of an aesthetic associated with World War I
- the convergence of expatriates in postwar Paris
- the staggering casualties among young men during World War I
- the complete rupture of the prewar social order"