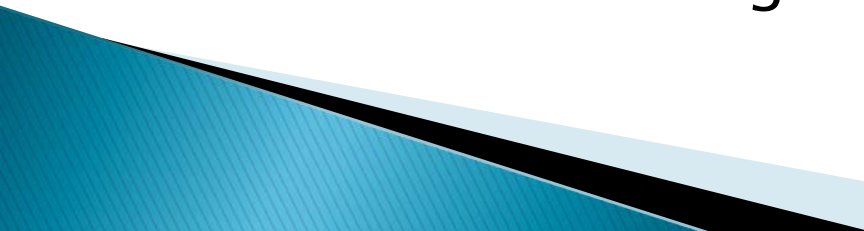


Cracking the System:

Multiple-Choice Questions

»» Answering Multiple-Choice Questions

The Questions

- ▶ You've read the passage, now you need to answer the questions.
 - ▶ You will answer all of them.
 - Taking your best guess if you aren't sure!
 - ▶ Remember: Be FEARLESS!
 - ▶ Recognize there are three types of questions:
 - General comprehension questions
 - Detail questions
 - Factual knowledge questions
- 

General Comprehension

- ▶ They ask about the overall passage.
- ▶ Don't send you back to any particular place in the passage.
- ▶ Examples:
 - The passage is primarily concerned with...?
 - Which one of the following choices best describes the tone of the passage?
 - Which one of the following choices best describes the narrator's relationship to her mother?
 - To whom does the speaker of the poem address his speech?

Detail Questions

- ▶ These send you back to a specific place in the text.
- ▶ They tell you where to look and ask about what is going on in that specific segment.
- ▶ Examples:
 - What significant change occurs in the speaker's attitude towards her mother in lines 5–9?
 - What does the author mean by “formalist” (line 19)?
 - Which of the following is the best paraphrase for the sentence that begins at line 9?

Factual Knowledge Questions

- ▶ About the English language and its grammar
- ▶ Basic terminology of criticism and poetry
- ▶ Sometimes ask for a widely known cultural fact related to the passage
- ▶ Examples:
 - How does the author's use of irony contribute to the effect of the poem?
 - What parallel structure helps to emphasize the attitude of the speaker?
 - In the context of the following lines (1–5), the phrase “This loaf's big” is used as a metaphor for the...

Cultural Fact Question

▶ Example:

- When in the third stanza the playwright character says, “I believe my tragedy is worthy of performance at the Globe,” he is referring to...

What is the Globe associated with?

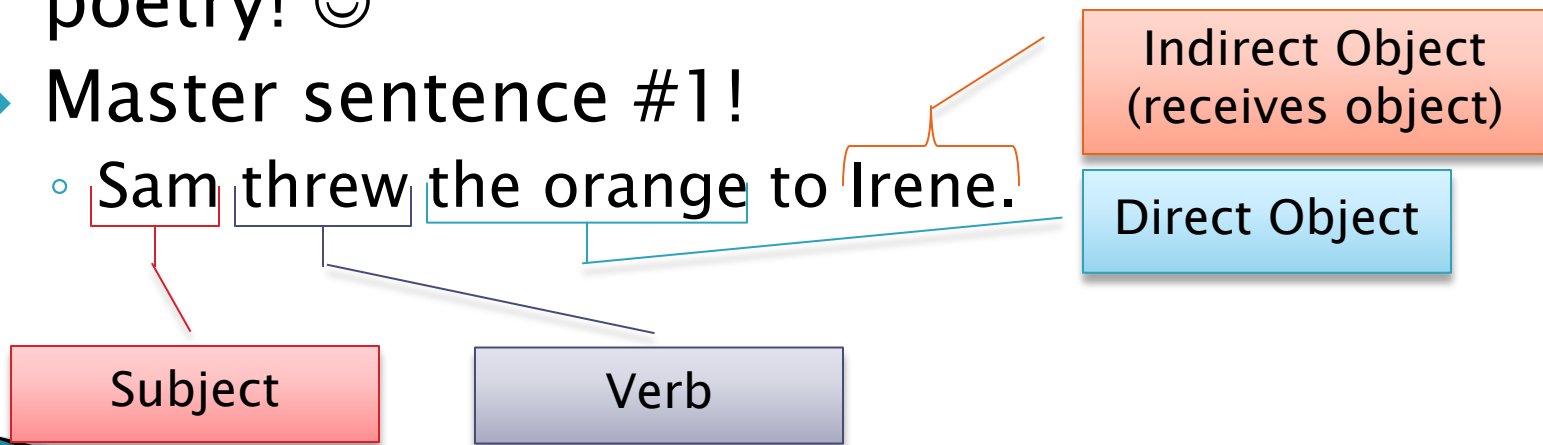
Shakespeare's plays

This is the sort of fact that ETS expects literate high school students to know.

These questions are impossible to study for!

How Much Grammar Do I Need to Know?

- ▶ Usually 3 or 4 questions on basic grammar.
- ▶ About 1 per passage – not a big deal on MC section.
- ▶ Don't spend a lot of time worrying about it!
- ▶ Worry about writing essays and reading poetry! 😊
- ▶ Master sentence #1!



▶ Master sentence #2

Independent Clause
Complete Sentence

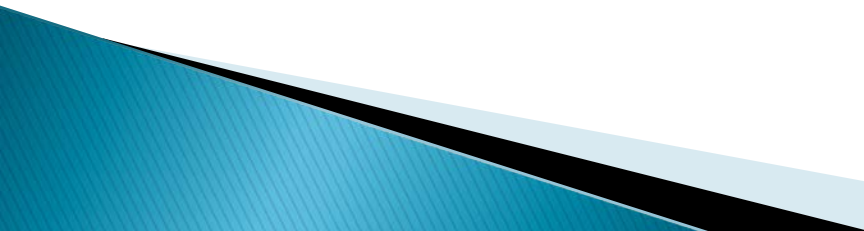
- Feeling generous, Sam threw the orange to Irene, who tried to catch it.

Dependent
(subordinate) clause
Has subject and verb

Phrase
(no subject or verb)
Modifies Sam

- Both phrases and dependent clauses function as modifiers.

Know your Basics

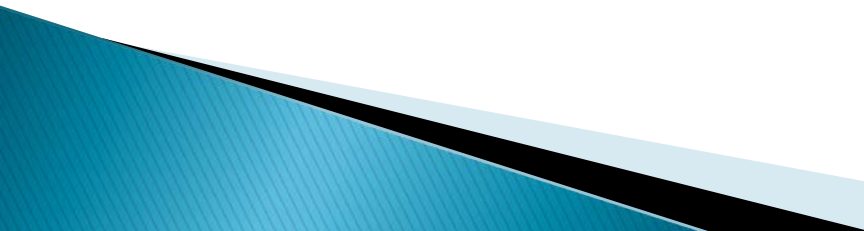
- ▶ Noun: A person, place, thing, or idea (or abstraction, ie: strength, determination)
 - ▶ Verb: An action word or a word that expresses a state of being.
 - ▶ Adjective: A word that modifies, describes, or limits a noun or a pronoun.
 - ▶ Adverb: A word that modifies, describes, or limits a verb, an adjective, or another adverb.
 - ▶ Preposition: A word that shows the relationship between a noun or a pronoun and some other words in the sentence. It should **not** be the last word in a sentence.
- 

- ▶ Pronoun: A word that replaces a noun. The noun to which the pronoun refers is the *antecedent*.
- ▶ Gerund: A word that serves two functions. It acts like a noun and it acts like a verb.
- ▶ Participle: A word that serves two functions. It acts like an adjective and it acts like a verb.
- ▶ Infinitive: A phrase that begins with the word *to* and is followed by a verb form.

ETS uses grammar as an indirect way to test your reading comprehension.




Do It Your Way

- ▶ You can do the questions in any order you want, but that doesn't mean you should jump around every time.
 - If you understand the passage, answer in the order provided.
 - If your understanding is limited or you just don't get the main idea, answer the detail ones first.
 - ▶ The main idea is the crucial thing to get from reading a passage, either prose or poetry.
 - ▶ Completing the detail questions first may help you understand the passage better.
- 

Consistency of Answers

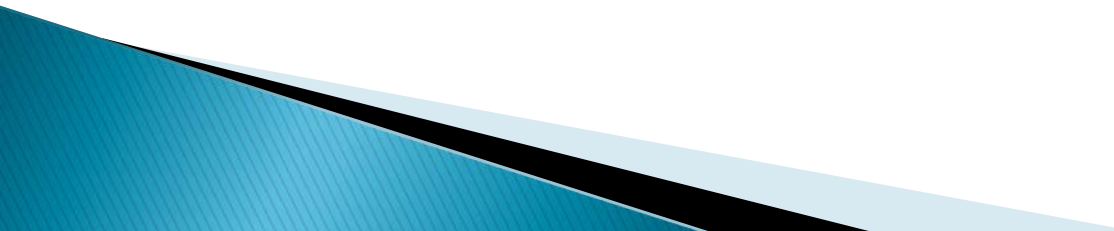
- ▶ Rule #1: *When in doubt, pick an answer that agrees with the main idea.*
 - The main idea should be your guiding rule for most of the questions on the passage.
- ▶ Rule #2: *Pick answers that agree with each other.*
 - The correct answers tend to be consistent.
 - IE: If you are sure the answer for #9 is that Mr. Buffalo is quite hairy, you can be sure question #10 won't be discussing his baldness.

Summary

- ▶ Recognize 3 basic categories of questions:
 - General Comprehension
 - Detail
 - Factual Knowledge
 - ▶ Don't sweat grammar. It isn't enough points to cause perspiration.
 - ▶ Do it your way
 - If you know the main idea, do the questions in order.
 - If you're uncomfortable with the main idea, answer detail and factual questions first.
 - ▶ Use Consistency of Answers
 - When in doubt, pick answers that agree with the main idea.
 - Pick answers that agree with each other.
- 

»» Answering Prose Passage Questions

How To Use The Samples

- ▶ The best way to study is by practicing on examples.
 - ▶ Choose one:
 - ▶ Don't do the questions right away – we will go through them step-by-step.
 - ▶ OR you can go through them and see how well you would have done
 - ▶ Look over the passage: Edgar Allan Poe's "The Duc De L'Omelette".
- 



Use
POE

Questions

General

1. The **primary purpose** of the passage is to portray

Keep A. the characteristics of an **exaggerated** type through the figure of L'Omelette.

Cut B. a **reassuringly humorous vision of hell** through a narrative in which the Devil himself is bested.

Cut C. the **evil consequences of excessive pride**.

Cut D. the **developing relationship** between L'Omelette.

Cut E. the pivotal **change** that occurs in L'Omelette through his encounter with the Devil.

2. Which of the following best describes the Duke De L'Omelette?

General

Cut

A. He is a typical eighteenth-century nobleman.

Exaggerated portrait

Keep

B. He is a **caricature** of a snob.

Cut

C. He is a man more wicked than the Devil.

Cut

D. He is a man with perfect aesthetic judgment.

Cut

E. He is a man transformed by his encounter with a power greater than his own.

Do you see any consistency with #1?

3. In context, lines 29–38 serve to reinforce the reader’s impression of the Duke’s

- A. quick temper
- B. exquisite taste
- C. **sense of self-importance**
- D. accomplishments and social position
- E. misunderstanding of his situation

Detail

Overall sense of the passage

Ask yourself: What does the passage serve to reinforce?

Consistency!

Keep the main idea in mind!

4. The author's portrayal of the Duke De L'Omelette is best described as

Detail

Cut A. a sympathetic portrait of a man with overly delicate sensibilities

Keep B. a comically ironic treatment of an effete snob

Cut C. a harshly condemnatory portrait of a bon vivant

Cut D. an admiring portrait of a great artist

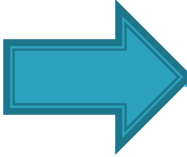
Cut E. a farcical treatment of the very rich

Consistency!

Remember:
Half bad = ALL bad!

5. Which of the following descriptions is an example of the narrator's irony?

You have to know what this means to get this answer right!

- 
- A. “Unable to restrain his feeling, his Grace swallows an olive.” (lines 9–10)
 - B. “I took thee, just now, from a rosewood coffin inlaid with ivory.” (lines 40–41)
 - C. “The Duke knew it to be a ruby; but from it there poured a lights so intense, so still, so terrible.” (lines 64–66)
 - D. “And there, too! –there! –upon the ottoman! – who could he be? – he, the Deity –who sat as if carved in marble, and who smiles, with his pale countenance, bitterly?” (lines 89–92)
 - E. “His Grace was all care, all attention, his Majesty all confidence.” (lines 104–105)

When the literal meaning of a word or phrase implies its opposite, you're dealing with irony! Which one does this?

6. In lines 58–59, the word “appalling” suggests the Duke

Phrase or
Word
Question

Cut

A. has found the room’s decorum unacceptable

Keep

B. ~~has approbation for clouds~~

Cut

C. suffers from insomnia

Keep

D. finds the apartment extraordinary

Keep

E. ~~suffers from paroxysm~~

Now what?
Use POE!

Fit or a
seizure

7. Which of the following best implies the contextual meaning of the phrase “sacrificed his loyalty” (line 6) within the context of the story?

If the excerpt is a fragment of a sentence, go back and read the full sentence, both before and after.

Cut

A. The Duke has fallen into disfavor with the King by outbidding him

Cut

B. The Duke has betrayed his country

Keep

C. The Duke has allowed his desire for the ottoman to override his deference to the King

Cut

D. The Due recognizes no one as more powerful than himself

Cut

E. The Duke values the ottoman more greatly than his prestige

8. In which of the following lines is the narrator most clearly articulating the Duke's thoughts?

Ask yourself, when is the narrator speaking for the Duke?

Keep

A. "Ignoble souls!" (line 2)

Cut

B. "It is superfluous to say more:—." (lines 16–17)

Cut

C. "Having become satisfied of his identity, he took a bird's-eye view of his whereabouts." (lines 53–55)

Keep

D. "But the chances—the chances! True—desperate!" (line 97)

Cut

E. "They play." (line 111)

Look back at the passage lines for reference. Is the Duke even introduced in line 2? Then the choice is easy!

9. Which of the following lines implies a speaker other than the narrator?

A. “But who ever died of inept poetry?” (lines 1–2)

B. “That night the Duke was to sup alone.” (line 4)

“The apartment was superb.” (line 56)

“His majesty did not think, he shuffled.” (line 105–106)

“Had Alexander not been Alexander, he would have been Diogenes.” (lines 118–119)

The key to answering this one is to know that there is the implication of another speaker. Who asks the questions? Who answers?

Narrator
is
Speaking

10. Which of the following best describes the situation in lines 19–22 and the events that came immediately before it?

Cut

A. The Duke has just noticed the Devil and laughs at him. The Devil returns the laugh, but quietly because he feels insulted.

Keep

B. The Duke has just heard the Devil explain the tortures that lie in store for him. He believes the Devil is joking and laughs. The Devil mocks his laughter, implying that it is no joke.

Cut

C. The Duke and the Devil have been talking, but the exact topic has purposefully been left vague.

Cut

D. The Duke has just heard the Devil's plans for him and laughs defiantly at the Devil. The Devil puns on the Duke's use of the word "Ha!" by saying "He!" By doing so, the devil indicates "He," that is the Duke, will be punished for his sins.

Cut

E. The Duke, believing he speaks with a lowly servant, laughs at the threats the Devil has made. The Devil plays along, laughing with the Duke in order to draw out the Duke's eventual humiliation.

KEY: Keep It Simple!
Don't over analyze!

Expect the unexpected at least
once or twice. Use POE!

11. Which of the following reinforces the effect of the passage most strongly?

Cut → A. **Light-hearted** situations narrated with deep seriousness

Cut → B. **Humorous** irony in the introduction, contrasted with serious reflection in the conclusion

Keep → C. **Calculated objectivity** offset by occasional interjections of subjective emotion

Cut → D. Underlying **contempt** partially concealed by **objectivity**

Keep → E. First-person outbursts of effusive emotion in an otherwise third-person narration

Not really!

Look closely. The answers deal with tone, style, and structure.
Remember: Half bad = ALL bad!

12. The narrator's attitude toward the Duke can best be described as

Just like a
tone
question!

Cut

A. complete objectivity

Cut

B. ambiguous pity

Cut

C. slight distaste

Keep

D. bemused confusion

Keep

E. satiric glee

Don't lean towards this because you are confused. The narrator isn't, so cut it!

13. The passage contains

- I. abrupt shifts in tense
- II. an abrupt shift in place
- III. abrupt shifts in emotional state

Take each point one at a time!

- ~~A. I only~~
- B. I and II only
- ~~C. I and III only~~
- ~~D. II and III only~~
- E. I, II, and III

II. When the Duke dies “in a paroxysm of disgust” there is an abrupt change of place – hell! Eliminate any answer that doesn’t contain it!

I. Does the tense shift? YES! After the Duke dies and goes to hell. Eliminate anything that doesn’t contain I.

Are there any abrupt changes in the emotional state? YES!

This question is testing whether you have noticed any structural and stylistic devices.

14. The phrase, “as if carved in marble” (line 91), is an example of

Literary Term Question

- A. an apostrophe
- B. irony
- C. lyricism
- D. a metaphor
- E. a simile ←

15. Grammatically, the phrase, “Were one not already the Duke De L’Omelette” (lines 120–121), establishes the.

- A. simple past tense
- B. past imperfect tense
- C. present conditional tense
- D. subjunctive mood
- E. simple present tense

If a sentence begins
with “if” or “were”
it is
subjunctive!

»» Art Of The
7 Minute Passage

If You Have 7 Minutes Or Fewer

- ▶ Don't read the passage. Just *don't* do it!
 - ▶ Go straight to the questions.
 - ▶ Answer the questions in the following order:
 - Answer any literary term or grammar questions.
 - Go to any question that asks for the meaning or a single word or phrase.
 - Go to any other question that gives you a line reference in the question.
 - Go to any question on tone or attitude.
 - Go to any questions that have line references in the answer choice.
 - Do whatever is left!
- 