

AP<sup>®</sup> EXAMS

# Multiple Choice: Eliminating Distractors

# Facts about multiple-choice questions

- Questions usually follow the order of the passage.
- Question sets typically begin and end with general questions that may take more time to answer.
- Only one answer choice is completely supported by the text. The others may seem plausible, but some part of the distractor (wrong answer) is not supported.
- If any part of the distractor is wrong, the answer is incorrect.
- EXCEPT questions take the longest time to answer because you must identify four right answers to choose the incorrect one.



# Multiple-choice tips



- Read the passage or poem before answering question.
- Annotate as you read.
- Eliminate answers not completely supported by the text.
- If you have difficulty understanding the text, focus only on the lines indicated in the question, if provided.
- Save questions that take the most time for last (e.g. questions about the whole passage and EXCEPT questions).





# How to eliminate distractors

Remember that most distractors are tempting because

- Some or part of the distractor is true.
- The distractor is taken from an unrelated section of the passage.
- The distractor contains language taken directly from the passage.
- The distractor seems plausible but is based on faulty reasoning.



# Prose Example

Excerpt from *Wastralls* by C. A. Dawson-Scott (1918)

Byron was helpless. He could not win [Sabina] to his will, neither could he break her. She was capable, as she let him see, of separating from him. If he appealed to the hinds\*, they would side with her. Her cousins at Hember and St. Cadic, the neighbours in the adjacent valleys, would take her part.

\**farm workers*



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The lines portray Sabina as being

- A optimistic but ~~manipulative~~
- B ~~charitable~~ but smug
- C ~~scholarly~~ and confident
- D ~~ambitious~~ and ~~impatient~~
- E independent and influential



# Poetry Example

Excerpt from "Birches" by Robert Frost (1916)

46 I'd like to get away from Earth awhile  
And then come back to it and begin over.  
May no fate willfully misunderstand me  
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away  
50 Not to return. Earth's the right place for love.





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The metaphor implied in lines 48—50  
is best interpreted as assigning "fate" the qualities of a

- A ~~lover~~ misunderstanding ~~words of affection~~
- B ~~maze of paths that~~ pose a threat
- C ~~forest that has many tangled branches~~
- D powerful being exercising authority
- E proud king ~~who ignores his subjects~~







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