**Multiple Choice: Reading Comprehension Tips**

Multiple-choice: 60 minutes to read four or five passages and answer 50–55 questions (with five choices each):

**Strategies:**

* Don’t assume that there’ll be four passages—yes, it’s usually four, but there may be five. Check quickly and begin.
* Quickly check the number of the question and the number on the answer form every time you see a zero

(10, 20, 30…). This double-check can keep you from getting off track, having to go back to find your error, and wasting time.

* If you have four passages to read in 60 minutes, allot 15 minutes to each, moving steadily.
* Each passage has a combination of easy, medium, and hard questions that generally follow the chronology of the passage rather than move from easiest to hardest or vice versa.
* ANSWER FIRST the questions that limit you to a particular paragraph or line.
* When the question refers to a part of the sentence and asks for the meaning of a word or phrase in context, what a word refers to, or how a word functions, go back to the beginning of that sentence—or even to the previous sentence—and read completely to the end of that sentence.
* Quickly scan the passages before you begin to get a sense of what each is about. Decide which one is the least comprehensible (usually a pre-1900 passage). **That’s the passage to skip at first.**
* Choose the passages you know you can do best on—if certain time periods are more difficult for you, save those passages for last or for skipping. Now you have time to read more carefully and answer more questions correctly. As a result, you achieve a higher MC score even with completely omitting a passage.

This is a strategy for students who struggle to make 3’s, not for students trying to make 4’s or 5’s.

* If you can eliminate two answers on MC questions, you have a one-in-three chance of guessing correctly; if you can eliminate three answers, you have a fifty-fifty chance. Make the guess—and tell yourself you got it right.
* Leave no questions unanswered. There is no penalty

**Wrong answer choices follow certain patterns:**

• They require only a surface reading, not a close understanding.

• They are simplistic—they have less depth.

• They give generalities when specificity is required.

• They are unrelated to the question.

• They are unrelated to the material of the passage.

• One part of the answer is correct, but not the other.