

UNIT 7

REGENTS

ADVANTAGE

unit

7

STRATEGIES FOR MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS



unit

7

STRATEGIES FOR MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

TEACHER'S NOTES

Test-Taking Challenges

Multiple-choice questions can pose challenges for *all* students. Students can easily fall prey to distracting answer choices, which have been carefully crafted by the test maker to reflect the kinds of mistakes struggling or careless readers tend to make. Successful students often have trouble narrowing their focus to select the clearest, simplest, “right” answer. Many students also dislike the format of multiple-choice questions. They would prefer to have an opportunity to explain their thinking at length, and they find the four choices limiting and frustrating.

Objective

Students will use **Predicting** and **Eliminating** to avoid tempting, distracting answer choices and to increase their odds of choosing the correct answer in multiple-choice questions.

Related New York State Learning Standards

- Standard 1:** Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.
- Standard 2:** Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.
- Standard 3:** Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

Thinking KAP

1. What is your greatest strength when it comes to taking tests?

2. What is your biggest obstacle when it comes to taking tests?

3. After studying Regents strategies for six units, what does the word "strategy" mean to you?

4. Based on what you have learned so far, what advice would you give to a middle school student preparing for the eighth-grade ELA test?

Task

Students will reflect on their strength and challenge areas in test taking.

Delivery

Welcome students to class and hand out the *Advantage* books. Have them answer the Thinking KAP questions as you take attendance and see to other classroom management issues. Let them know that there is no one right answer for any of the questions.



When the work is finished, call for answers. Let the class hear three or four answers for each question. Do not open the floor for comments or start a discussion. If students want to respond to what they have heard, have them do so by reading *their* answers aloud.

Thinking KAP: Sample Answers

1. Answers will vary.
2. Answers will vary.
3. Most students should be able to identify a *strategy* as any kind of technique or approach to a problem or challenge that has been decided upon beforehand, based on information about the nature of the challenge.
4. Answers will vary, but should include advice pertaining to good reading skills, understanding inferential thinking, and knowing how to find the main idea and supporting information in a reading passage.



Moving On

*“So far in this course, we have learned many techniques for answering specific types of multiple-choice questions. Today we’re going to look at two strategies that apply to **every** kind of multiple-choice question.”*

New York High School

Use What You Know

You now have a lot of information about multiple-choice reading questions on the Regents Exam. You also have strategies for solving each type of question. When faced with a multiple-choice question, your first job is to determine what kind of question it is. Then use the appropriate strategy to answer it.

Try It Out!

Here is a multiple-choice question that you don't have enough information to answer. Even without the necessary information, what do you know about the question? What would your strategy be?

- 1 It is ironic that Jack wears Piggy's glasses on his belt because
 - (1) Jack is already in charge
 - (2) the glasses are a sign of weakness
 - (3) Piggy can't see Jack wearing them
 - (4) Jack has perfect eyesight

▶ What kind of question is this?

▶ What strategy would you use to solve it?

▶ What additional information would you need to solve it?

In this unit, we will discuss two strategies that you can apply to any type of multiple-choice question. These strategies can be especially helpful when the question or answer choices are confusing.

Question Identification

It is important to be able to identify the question type so that you can apply the appropriate strategy.

Task

Students will analyze a typical multiple-choice question to determine what type it is and what strategy to apply to it.

Delivery

Read the first paragraph of text on the student page. Then read the instructions to the Try It Out exercise and do the exercise together as a class.

Try It Out: Answers

- ▶ What kind of question is this?

It may be a detail question, but it is probably an inference question.

Irony is rarely explained explicitly by an author; it is a twist or surprise left for readers to uncover.

- ▶ What strategy would you use to solve it?

Irony is an unexpected effect or result, so I should look to the event in question and Connect the Dots to see what caused it (and what result should have occurred).

ELL³

- ▶ What additional information would you need to solve it?

I would need to know why Jack wanted Piggy's glasses.

By working backwards from the event, students should be able to figure this out. The fact that irony is involved suggests that Jack's purpose or intention is contradicted or undermined by the something about the glasses or Piggy.

Delivery

Review some other question types and ask students which strategies they would use. You can refer back to the Mini Practice Test for some sample questions, if you like.

Moving On

"Let's look at one problem that many students have with multiple-choice questions—and a strategy to avoid that problem."

Predicting

Distracting Answer Choices

As you may have noticed, answer choices for multiple-choice questions often look good for one reason or another but are incorrect. If you aren't absolutely certain about your answer, you might fall for these distracting, appealing answers. Even when you do know the answer, you can be led astray by choices that look tempting.

Making Predictions

An important strategy for avoiding wrong answer choices on multiple-choice questions is Predicting. Before even looking at the answer choices, you should predict what the correct answer is.

Cover the Choices

You should cover the answer choices with your hand. That way you won't be tempted to look at them when you make a prediction.

The 3-Step Predicting Strategy

- STEP 1** Cover the answer choices before reading the question.
↓
- STEP 2** Read the question and predict what the answer will be.
↓
- STEP 3** Find the choice that most closely matches your prediction.
↓

Task

Students will learn the 3-Step Predicting strategy.

Delivery

Ask students if they have ever looked at answer choices to multiple-choice questions and felt as though every one of them *could* be right...if they just thought about it a certain way. Many of them will probably nod their heads or smile.

Assure students that this is very common—especially with bright and imaginative students. Read the first paragraph of text on the student page. Remind students that the test makers choose wrong answer choices very carefully, looking for the kinds of mistakes students are most likely to make. This can make several of the answer choices look very tempting, and distract students from the correct answer that is right in front of them.

Have a student read the text under “Making Predictions” and the steps of the Predicting strategy. Remind them that this strategy should be used *after* they have read the passage, when they are ready to begin answering the questions. Read the sidebar aloud to students.

Some students may feel that it is “cheating” to cover up the answer choices—or that they are making their lives more difficult by denying themselves the answer choices. Assure them that this strategy will actually make their lives much *easier*. Tell them that, in most cases, they will be able to supply the correct answer to the question quite easily (as if it were a short-answer question, or a class discussion question). Looking at the wrong answer choices may just distract and confuse them.

The best way to avoid being distracted by the wrong answers is to refuse to look at them!

Moving On

“Let’s try this out with a short paragraph and a couple of questions.”

New York High School

Try It Out!

Read the short paragraph and apply the Predicting strategy to the question that follows.

The feline family includes many animals—from the tame house cat to the vicious lion. Amazingly enough, these animals have many traits in common. They all have strong hunting instincts. They all care for their young. Furthermore, if you stand a house cat beside a lion, you can observe consistent physical features, such as their whiskers. Just make sure that the lion is not hungry at the time.

Write Prediction

If it helps you stay focused, you can write your prediction before you look at the answer choices.

- 1 According to the text, what physical feature do lions and house cats have in common?

▶ Write your prediction:

▶ Does your prediction match any of these answer choices?

- (1) whiskers
- (2) eyes
- (3) instincts
- (4) hunger

- 2 The text uses which two animals as examples of the feline family?

▶ Write your prediction:

▶ Does your prediction match any of these answer choices?

- (1) house cat and cheetah
- (2) lion and leopard
- (3) cheetah and leopard
- (4) house cat and lion

Task

Students will practice the Predicting strategy.

Delivery

Have students do the Try It Out exercise. Tell them to use the 4-Step Method for Reading Comprehension *and* the 3-Step Predicting strategy. Remind them to cover the answer choices before making a prediction.



Try It Out: Sample Answers

Go over the answers together.

1 (1)

The only physical trait mentioned in the paragraph is whiskers. This is the best prediction. (4) might be a tempting choice because it is mentioned in the passage. However, it is a physical *state*, not a physical *trait*. (2) is also tempting, but it is not mentioned in the passage. If any students chose (2) or (4), ask them if they covered the answer choices and made a prediction. Most likely they did not. Most students will not even consider “hunger” or “eyes” as answers—*unless* they see them listed as a possible choice. This is why Predicting can be very helpful.



2 (4)

The very first sentence of the paragraph provides the answer. Students will be able to predict this answer and find the choice that matches very quickly. Point out that students who do *not* predict here will have to look at each answer choice and scan the paragraph to see if the animals listed are mentioned. For a question this simple, this is far too much work and a waste of valuable test time.



Moving On

“Some questions are phrased in a way that makes Predicting difficult or impossible. And sometimes, your predictions may not give you the correct answer. What should you do? Let’s take a look.”

The Eliminating Strategy

Another powerful strategy for multiple-choice questions is Eliminating. When you eliminate answer choices, you increase your chances of choosing the correct answer. Fill in the chart below.

# of Choices Eliminated	Chance of Guessing the Answer
0	25%
1	_____
2	_____
3	_____

Eliminate Extremes

Extreme language includes words such as *never*, *always*, *none*, *all*, *best*, and *worst*.

What Can You Eliminate?

- Which of the following helps Luke Skywalker attack the Death Star?
 - ▶ Eliminate choices that use extreme language.
 - He never doubts that he can win.
 - ▶ Eliminate choices that are too narrow or broad.
 - He is a Jedi knight in training.
 - ▶ Eliminate choices that are true but do not answer the question.
 - He sees his friend and teacher killed by Darth Vader.
 - ▶ Eliminate choices that contradict the passage.
 - He learns that it is his destiny to side with his father.

Try It Out!

See how many answer choices you can eliminate without even seeing the passage.

- There is enough information to show that Zachary won the race because he
 - didn't try hard
 - trained very well
 - despised running
 - was the best in the world

Task

Students will learn how to eliminate incorrect answer choices.

Delivery

Read the first paragraph of text on the student page. Then review the chart and ask students to supply the missing percentages.

Answers:

- 1 choice eliminated = 33.3% (3 choices left)
- 2 choices eliminated = 50% (2 choices left)
- 3 choices eliminated = 100% (1 choice left—the correct answer)

Make sure students see that the odds increase dramatically, the more choices they can eliminate.

ELL⁷

Tell students that the sample question under “What Can You Eliminate?” has four incorrect answer choices. Each choice represents a different *type* of wrong answer choice that students should be on the lookout for on the Regents Exam. Review each of the answer choices. If your students are unfamiliar with *Star Wars*, you may want to craft another example question and answer choices.

- 1 Test passages tend to be mild and middle-of-the-road. Extreme language, extreme emotions, and passionate reactions should be suspect in answer choices.
- 2 Big Picture questions may have choices that refer to one section, not the whole passage. Little Picture questions may have choices that are too broad and general.
- 3 The information in the answer choice is accurate, but it does not answer the question being posed. Students working too quickly will often fall for choices like these.
- 4 Contradictions should be easy to eliminate, but many students choose them. Only choose an answer like this if the word “not” or “except” is in the question.

Do the Try It Out exercise together as a class.

Try It Out: Answers

2 (2)

Even without a passage attached, students can find this answer. (1) does not make sense if Zachary won. (3) is extremely negative, and does not make much sense. (4) is also extreme and, therefore, suspect (it *may* be correct, but chances are, it's not).

Moving On

“Whenever you can, of course, use Predicting and Eliminating together.”

New York High School

Predicting and Eliminating Together

The Predicting and Eliminating strategies are most powerful when used together. This combination allows you to think about the correct answer, as well as to rule out improbable answer choices.

Try It Out!

1 How many states begin and end with the same letter?

- (1) 1
- (2) 4
- (3) 40
- (4) 50

Strategy Combo

Throughout this course, you have learned a number of test-taking strategies. The more that you can combine, the better.

Task

Students will demonstrate how a combination of Predicting and Eliminating can save time and help them find the correct answer.

Delivery

Read the paragraph at the top of the student page. Students should always attempt to predict the correct answer. If they can't, or it does not yield the correct answer, they should begin eliminating incorrect answer choices.

Have a student read the text below the question, showing how Predicting and Eliminating together would quickly yield the correct answer. Point out that this method is *much* faster than having to calculate the answer from scratch, which would require listing many state names.

Answer:

1 (2)

You can think of Alabama, Ohio ... a good prediction would be about 10. That number is not a choice, so here is where the Eliminating strategy begins. The first choice is too low and can be eliminated. Choices (3) and (4) are way too high and can also be eliminated. The correct answer must be (2).

Moving On

"Now let's try it on a reading passage."

Try It Out!

Use the Predicting and Eliminating strategies together to answer the questions below.

Koalas look like cuddly animals. Seen in photographs, their button noses and furry ears make them popular with children everywhere. But visitors to Australia are often surprised to find out what koalas are really like. Koalas often spit and hiss at people who come near. In reality, koalas are not very sociable animals.

- 1 What is the main reason this paragraph was written?
 - (1) to describe the animals of Australia
 - (2) to tell you the truth about koalas
 - (3) to compare different animals
 - (4) to warn tourists in Australia

- 2 Koalas are different from people's common perceptions of them because
 - (1) they are cute and cuddly
 - (2) they have button noses and furry ears
 - (3) they spit and hiss at people
 - (4) they are popular with children

Putting the Answer Choices to Work

Predicting and Eliminating are two ways of putting multiple-choice answer choices to work for you. This means that instead of re-reading a whole passage to research the answer, you find the most sensible answer choice. In the end, you save time and energy.

Time = Points

Use Predicting and Eliminating to keep moving through the Regents at a comfortable pace.

Task

Students will practice Predicting and Eliminating.

Delivery

Have students do the Try It Out exercise. Remind them to scan the questions before reading, and tell them to use Predicting and Eliminating to find the correct answers.



Try It Out: Sample Answers

Review the answers together.

1 (2)

Prediction: to disprove common misconceptions about koalas.

Students should recognize this as a Big Picture question, and should know to make a prediction that sums up the main idea. If Predicting doesn't yield (2), several answer choices can be eliminated. (1) is too general and broad. (3) is not accurate; no other animals are mentioned. (4) is accurate, but it only refers to a portion of the paragraph; it does not summarize the whole thing.

2 (3)

Prediction: they're mean.

Predictions do not have to match the answer choice word-for-word. In the sample prediction above, no answer choice matches exactly. However, it is close enough to the correct answer to see that (3) is correct. (1), (2), and (4) are not different from common perceptions; they *are* common perceptions.



Moving On

"Now let's try these strategies with some real passages and questions."

New York High School

Guided Practice

from The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

by MARK TWAIN

Image Is Everything

Images can communicate powerful feelings and ideas in very few words. Make sure you aren't skipping them or racing through them—they have a lot to tell you.

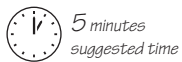
- Tom appeared on the sidewalk with a bucket of whitewash and a long-handled brush. He surveyed the fence, and all gladness left him and a deep melancholy settled down upon his spirit. Thirty yards of board-fence nine feet high. Life to him seemed hollow, and existence but a burden.
- 5 Sighing, he dipped his brush and passed it along the topmost plank; repeated the operation; did it again; compared the insignificant whitewashed streak with the far-reaching continent of unwhitewashed fence, and sat down on a tree-box discouraged. He began to think of the fun he had planned for this day, and his sorrows multiplied. Soon the
- 10 boys would come tripping along on all sorts of delicious expeditions, and they would make a world of fun of him for having to work—the very thought of it burnt him like fire. At this dark and hopeless moment an inspiration burst upon him! Nothing less than a great, magnificent inspiration.
- 15 He took up his brush and went tranquilly to work. Ben Rogers hove in sight presently—the very boy, of all boys, whose ridicule he had been dreading. Ben's gait was the hop-skip-and-jump—proof enough that his heart was light and his anticipations high. Tom surveyed his last touch with the eye of an artist, then he gave his brush another gentle sweep and
- 20 surveyed the result, as before. Ben ranged up alongside of him. Tom's mouth watered for the apple Ben was eating, but he stuck to his work. Ben said: "Hello, old chap, you got to work, hey?"
- Tom wheeled suddenly and said: "Why, it's you, Ben! I warn't noticing."
- "Say—I'm going in a-swimming, I am. Don't you wish you could? But
- 25 of course you'd druther WORK—wouldn't you? Course you would!"
- Tom contemplated the boy a bit, and said: "What do you call work?"
- "Why, ain't THAT work?"
- Tom resumed his whitewashing, and answered carelessly: "Well, maybe it is, and maybe it ain't. All I know is, it suits Tom Sawyer."
- 30 "Oh come, now, you don't mean to let on that you LIKE it?"
- The brush continued to move.
- "Like it? Well, I don't see why I oughtn't to like it. Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?"
- That put the thing in a new light. Ben stopped nibbling his apple. Tom
- 35 swept his brush daintily back and forth—stepped back to note the effect—added a touch here and there—Ben watching every move and getting more and more interested, more and more absorbed. Presently he said:
- "Say, Tom, let ME whitewash a little."

Task

Students will read a literary passage.

Delivery

Have students read the story excerpt on this page and answer the questions on page 171. Remind them to use the 4-Step Method for Reading Comprehension, and to use Predicting and Eliminating when answering questions. Even if students find the questions easy at this stage, it is important that they go through the process of using the strategies, so they will feel comfortable using them on more difficult questions later—and on the test itself.



Moving On

No transition is needed here. Students should work straight through to page 171.

1 Which of the following statements best expresses this selection's central ideas?

STEP 1 Cover the answer choices with your hand.

↓ It is a main idea question.

STEP 2 Predict what the answer will be.

↓ The answer should summarize the entire passage.

- (1) Household chores are boring and stupid.
- (2) Friends are easily fooled.
- (3) Anything can seem fun if presented right.
- (4) Ben is not as smart as Tom.

STEP 3 Match your prediction to the best answer choice.

↓ If you cannot find a match, eliminate as many answer choices as you can.

2 In paragraph 1, the phrase, "a continent of unwhitewashed fence," is used to

STEP 1 Cover the answer choices with your hand.

↓ _____

STEP 2 Predict what the answer will be.

↓ _____

- (1) highlight Tom's overactive imagination
- (2) set up a contrast with the area of fence Tom has painted
- (3) describe in realistic terms the size of the fence Tom must paint
- (4) show Tom's diligence and work ethic

STEP 3 Match your prediction to the best answer choice.

↓ _____

Predict First, Eliminate Last

First, try to predict the answer. If you cannot find a good match, eliminate unlikely choices.

Task

Students will use Predicting and Eliminating to answer multiple-choice questions.

Delivery

Review the answers together.

Guided Practice: Answers

1 (3)

(1) and (4) are details within the story, and are both presented here much more negatively and harshly than in the story itself. (2) is a more general statement, but it, too, is fairly negative and harsh. If this were the main idea, *Tom Sawyer* would be a much more cynical book. Ben may, indeed, be fooled, but he does still have fun. The tone of (1), (2), and (4) does not fit the story, so those choices can be eliminated.

S1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

2 (2)

Students may not be able to make a prediction without going back to the text (paragraph 1) to see how the phrase is used. However, Elimination is still a useful strategy. (3) can be eliminated right away. There is nothing “realistic” about the use of “continent” here; it is clearly an exaggeration. (4) can also be eliminated, as it contradicts the entire story. Tom *has* no diligence and work ethic. (1) will seem tempting, but this is not how the image is used in the story. Students going back to the text will find it spelled out for them that the image sets up a comparison between the painted and unpainted sections of the fence.

S2: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

Moving On

“Now it’s time to try a longer passage, with a few more questions and a little less help.”

ELL¹¹

New York High School

Independent Practice

From Cacao to Chocolate

The word “chocolate” is used to describe a variety of foods made from the beans of the cacao tree. These valuable beans grow inside of large pods that sprout from a large tree that grows in areas close to the equator, where it is warm year-round. Inside the pod is a layer of sweet pulp that has
5 anywhere from 20-60 seeds or cocoa beans embedded in it. Over 1,000,000 tons of cocoa beans are harvested every year.

The fat in the cocoa bean, known as cocoa butter, can be used to make soaps, cosmetics, and medicines. The residue is ground to a powder, known as cocoa, which can be used for beverages and flavoring. Products made
10 from cacao are nutritious because of the large proportion of fat, carbohydrates, and protein.

Some of your favorite foods and drinks may contain cocoa. Others may contain chocolate. The difference is this: chocolate is a product in which the cocoa butter has been preserved.

15 The first people known to have made chocolate were the Aztecs of Mexico, who used cacao seeds to make a bitter but tasty drink. It was not until Hernan Cortez’s exploration of Mexico in 1519 that Europeans first learned of this delicacy.

Cortez came to the New World in search of gold, but his interest was
20 also fired by the Aztec’s strange drink. When Cortez returned to Spain, his ship’s cargo included three chests of cacao beans. It was from these beans that Europe experienced its first taste of what seemed to be a very unusual beverage. The drink soon became popular among those people wealthy enough to afford it. Over the next century, cafés specializing in chocolate
25 drinks began to appear throughout Europe.

Over time Europeans began to experiment with cocoa and chocolate, creating so many tasty and wonderful desserts that most people have forgotten where the delicacy originally came from. North Americans whose knowledge of chocolate is limited to bars made by Nestlé and Hershey
30 would probably be surprised at the circuitous route that chocolate has taken—from Mexico to Europe via Cortez, and from Europe back to the Americas as Europeans began to settle the territories that became the United States.

Chocolate remains popular to this day. People all over the world enjoy
35 chocolate bars, chocolate cake, chocolate sprinkles, and even chocolate soda. In fact, in Asia, one delicacy is chocolate-covered ants! People enjoy this nutritious food as a snack at the movies or when they are just hanging around. The chocolate ant craze has not yet caught on in America, but Americans enjoy chocolate in countless other ways.

Task

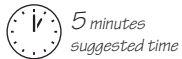
Students will read an informational article.

Delivery

Have students read the article on page 172, and answer the questions on page 173. Remind them to use the 4-Step Method for Reading Comprehension, and to use Predicting and Eliminating to answer the questions.



12



Moving On

No transition is needed here. Students should work straight through to page 173.

- 1 Europeans first experienced chocolate when
- (1) wealthy people imported it
 - (2) the Aztec drink was invented
 - (3) chocolate ants were introduced
 - (4) Cortez returned from Mexico

HINT Do any choices not make sense? Eliminate them!

- 2 What happened to chocolate in the century after Cortez returned from Spain?
- (1) It was scorned by the wealthy.
 - (2) It was banned in Spain.
 - (3) It became popular in Europe.
 - (4) It was sought-after in Asia.

HINT Which choices have words that contradict the emotions and feelings of the passage?

- 3 The Aztecs probably made use of the cacao bean because
- (1) it had a high fat and protein content
 - (2) it did not weigh down sea chests
 - (3) many foreigners were allergic to it
 - (4) the taste was appealing to them

HINT Which inference is in the ballpark of the main idea?

- 4 In line 36, the author uses an exclamation point to
- (1) show amazement
 - (2) express disgust
 - (3) raise alarm
 - (4) question facts

HINT Use Predicting and Eliminating to narrow down your choices.

1 _____
2 _____

3 _____
4 _____

Task

Students will answer questions based on the article.

Delivery

Go over the answers together.

Independent Practice: Answers

1 (4) (1) occurs later in the passage than the first experience. (2) may be tempting for students who are either working too quickly or who have not used Predicting. The question asks when *Europeans* first experienced chocolate, not when people in general first discovered it. (3) does not make sense with the question.

ELL 13

S1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

2 (3) Negative answer choices, (1) and (2), can be eliminated easily. If students are not sure whether (3) or (4) is correct, they can go back to the text to check. Asia, (4), is not mentioned until the present time period, in the final paragraph.

ELL 14

S1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

3 (4) The entire passage discusses how wonderful and tasty chocolate is. Aztecs probably used it because it tasted good. (1) sounds reasonable and “scientific,” and it refers to facts stated in the article. However, nowhere does it say that the *Aztecs* knew about these properties of the cacao bean. (2) refers to the Spaniards, not the Aztecs, and (3) likewise talks of foreigners.

ELL 15

S3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

4 (1) (2) will be the tempting answer choice here, if students draw on their own opinions instead of textual evidence. There is nothing to suggest that the author is disgusted—or alarmed for that matter (3). As for (4), this exclamation point by itself would probably not be enough to suggest that the author doubts or questions the facts she is relating. In this case, the exclamation point merely emphasizes the strangeness of the fact and the author’s amazement.

S3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

Teacher’s Note

If you are teaching a 40-minute class, you are probably close to the end of it by now. You will probably need another period to do the Test Practice exercise that closes the unit.

Moving On

“Now let’s try a full-length passage and a whole page of questions, without any hints. Make sure your desks are clear of everything except your books and a pen or pencil. We are entering the Regents Zone.”

Test Practice

Teacher's Notes

This section of the *Advantage* unit should replicate test conditions as much as possible. Students should be at single desks, in straight rows. There should be nothing on their desks except their *Advantage* books, opened to this page, and a pen or a pencil.

Delivery

Tell students **not** to turn the page until they are told to.

Tell students that they will have 10 minutes to read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

ELL¹⁶

Moving On

"You may now turn the page and begin work. You have 10 minutes."

New York High School

Zora Neale Hurston

In August of 1973, the African-American novelist Alice Walker set out to find the unmarked grave of her literary idol—a woman who had written novels, stories, plays, anthropological folklore studies, and an autobiography. Once a well-known member of the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, this woman had passed into obscurity and penury, dying penniless in a state-funded nursing home. By the 1970s, her works had gone out of print and were unread and unknown by most people, including authors and scholars. Who was this woman, and why had she been so completely forgotten?

10 Zora Neale Hurston was born in Notasulga, Alabama, possibly as early as 1891, although she officially claimed 1901—and, later on, 1910—as birth dates. For most of her childhood, she lived in the all-black town of Eatonville, Florida, where, she said, “The only white people I knew passed through the town going to or coming from Orlando.” Her father was a sharecropper, preacher, and carpenter, and her mother was a schoolteacher. She was a bright and capable student, but family tragedies bounced her from one uncaring relative to another, and it was not until 1918 that Hurston was able to complete her high school education.

At Howard University, she began to write for a campus magazine, which published her first story, “John Redding Goes to Sea.” In 1925, Hurston moved to New York City, arriving just as the Harlem Renaissance was reaching its peak. In New York, she worked alongside literary stars like Langston Hughes. A play of hers even won a contest judged by the famed playwright Eugene O’Neill.

25 Hurston received a scholarship, prompting her move to New York, and enrolled in Barnard College to study anthropology with the well-known and influential scholar, Franz Boas. She decided to focus her studies on her own people and culture, and returned to the South to collect folk stories from rural, African-American families like her own.

30 In 1928, Zora Neale Hurston published one of her best-known pieces, an essay entitled, “How It Feels To Be Colored Me.” In that essay, she said, “I am not tragically colored. There is no great sorrow dammed up in my soul, nor lurking behind my eyes. I do not mind at all. Someone is always at my elbow reminding me that I am the granddaughter of slaves. It fails to register depression with me. I am off to a flying start and I must not halt in the stretch to look behind and weep.”

Her fierce pride in her southern, rural heritage and culture put her at odds with other members of the Harlem Renaissance, who were working very hard to be seen and accepted as urban, sophisticated intellectuals. Her advocacy of women’s issues set her apart from her contemporaries as well.

Task

Students will read a biographical essay.

Delivery

Do not answer questions or help students during this section. If you notice students are having trouble at a particular section, make note of it so that you can discuss it when you go over the answers.

As students work through the passage and the questions, move around the room and watch them at work. Check to see if they are using the Predicting and Eliminating Strategies to answer questions.



Moving On

No transition is needed here. Students should work straight through to page 178.

During this period, Hurston worked across disciplines, writing fiction as well as folklore, occasionally combining the two. Her novel, *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, published in 1934, became a Book-of-the-Month Club selection.

45 In 1937, working in Haiti on a Guggenheim fellowship to study Voodoo spiritual practices, Hurston wrote what has become her most famous novel today, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

Throughout the late 1930s and early 1940s, Zora Neale Hurston continued to write and publish, winning literary awards and other
50 distinctions. In 1943, she was given a Distinguished Alumni Award from Howard University.

The late 1940s saw the beginning of Hurston's decline. Although she continued to write and get published, she lived in small, cramped apartments, alone (after several marriages and divorces). By 1950, she was
55 working as a maid in Miami, to pay her bills. Her public stand against desegregation in the 1950s alienated her from many of her contemporaries; having grown up in a self-sufficient, all-black town, she felt little need to be included in "White America" or its institutions. The Civil Rights Movement passed her by, and her works began to fall out of print, in favor of more
60 recent, militant works by authors like Richard Wright.

In the 1950s, Hurston worked as a librarian and substitute teacher in various Florida towns. A debilitating stroke in 1959 left her unable to work. Without any resources to pay for medical care, she was forced to enter the St. Lucie County Welfare Home, where she died in early 1960. Because she
65 had no money, she was buried without ceremony in an unmarked grave.

Zora Neale Hurston's work remained out of print and forgotten until Alice Walker, author of *The Color Purple*, went looking for her grave. Her essay about her search, "In Search of Zora Neale Hurston," launched a revival of interest in the forgotten author. Hurston's novels and folklore
70 collections were reprinted, and are now regularly read and studied in schools. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* sold over a million copies between 1990 and 1995 and, in 1996, she became the first African-American woman to be published in the distinguished Library of America series.

Hurston's grave is no longer unmarked and forgotten. Alice Walker
75 arranged for a headstone to be erected so that future generations could visit and pay their respects. It reads:

Zora Neale Hurston
"A Genius of the South"
Novelist Folklorist Anthropologist
1901 – 1960

Task

Students will continue reading a biographical essay.

Delivery

Do not answer questions or help students during this section. If you notice students are having trouble at a particular section, make note of it so that you can discuss it when you go over the answers.

As students work through the passage and the questions, move around the room and watch them at work. Check to see if they are using the Predicting and Eliminating strategies to answer questions.

Moving On

No transition is needed here. Students should work straight through to page 178.

New York High School

Multiple-Choice Questions

Directions (1–5): Select the best suggested answer to each question and write its number on the grid provided at the bottom of this page.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 What is the author's main purpose in writing this essay?</p> <p>(1) to inform you about an important American author</p> <p>(2) to protest the unfair treatment of Zora Neale Hurston</p> <p>(3) to analyze the works of Zora Neale Hurston</p> <p>(4) to honor Alice Walker for reclaiming Hurston's work</p> | <p>4 In 1950, Hurston worked as a</p> <p>(1) teacher</p> <p>(2) librarian</p> <p>(3) anthropologist</p> <p>(4) maid</p> |
| <p>2 What might have caused Hurston to misrepresent her age by nearly 20 years?</p> <p>(1) She wanted people to think she was younger than she actually was.</p> <p>(2) She didn't want people to know anything about her.</p> <p>(3) She wanted people to see her as urban and sophisticated.</p> <p>(4) She was unhappy about living with uncaring relatives.</p> | <p>5 Which word best describes the structure of this essay?</p> <p>(1) chronological</p> <p>(2) analytical</p> <p>(3) symbolic</p> <p>(4) editorial</p> |
| <p>3 What happened after Alice Walker went in search of Hurston's grave?</p> <p>(1) Hurston's novels went out of print.</p> <p>(2) Walker arranged for a headstone to be erected.</p> <p>(3) Hurston passed into obscurity.</p> <p>(4) Walker wrote <i>The Color Purple</i>.</p> | |

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

Task

Students will answer questions on the biographical essay.

Test Practice: Answers

1 (1)

(2) is a little extreme; the unfair treatment is mentioned factually, but never protested by the author. In (3), the word *analyze* makes the choice incorrect. Hurston's works are mentioned, but are hardly discussed, much less analyzed. (4) also becomes incorrect because of a single word: *honor*. The article focuses on Hurston and honors her achievements, not Walker's.

S1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

ELL 17

2 (1)

The fact that Hurston chose 1901 is a good clue. That particular year would have made her seem to be 17 when she graduated from high school, instead of 27. Only (1) connects to this fact. (2) is too extreme. Changing one's age does not keep *all* information from people. (3) does not make sense. Younger does not mean urban or sophisticated. (4) is probably true, but it does not answer the question.

S3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

ELL 18

3 (2)

What makes the question tricky is that the event that chronologically follows Walker's search, which is mentioned in the first paragraph, does not occur in the text until the *last* paragraph. In between is the story of Hurston's entire life. (1), (3), and (4) all occur *before* Walker's search, even though they are mentioned after it in the text.

S1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

4 (4)

This question can be answered simply by scanning the text for "1950." (1), (2), and (3), are all jobs Hurston held at other points in her life. "1950s" may tempt or confuse some students.

S1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

ELL 19

5 (1)

The question itself is fairly straightforward: how is the essay structured? It starts in the present, goes back in time, and works its way through Hurston's life, stage by stage, until we are back in the present. Students who use Predicting should be looking for some word that relates to the passage of time. Students who do not know the word *chronological* may still be able to eliminate some of the other choices for *not* relating to time.

S3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

ELL 20

Moving On

Before we move on, let's take a few minutes to review what you learned in Unit 7.

Unit 7 ReKAP

Look back at the strategies in this unit and review them. Then fill in the spaces below to show what you have learned.

- When facing multiple-choice questions, I will combine strategies by asking:
 - What kind of _____ is it?
 - What _____ should I use with it?
 - What additional _____ do I need to get the correct answer?
- To avoid distractor answer choices, I will use _____.
- To use the Predicting strategy, my first step will be to cover the _____.
- When I'm not sure what the answer is, I will _____ answer choices that are extreme or unreasonable.

Task

Students will review what they have learned in Unit 7.

Delivery

This ReKAP exercise can be a useful homework or introductory activity for a day following the lesson. It can also serve as a quick review before the Test Practice exercise, if it has been a day or more since students worked through the unit. You may allow students to use their notes if you choose, or have them work solely from memory.

ReKAP: Answers

- When facing multiple-choice questions, I will combine my strategies by asking:
 - What kind of **question** is it?
 - What **strategy** should I use with it?
 - What additional **information** do I need to get the correct answer?
- To avoid distractor answer choices, I will use **Predicting**.
- To use the Predicting strategy, my first step will be to cover the **answer choices**.
- When I'm not sure what the answer is, I will **Eliminate** answer choices that are extreme or unreasonable.

Moving Beyond

Use these activities throughout the year to help develop students' abilities to answer multiple-choice questions.

1. Give students open-ended questions based on a reading passage. After they have answered them, have the students turn them into multiple-choice questions. Let them have the experience of trying to create a variety of tempting but incorrect answer choices; it may make them more aware of the snares being laid for them by test makers.
2. Give students plenty of practice in eliminating things that do not fit or belong in many contexts and situations. Have them identify details that do not support main ideas, details that do not fit with each other, pieces of text that have a different tone from others, causes that do not lead to a given effect, and so on.
3. Whenever you review multiple-choice questions, always remember to ask students *why* they chose a particular wrong answer. It can give you a lot of insight into their thought processes.
4. Vary the physical layout of the room often throughout the year. Many students become nervous on Test Day when desks are rearranged for the first time.

ELL Instruction

page T163

- ¹ Regarding question 4, you may want to give ELL students the choice of answering an alternate version of the question: “What advice would you give to a middle-school student who is an English-language learner preparing for an eighth grade English-Language Arts test?”
- ² Encourage ELL students to contribute the additional strategies they have learned for understanding difficult test passages. These include: asking questions about the title; being aware of the passive voice when determining the Big Picture; guessing words in context by using antonyms, synonyms, stated definitions, parts of speech, and prefixes; knowing when to ignore an unknown word; and underlining and jotting down synonyms for key words in the questions.

page T164

- ³ See “Connect the Dots”, on page 96 of Unit 4, if ELL students need further help with this concept.

page T166

- ⁴ In order to help ELL students focus on the task at hand (practicing predicting skills), you may want to preview some of the more difficult vocabulary in this passage. Find out if students know the meanings of *traits* (distinguishing features or qualities) and *instincts* (in this context, behaviors animals are born with, as opposed to those they may have learned) and have them add these terms to their notebooks.
- ⁵ The key word is *physical*. Check to see that ELL students underlined it and were able to find it in the passage to confirm their prediction.
- ⁶ You might also point out that *house cat* and *lion* are among the best-known members of the feline family. Going for what is obvious often helps in Predicting.

page T167

- ⁷ Make sure ELL students read the sidebar entitled “Eliminate Extremes” and are familiar with the meaning and function of each word.

page T169

- 8 Remind ELL students to underline and jot down synonyms for key words.
- 9 ELL students who don't know the word *hiss* (make a sound by blowing air through a small opening, often to show displeasure) may have had trouble with this, but you can point out how they could have guessed its general meaning or "charge" by using Context Clues ("But visitors..." "In reality...").

page T170

- 10 Remind ELL students of additional strategies, and tell them to combine them with the teaching points of this unit: Predicting and Eliminating. (The additional strategies include: asking questions about the title; being aware of the passive voice when determining the Big Picture; guessing words in context by using antonyms, synonyms, stated definitions, parts of speech, negative prefixes and prefixes of time and order; knowing when to ignore an unknown word; and underlining and jotting down synonyms for key words in the questions.)

Depending on the proficiency of your ELL students, you may want to either preview the difficult words and expressions in this passage, or let them rely on their guessing strategies at this point.

If you want to preview potentially difficult words and expressions, you might point out the following: *whitewash* (a white-colored solution used for covering walls and fences; similar to paint) and *continent* (a large land mass such as Europe). Students will need to know these in order to answer the questions.

Time permitting, it may also help ELL students if you pull out and put on the board some of the sentences with examples of dialect and archaic and ungrammatical forms. See if ELL students can guess the meanings of (or give synonyms for) the underlined terms from these sentences. It may help ELL students' comprehension if you read the sentences aloud.

- Ben Rogers hove in sight. (appeared)
- Ben's gait was the hop-skip-and-jump. . . (the way he moved)
- Hello, old chap, you've got to work, hey? (friend, buddy)
- Why it's you, Ben! I warn't noticing. (wasn't)
- But of course you'd druther WORK—wouldn't you? (rather)
- Well, maybe it is, and maybe it ain't. (isn't)

page T171

- ¹¹ If ELL students had trouble with question 2, it may be because they didn't understand vocabulary in the answer choices such as *overactive*, *realistic*, *diligence*, and *work ethic*. Make sure they understand these terms and add them to their notebooks.

page T172

- ¹² Although this is independent practice, give ELL students help if they ask for it.

Remind ELL students of the additional strategies (asking questions about the title; being aware of the passive voice when determining the Big Picture; guessing words in context by using antonyms, synonyms, stated definitions, parts of speech, and prefixes; knowing when to ignore an unknown word, and underlining and jotting down synonyms for key words in the questions).

If you want to preview difficult words and expressions as opposed to letting students guess as they encounter them (see note 10), you may want to go over *residue* (paragraph 2: what's left over after something is removed); *craze* (paragraph 7: an extremely popular practice); *caught on* (paragraph 7: become popular); and *fired* (paragraph 5: awakened, increased).

If time allows, the word *circuitous* (paragraph 6) provides an opportunity to teach another vocabulary-guessing strategy: definition by example. Point out the expression in its context in the last sentence in paragraph 6, and the phrase: "... from Mexico to Europe ... and from Europe back to the Americas..." (You may also want to sketch a map on the board.) Explain how the example of the route gives students an idea of what *circuitous* means (indirect).

If necessary, give students further examples, such as:

Spinach is nutritious. For example, it contains iron and vitamin B.

Point out that if students don't know the meaning of *nutritious*, the example (*iron* and *vitamin B*) helps them figure it out.

page T173

- 13 If ELL students had trouble with this question, point out that the answer is in paragraph 4 (“It was not until. . .”).
- 14 If ELL students had difficulty with this question, point out that the key term is “in the century after Cortez,” and that they can find the answer at the end of paragraph 5 and the beginning of paragraph 6.
- 15 ELL students who had difficulty with this item may still be uncomfortable with making inferences and may need to review Unit 4.

page T175

- 16 Remind ELL students of the additional strategies, if necessary (asking questions about the title; being aware of the passive voice when determining the Big Picture; guessing words in context by using antonyms, synonyms, stated definitions, part of speech, and prefixes; knowing when to ignore an unknown word, and underlining and jotting down synonyms for key words in the questions).

page T178

- 17 Make sure ELL students understand the “purpose” words (*to inform, to protest, to analyze, to honor*) and add them to their notebooks.
- 18 Remind ELL students that *might* is a clue that this is an inference question. Encourage them to use common sense in predicting answers to questions such as these (i.e., what’s the most obvious or common reason a person lies about his or her age?).

Students may also have had trouble with the difficult vocabulary in the answer choices. Make sure they understand and record in their notebooks any new words such as *urban* (related to a big city) or *sophisticated* (complex; understanding the ways of the world).

- 19 If ELL students had difficulty with this question, they may need further practice in scanning. (See note 25, Unit 2.)
- 20 ELL students who had trouble with this question may not have understood the meanings of the words in the answer choices. Define them (*chronological* = presenting a topic in order of time; *analytical* = approaching a topic by breaking it into parts and commenting on the parts; *symbolic* = discussing the hidden meanings of a topic or its parts; *editorial* = giving one’s opinion about a topic) and have them add these terms to their notebooks.

page T179

- ²¹ Remind ELL students that they also learned to guess vocabulary by finding an example.

