

BASIC STRATEGIES FOR Answering Test Questions



- 1** If the question asks you to define the word, replace the original word with each of the answer choices. Pick the one that sounds best when read in the sentence.

Little Bo-Peep has lost her sheep,
And doesn't know where to find them;
Leave them alone, and they'll come home,
Wagging their tails behind them.
What is the best definition of "wagging?"

- A** shaking
- B** movement
- C** running
- D** jumping



The correct answer is A.
Replace the word "wagging" with each of the choices. The word that makes the most sense is "shaking."

- 2** Prove your correct answer by underlining the section in the test passage that supports the answer.

Little Bo-Peep has lost her sheep,
And doesn't know where to find them;
Leave them alone, and they'll come home,
Wagging their tails behind them.

Why should Little Bo Peep be happy?

- A** She has lost her sheep
- B** Her sheep will return on their own.
- C** Her sheep like to wag their tails.
- D** She cannot find her sheep.

The right answer is B.

I underlined the idea that they will come home because it is the best reason she would be happy, not sad.

- 3** Even when the question asks for an answer that is not clearly stated in the text, underline clues in the passage that help you find the right answer. Cross out answers that do not make sense.

Little Bo-Peep has lost her sheep,
And doesn't know where to find them;
Leave them alone, and they'll come home,
Wagging their tails behind them.

What does the story imply about the sheep?

- ~~**A** They do not like Little Bo-Peep.~~
- ~~**B** They like to eat biscuits when they return home.~~
- C** They have been trained how to find their home.
- D** They are happiest when they are lost.

The right answer is C.

I underlined the idea that the sheep would come home because it supports that they would have been trained to get there.

Answers A& B do not make sense based on the rest of the poem, so I crossed them out.

BASIC STRATEGIES FOR Answering Test Questions

Multiple Choice

- Look carefully at similar-sounding answers. Find the more precise answer. If each answer has two descriptive words, one of those descriptive words is incorrect. Eliminate the option with the one incorrect word.
- If the question asks you to define a word, replace the original word with each of the answer choices. Pick the one that sounds best when read in the sentence.
- Whenever possible, justify your answer by underlining the section in the test passage that supports your reasoning.
- If the question asks about themes or an overall idea about the passage, look at each topic sentence and conclusion sentence. Also pay special attention to the beginning and end of the entire passage. Use the ideas presented in these areas to come to a conclusion.
- Think about theme in regards to idea + attitude. What is the main idea of the passage and what is the speaker's attitude toward that idea?
- In poetry, use the last stanza or last few lines to find the poem's theme. Again think idea + attitude.

Short Answer

- Identify with a number each aspect of the question to be answered. For example: (1.) *Identify the speaker's tone* (2. & 3.) *Provide two examples where she clearly uses this tone.* Then number the parts of your response to make sure you covered all aspects of the question. For example: (1.) *The speaker's tone is awestruck and she uses it clearly as she describes* (2.) *The flower as "mystifying and magical."* She also calls (3.) *the trees "majestic and mysterious."*

Essay

- Be sure to outline or web before beginning your essay.
- Be sure to write a thesis and have a focus for each body paragraph. Try to underline and number specific quotes to use in each paragraph.
- Decide on an interesting quote, general idea, or analogy that relates to your topic that you can use to begin your paper and expand on for your last sentence.

Narrative

- Identify the basic plot structure for your story (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution) before beginning.
- Try to identify two or three metaphors or similes to use in your writing and one scene to fully develop with specific details.

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