

Applied Practice
in

*Contemporary Nonfiction
Selections
PRE-AP*/AP**

By various authors

RESOURCE GUIDE

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APPLIED PRACTICE
Resource Guide
Contemporary Nonfiction Selections
Pre-AP*/AP* Version

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STRATEGIES FOR MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

The multiple-choice section of the AP English Language and Composition Exam includes 45 multiple-choice questions in five sets that address reading (23-25 questions) and writing (20-22 questions). Skill categories tested include rhetorical situation, claims and evidence, reasoning and organization, and style.

The multiple-choice section of the AP English Literature and Composition Exam includes 55 multiple-choice questions, consisting of five sets of questions. (Each multiple-choice section will include at least two prose fiction passages and at least two poetry passages.) Skill categories tested include character, setting, structure, narration, figurative language, and literary argumentation.

CLASS APPROACH:

1. Walk through a multiple-choice selection with the class:
 - a. Read the passage and the questions aloud. Discuss any unfamiliar terms or words.
 - b. Analyze exactly what the questions are asking; note key terms or words.
 - c. Highlight or mark the parts of the passage in which the answers might be found.
 - d. Discuss each correct answer, including why it is a better choice than the distractors.
2. Assign a passage and set of questions as homework. The following day, put students into small groups and have them compare answers in order to arrive at a consensus. After the groups have reached a consensus, go over the correct answers and discuss any questions that posed difficulties for the students. Repeat this activity on a regular basis to help the students become proficient.
3. For homework, assign a passage from the booklet for students to annotate. The following day distribute the passage's questions for students to answer using the passage they annotated.
4. Have students keep track of the types of questions with which they have difficulty and see if a pattern emerges.
5. Teach mini-lessons on problem areas.
6. Use the close reading selections as quizzes or tests.
7. Challenge students to write their own questions over selected passages. Students' proficiency should increase after they become familiar with the questions' formats and levels of difficulty,

STRATEGIES FOR FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

The free-response section of the AP English Language and Composition Exam includes three questions: synthesis, rhetorical analysis, and argument. The questions will reflect the elements of the course's conceptual framework as determined by the College Board.

The free-response section of the AP English Literature and Composition Exam includes three questions: poetry analysis, prose fiction analysis, and literary argument. (There will be a higher number of 20th-century and contemporary texts used, rather than texts published before the 20th century.) The questions will reflect the elements of the course's conceptual framework as determined by the College Board.

NOTE: Beginning with the fall 2019-2020 school year, the College Board will rely on an analytic scoring rubric (rather than the traditional holistic scoring guide) at both AP English Readings. A 6-point scale will be used to evaluate an essay's thesis, evidence and commentary, and sophistication. The rubric is available on the College Board website (apcentral.collegeboard.com).

CLASS APPROACH:

1. Walk through a free-response question with the class:
 - a. Read the prompt aloud and have students note key words.
 - b. Discuss what the question is asking students to address.
 - Highlight/underline key parts of the passage that relate to the prompt
 - Annotate the passage
 - c. Have students develop thesis statements and share some of these statements with the class. Discuss the statements' strengths and weaknesses.
 - d. Discuss a possible organization for the essay and, in the case of a prompt with a passage, determine which parts of the passage should be referenced in support of the thesis. (Students might want to create an outline, diagram, or other organizer.)
 - e. Ask students to write the essay. (This can be un-timed early in the year.)
 - f. Display some student essays or read them aloud, discussing the essays' strengths and weaknesses.
 - g. Distribute and discuss the grading rubric so that students understand the grading criteria.
 - h. Reanalyze the essays according to the rubric and have students assign a score (0-6) for each essay.
2. Hand out a sample College Board free-response question, sample student responses, and the rubric, and discuss what constitutes a good response.
3. Assign a different free-response question for homework. The next day, put students into small groups to read each other's essays and score them using the rubric. Have each group share its "best" essay and explain why they rated it the best. An alternate approach is to assign numbers to each student so that the authorship of each essay is anonymous, and then distribute the essays at random among the groups.
4. Have students write in-class essays that are timed, perhaps beginning with longer response times and gradually reducing the time limit to 40 minutes.

The following passages are from various nonfiction selections and questions on their content, form, and style. After reading each passage, choose the best answer to each question.

Note: Pay particular attention to the requirement of questions that contain the words NOT, LEAST, or EXCEPT.

Passage 1, Questions 1-10 Read the following passage from “Brainworms, Sticky Music, and Catchy Tunes” from *Musicophilia* by Oliver Sacks carefully before you choose your answers.

Sometimes normal musical imagery crosses a line and becomes, so to speak, pathological, as when a certain fragment of music repeats itself incessantly, sometimes maddeningly, for days on end. These repetitions—often a short, well-defined phrase or theme of three or four bars—are apt to go on for hours or days, circling in the mind, before fading away. This endless repetition and the fact that the music in question may be irrelevant or trivial, not to one’s taste, or even hateful, suggest a coercive process, that the music has entered and subverted a part of the brain, forcing it to fire repetitively and autonomously.

Many people are set off by the theme music of a film or television show or an advertisement. This is not coincidental, for such music is designed, in the terms of the music industry, to “hook” the listener, to be “catchy” or “sticky,” to bore its way, like an earwig, into the ear or mind, hence the term “earworms” – though one might be inclined to call them “brainworms” instead. (One newsmagazine, in 1987, defined them, half facetiously, as “cognitively infectious musical agents.”)

A friend of mine, Nick Younes, described to me how he had been fixated on the song “Love and Marriage,” a tune written by James Van Heusen. A single hearing of this song—a Frank Sinatra rendition used as the theme song of the television show *Married . . . with Children*—was enough to hook Nick. He “got trapped inside the tempo of the song,” and it ran in his mind almost constantly for ten days. With incessant repetition, it soon lost its charm, its lilt, its musicality and its meaning. It intervened with his schoolwork, his thinking, his peace of mind, his sleep. He tried to stop it in a number of ways, all to no avail: “I jumped up and down. I counted to a hundred. I splashed water on my face. I tried talking loudly to myself, plugging my ears.” Finally it faded away—but as he told me this story, it returned and went on to haunt him again for several hours.

Though the term “earworm” was first used in the 1980s (as a literal translation of the German *Ohrwurm*), the concept is far from new. Nicolas Slonimsky, a composer and musicologist, was deliberately inventing musical forms or phrases that could hook the mind and force it to mimicry and repetition, as early as the 1920s.

Yet it seems to make little difference whether catchy songs have lyrics or not—the wordless themes of *Mission: Impossible* or Beethoven’s *Fifth* can be just as irresistible as an advertising jingle in which the words are almost inseparable from the music (as in Alka-Seltzer’s “Plop, plop, fizz, fizz” or Kit Kat’s “Gimme a break, gimme a break”).

The phenomenon of brainworms seems similar, too, to the way in which people with autism or Tourette’s syndrome or obsessive-compulsive disorder may become

hooked by a sound or a word or a noise and repeat it, or echo it, aloud or to themselves, for weeks at a time.[...]But while the involuntary repetition of movements, sounds, or words tends to occur in people with Tourette's or OCD or damage to the frontal lobes of the brain, the automatic or compulsive internal repetition of musical phrases is almost
40 universal—the clearest sign of the overwhelming, and at times helpless, sensitivity of our brains to music.

Brainworms are usually stereotyped and invariant in character. They tend to have a certain life expectancy, going full blast for hours or days and then dying away, apart from occasional afterspurts. But even when they have apparently faded, they tend to lie in
45 wait; a heightened sensitivity remains, so that a noise, an association, a reference to them is apt to set them off again, sometimes years later. And they are nearly always fragmentary. These are all qualities that epileptologists might find familiar, for they are strongly reminiscent of the behavior of a small, sudden-onset seizure focus, erupting and convulsing, then subsiding, but always ready to re-ignite.

50 There are, of course, inherent tendencies to repetition in music itself. Our poetry, our ballads, or songs are full of repetition. Every piece of classical music has its repeat marks or variations on a theme, and our greatest composers are masters of repetition; nursery rhymes and the little chants and songs we use to teach young children have choruses and refrains. We are attracted to repetition, even as adults; we want the stimulus
55 and the reward again and again, and in music we get it. Perhaps, therefore, we should not be surprised, should not complain if the balance sometimes shifts too far and our musical sensitivity becomes a vulnerability.

Is it possible that earworms are, to some extent, a modern phenomenon, at least a phenomenon not only more clearly recognized, but vastly more common now than ever
60 before? Although earworms have no doubt existed since our forebears first blew tunes on bone flutes or beat tattoos on fallen logs, it is significant that the term has come into common use only in the past few decades.

Half of us are plugged into iPods, immersed in daylong concerts of our own choosing, virtually oblivious to the environment—and for those who are not plugged in,
65 there is nonstop music, unavoidable and often of deafening intensity, in restaurants, bars, shops, and gyms. This barrage of music puts a certain strain on our exquisitely sensitive auditory systems, which cannot be overloaded without dire consequences. One such consequence is the ever-increasing prevalence of serious hearing loss, even among young people, and particularly among musicians. Another is the omnipresence of annoyingly
70 catchy tunes, the brainworms that arrive unbidden and leave only in their own time—catchy tunes that may, in fact, be nothing more than advertisements for toothpaste but are, neurologically, completely irresistible.

1. The idea that “brainworms” are part of “a coercive process” (line 7) is best supported by the word
 - (A) “pathological” (line 2)
 - (B) “maddeningly” (line 3)
 - (C) “circling” (line 4)
 - (D) “repetition” (line 5)
 - (E) “irrelevant” (line 6)

2. Which of the following words is grammatically and thematically parallel to “plugging” (line 23)?
 - (A) “lost” (line 20)
 - (B) “thinking” (line 21)
 - (C) “jumped” (line 22)
 - (D) “talking” (line 23)
 - (E) “loudly” (line 23)

3. The structure of the paragraph that begins in line 25 could best be described as
 - (A) a chronological account
 - (B) an assertion followed by examples
 - (C) an implied question followed by possible answers
 - (D) the statement of a position followed by several concessions
 - (E) a contrast between modern and former theories about music

4. The purpose of the parenthetical comment in line 32 is to
 - (A) show the relevance of brainworms to popular culture
 - (B) create a sense of immediacy about the history of brainworms
 - (C) remind the reader that the entire selection is subjective in nature
 - (D) add an authoritative tone to the author’s description of brainworms
 - (E) emphasize that brainworms are not limited only to memorable tunes

5. Which of the following words or phrases serves LEAST to emphasize music’s ability to “victimize” human beings?
 - (A) “circling in the mind” (line 4)
 - (B) “incessant repetition” (line 19)
 - (C) “involuntary repetition of movements” (line 37)
 - (D) “erupting and convulsing” (lines 48-49)
 - (E) “barrage of music” (line 66)

Passage 4, Questions 30-40 Read the following passage from *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* by Barbara Kingsolver carefully before you choose your answers.

Note: Earlier in the chapter, the author describes an encounter with a gas station clerk who, during a severe drought, expresses her hope that the clouds coming in will not bring rain because she wants to wash her car on her day off.

Who is us, exactly? I live now in a county whose economic base is farming. A disastrous summer will mean some of our neighbors will lose their farms. Others will have to keep farming and go looking for a job at the end of a long commute. We'll feel the effects in school enrollments, local businesses, shifts in land use and tax structure. The health of our streams, soils, and forests is also at stake, as lost farms get sold to developers whose business is to rearrange (drastically) the topsoil and everything on it. When I recognize good agricultural sense, though, I'm not just thinking of my town but also my species. It's not a trivial difference: praying for or against rainfall during a drought. You can argue that wishes don't count, but humans are good at making our dreams manifest and we do, historically speaking, get what we wish for. What are the just deserts for a species too selfish or preoccupied to hope for rain when the land outside is dying? Should we be buried under the topsoil in our own clean cars, to make room for wiser creatures?

We'd surely do better, if only we knew any better. In two generations we've transformed ourselves from a rural to an urban nation. North American children begin their school year around Labor Day and finish at the beginning of June with no idea that this arrangement was devised to free up children's labor when it was needed on the farm. Most people of my grandparents' generation had an intuitive sense of agricultural basics: when various fruits and vegetables come into season, which ones keep through the winter, how to preserve the others. On what day autumn's first frost will likely fall on their county, and when to expect the last one in spring. Which crops can be planted before the last frost, and which must wait. Which grains are autumn-planted. What an asparagus patch looks like in August. Most importantly: what animals and vegetables thrive in one's immediate region and how to live well on those, with little else thrown into the mix beyond a bag of flour, a pinch of salt, and a handful of coffee. Few people of my generation, and approximately none of our children, could answer any of those questions, let alone all.

We also have largely convinced ourselves it wasn't too important. Consider how Americans might respond to a proposal that agriculture was to become a mandatory subject in all schools, alongside reading and mathematics. A fair number of parents would get hot under the collar to see their kids' attention being pulled away from the essentials of grammar, the all-important trigonometry, to make room for down-on-the-farm stuff. The baby boom psyche embraces a powerful presumption that education is a key to moving away from manual labor, and dirt—two undeniable ingredients of farming. It's good enough for us that somebody, somewhere, knows food production well enough to serve the rest of us with all we need to eat, each day of our lives.

Why isn't it good enough for someone else to know multiplication and the contents of the Bill of Rights? Is the story of bread, from tilled ground to our table, less relevant to our lives than the history of the thirteen colonies? Couldn't one make a case for the relevance of a subject that informs choices we make daily—as in, What's for dinner? Isn't ignorance of our food sources causing problems as diverse as overdependence on petroleum and an epidemic of diet-related diseases?

30. In relation to the last two sentences in the first paragraph (lines 10-12), the first sentence of the second paragraph (line 13) serves to
- (A) refute them
 - (B) clarify them
 - (C) temper them
 - (D) reiterate them
 - (E) elaborate on them
31. The author’s statement that “In two generations we’ve transformed ourselves from a rural to an urban nation.” (lines 13-14) is most directly supported by all of the following EXCEPT
- (A) “A disastrous summer will mean some of our neighbors will lose their farms” (lines 1-2)
 - (B) “North American children begin their school year around Labor Day and finish at the beginning of June” (lines 14-15)
 - (C) “Most people of my grandparents’ generation had an intuitive sense of agricultural basics” (line 17)
 - (D) “Few people of my generation, and approximately none of our children, could answer any of those questions, let alone all” (lines 24-26)
 - (E) “The baby boom psyche embraces a powerful presumption that education is a key to moving away from manual labor, and dirt” (lines 32-33)
32. The writer wants to add a phrase at the beginning of the second sentence of the second paragraph (reproduced below), adjusting the capitalization as needed, to set up a transition from the paragraph’s first sentence.
- In two generations we’ve transformed ourselves from a rural to an urban nation.*
- (A) In fact,
 - (B) Likewise,
 - (C) As a result,
 - (D) By contrast,
 - (E) Furthermore,

33. The writer wants to add a sentence to the end of the second paragraph (lines 13-26). Which of the following best accomplishes this goal?
- (A) We never seem to learn from our mistakes.
 - (B) This knowledge has vanished from our culture.
 - (C) We soon will be destroyed by our own arrogance.
 - (D) Just because questions are difficult doesn't mean we shouldn't search for the answers.
 - (E) We must include agriculture courses to our schools' curricula if we hope to have a prosperous future.
34. The writer includes the list of "agricultural basics" (lines 17-24) in order to
- (A) inform the reader about basic agricultural tenets
 - (B) to accentuate what she assumes to be the reader's ignorance
 - (C) share the knowledge she has acquired from living in a rural community
 - (D) to force the readers to re-think their assumptions about farming communities
 - (E) support her premise that knowledge of agriculture is vital to humans' well-being
35. In the third paragraph (lines 27-35), the writer wants to expand on the concession that American parents would view mandatory agriculture education negatively. Adding which of the following claims would best achieve this purpose?
- (A) We can't know what we haven't been taught.
 - (B) To people who live in urban areas, the idea of growing their own food seems as plausible as writing and conducting their own symphonies.
 - (C) Adults don't mind pretending all food comes from clean, well-lit grocery stores, so agriculture education isn't deemed important.
 - (D) Because parents gradually lose interest in their children's education, it would be easy to introduce agriculture courses into a high school curriculum.
 - (E) Knowing how foods grow is to know how and when to look for them; such expertise is useful for certain kinds of people, namely, the ones who eat, no matter where they live or grocery shop.
36. Which of the following best describes the rhetorical function of the final paragraph?
- (A) It restates the thesis of the passage.
 - (B) It provides examples to support a generalization.
 - (C) It echoes the questions raised at the end of the first paragraph.
 - (D) It challenges the validity of a belief described in the previous paragraph.
 - (E) It reinforces the author's dismissal of "reading and mathematics" (line 29).

**Answer Key and Question Alignment to AP English Language Conceptual Framework:
*Contemporary Nonfiction Resource Guide***

Multiple Choice Question	Answer
PASSAGE 1	
1	B
2	D
3	B
4	E
5	C

PASSAGE 4	
30	C
31	A
32	A
33	B
34	E
35	C
36	D

ANSWER RATIONALES

Passage 1 – Sacks

- 1. (B) “maddeningly” (line 4).** Although the other choices contribute to a description of “brainworms,” only the word “maddeningly” suggests that the person who experiences these phenomena is in a sense a “victim” who is being forced or coerced into repeating music against his or her will.
- 2. (D) “talking” (line 42).** “Talking” is syntactically parallel to the participle “plugging,” and both words describe actions Nick Younes took in an attempt to stop the incessant repetition of the song “Love and Marriage” in his brain. The word “thinking” is one of a series of things affected by the musical repetition (“schoolwork . . . thinking . . . peace of mind”), so it is not thematically parallel to “plugging.”
- 3. (B) an assertion followed by examples.** The author asserts that the concept, if not the name, of “earworms” is not a new concept. To support this assertion, he gives specific examples.
- 4. (E) emphasize that brainworms are not limited only to memorable tunes.** The parenthetical comment “Plop, plot, fizz, fizz” emphasizes that lyrics, as well as tunes, can serve as brainworms.
- 5. (C) “deliberately inventing musical forms.”** The other choices (“circling in the mind” etc.) reflect how brainworms “victimize” human beings. This choice refers to actual the symptoms of physical disabilities.