

**AP English Literature  
Poetry  
Multiple-Choice Questions**

For this set of questions, you should read the question stem and decide which one of the AP multiple-choice strategies listed below you should use, given what type of question it is. Then, go back and highlight where you think the KEY piece of information is for that question and place the question's number by it. For example, if you think question 5's answer is found in lines 12-17, you would highlight those lines and put a 5 by it.

**Strategy 1:** Read the first and last lines to see how the poet opened and closed the door to the poem's core concern.

**Strategy 2:** Pay attention to punctuation to note how the poet has organized the flow of ideas within stanza(s).

**Strategy 3:** Read around the line number indicated in the question—two lines below if at the start of a stanza; one line above and below if in the middle; two lines above if at the end of a stanza.

**Strategy 4:** Play positive and negative with the poem and eliminate the choices that are the opposite of your choice. Example: the speaker's tone is positive, so eliminate all negative tone words like "critical."

**Strategy 5:** Play too broad, too narrow, or not mentioned in the poem to eliminate choices.

**Strategy 6:** Ask "Why would the author write \_\_\_\_\_? What is she trying to accomplish by \_\_\_\_\_?"

**Strategy 7:** How is the poem organized? Where are the shifts in subject or tone that might help me follow the writer's ideas?

**Strategy 8:** What words are used in an unusual way or are new to me? Can I use the sentence above and below the word to figure it out?

**Strategy 9:** Look for extremes in the answers (always, never, universally) or "loaded" words and be suspicious of selecting that answer.

**Strategy 10:** For antecedent questions, look in the middle of the line numbers suggested: rarely is the answer the nearest or the farthest away from the pronoun in the question.

**Strategy 11:** Make sure ALL parts of your answer are true. Some answers might contain two ideas, one of which is not supported in the passage.

**Strategy 12:** Rephrase, restate, paraphrase, summary—all are useful to capture the basic thrust of an author's writing.

**Strategy 13:** What are the core literary devices used in the passage? How can I use my rock-solid knowledge of AP examination vocabulary to quickly eliminate three or even four possible answers?

**Strategy 14:** As Robert Frost notes, poetry is the one permissible way of saying one thing but meaning another. Are there any core ironies in the poem? What is the central metaphor of the poem?

**Strategy 15:** Can I use the title of the poem to give me a sense of the subject or tone of the poem?

**Strategy 16:** Are there patterns or significant repetitions that I can use to get to the complexity of the poem's meaning(s).

**William Wordsworth (1770-1850)**

**There was a Boy**

1     There was a Boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs  
2     And islands of Winander! many a time,  
3     At evening, when the earliest stars began  
4     To move along the edges of the hills,  
5     Rising or setting, would he stand alone,  
6     Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake;  
7     And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands  
8     Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth  
9     Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,  
10    Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls  
11    That they might answer him.--And they would shout  
12    Across the watery vale, and shout again,  
13    Responsive to his call,--with quivering peals,  
14    And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud  
15    Redoubled and redoubled; concourse wild  
16    Of jocund din! And, when there came a pause  
17    Of silence such as baffled his best skill:  
18    Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung  
19    Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise  
20    Has carried far into his heart the voice  
21    Of mountain-torrents; or the visible scene  
22    Would enter unawares into his mind  
23    With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,  
24    Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received  
25    Into the bosom of the steady lake.

26    This boy was taken from his mates, and died  
27    In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.  
28    Pre-eminent in beauty is the vale  
29    Where he was born and bred: the churchyard hangs  
30    Upon a slope above the village-school;  
31    And through that churchyard when my way has led  
32    On summer-evenings, I believe that there  
33    A long half-hour together I have stood  
34    Mute--looking at the grave in which he lies!

"The Most of It" by Robert Frost (1874-1963)

1- He thought he kept the universe alone;  
2- For all the voice in answer he could wake  
3- Was but the mocking echo of his own  
4- From some tree-hidden cliff across the lake.  
5- Some morning from the boulder-broken beach  
6- He would cry out on life, that what it wants  
7- Is not its own love back in copy speech,  
8- But counter-love, original response.  
9- And nothing ever came of what he cried  
10- Unless it was the embodiment that crashed  
11- In the cliff's talus on the other side,  
12- And then in the far distant water splashed,  
13- But after a time allowed for it to swim,  
14- Instead of proving human when it neared  
15- And someone else additional to him,  
16- As a great buck it powerfully appeared,  
17- Pushing the crumpled water up ahead,  
18- And landed pouring like a waterfall,  
19- And stumbled through the rocks with horny tread,  
20- And forced the underbrush—and that was all.

Questions 1-10 are based on *There Was a Boy* by William Wordsworth.

1. The speaker recounts the experiences of the boy in the poem with
- (A) mock heroic tones
  - (B) resentful disdain
  - (C) nostalgic reverence
  - (D) gently controlled pity
  - (E) faint satiric humor

Strategy Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which of the following illustrates the rhetorical device of apostrophe?
- (A) "ye knew him well, ye cliffs" (line 1)
  - (B) "when the earliest stars began/To move" (lines 3-4)
  - (C) "with fingers interwoven" (line 7)
  - (D) "they would shout/Across the watery vale" (lines 11-12)
  - (E) "the voice/Of mountain-torrents" (lines 20-21)

Strategy Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

3. The phrase "Rising or setting" (line 5) modifies which of the following?
- (A) "evening" (line 3)
  - (B) "stars" (line 3)
  - (C) "edges" (line 4)
  - (D) "hills" (line 4)
  - (E) "he" (line 5)

Strategy Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

4. As determined by context, which of the following would best fit between "owls" (line 10) and "That" (line 11)?
- (A) until
  - (B) in
  - (C) when
  - (D) so
  - (E) if

Strategy Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

5. Which of the following is the best rendering of the phrase "concourse wild/Of jocund din" (lines 15-16)?
- (A) A deafening clatter of wings
  - (B) A tumultuous, loud, gleeful noise
  - (C) A painful mixture of sharp sound
  - (D) An aggressive, threatening, vocal attack
  - (E) A witty and mocking conversation

Strategy Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

6. The word "din" (line 16) is most strongly reinforced by which of the following pairs of lines?  
(A) 3 and 4  
(B) 5 and 6  
(C) 9 and 10  
(D) 14 and 15  
(E) 20 and 21

Strategy Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

7. In context, the word "baffled" (line 17) is best interpreted to mean  
(A) defied  
(B) confused  
(C) reflected  
(D) strengthened  
(E) induced

Strategy Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

8. The phrase "his best skill" (line 17) is an oblique reference to which of the following?  
(A) "To move along the edges" (line 4)  
(B) "would he stand alone" (line 5)  
(C) "with fingers interwoven" (line 7)  
(D) "as through an instrument" (line 9)  
(E) "Blew mimic hootings" (line 10)

Strategy Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

9. The heaven is "uncertain" (line 24) in the sense that it  
(A) is a reflection that moves  
(B) is of doubtful existence for the speaker  
(C) is a metaphor for fate  
(D) threatens the speaker  
(E) reflects various colors

Strategy Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

10. The speaker's experience described in lines 19-25 ("a gentle shock . . . the steady lake") is best characterized as  
(A) a delusion induced by a powerful artist  
(B) a mystical experience resulting from prayer  
(C) a heightened consciousness of the beauty of nature  
(D) an indifference to a force that no longer responds to him  
(E) a growing resentment at his own insignificance.

Strategy Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

Questions 11-18 are based on *The Most of It* by Robert Frost.

11. In this poem, the speaker perceives that for human beings nature is most like which of the following?
- (A) Nurturing and supportive
  - (B) Hostile and violent
  - (C) Unpredictable and unknowable
  - (D) Unaware and indifferent
  - (E) Oppressive and sinister

Strategy Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

12. Which of the following is the best interpretation of "He thought he kept the universe alone" (line 1)?
- (A) He maintained a detached attitude toward society.
  - (B) He felt that he was utterly alone in the world.
  - (C) Through contemplation, he merged his whole self with nature.
  - (D) Because of special insight, he felt he alone knew the essence of the universe.
  - (E) He kept to himself entirely and avoided any contact with other living things.

Strategy Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

13. The echo is "mocking" (line 3) because the speaker
- (A) had hoped for some response to his call
  - (B) is cynical about other human beings
  - (C) has despaired of the existence of God
  - (D) is being ridiculed by other travelers in the woods
  - (E) is humorously criticizing himself and his aloneness

Strategy Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

14. The primary implication of lines 5 through 8 is that
- (A) human beings are possessed of a primal need for one another
  - (B) life is richer when one knows who one's antagonist is
  - (C) one understands oneself well only after being measured against others
  - (D) life and nature eternally oppose and frustrate the essential needs of human beings
  - (E) each human being is like a copy of a masterpiece whose essence remains a mystery

Strategy Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

15. Which of the following is the critical transition point in the poem?
- (A) "He would cry out . . ." (line 6)
  - (B) "And nothing ever came . . ." (line 9)
  - (C) "Unless it was . . ." (line 10)
  - (D) "But after a time . . ." (line 13)
  - (E) "As a great buck . . ." (line 16)

Strategy Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

16. Which of the following is the most accurate statement about the word "embodiment" (line 10)?
- (A) It is an indirect reference to the "universe" (line 1).
  - (B) It is a simile for the "echo" (line 3) of the speaker.
  - (C) It is a metaphor for boulders and "talus" (line 11).
  - (D) It is a pronoun foreshadowing the "him" in line 15.
  - (E) It is an abstract noun denoting the "buck" (line 16).

Strategy Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

17. The figure of speech in line 18 is  
(A) a simile  
(B) personification  
(C) a symbol  
(D) an extended metaphor  
(E) allegory

Strategy Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

18. As the buck is presented in lines 16-20, the effect is one of a  
(A) beautiful and enchanting presence  
(B) primeval and impervious force  
(C) hostile and destructive power  
(D) curious and animated intelligence  
(E) cunning and deceptive spirit

Strategy Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer \_\_\_\_\_