
Avoiding Multiple Choice Monotony

— Creative Multiple Choice Practice —
Activities

Offer students
a variety of
low-pressure
practice
activities to
build skill and
confidence



Activity 1 - Stations around the Room

Students work through a passage individually.

Have letters A, B, C, D, and E posted around the room. Students move to the letter they believe is the correct answer when reviewing the questions.

Students can defend their answer and others have the opportunity to change their mind and move to another letter or stay and defend their answer.

Benefits - Students are able to hear each other's reasoning and defense of an answer, students are able to change their mind, offers the teacher and students a visual of what percentage are with each answer, students are up and out of their seats

Activity 2 - Random Grouping

Students complete a MC passage on their own.

Randomly group students into A, B, C, D, and E groups. Each group has to decide whether their answer is the correct or incorrect answer for each question in the passage and offer text support as to why. Once the groups are finished, discuss as a class the questions giving each group a chance to give their reasoning. If two groups are correct, the class will vote to determine which group they believe to be correct.

Benefits - allows a thorough discussion of not only correct answers but of distractors as well, forces students to close read and consider answer they may otherwise disregard

Activity 3 - Pyramid

Students read and answer a passage individually.

Students divide into pairs and work through the questions concluding with one correct answer they each agree on. Repeat this process in quads, then octaves, and so on until the entire class can agree on a correct answer for each question.

Classes can compete with each other to see which class scores the highest.

Benefits - everyone has a chance to use his or her voice, employs competition when going against other classes, students are able to hear and consider other positions

Activity 4 - Kick Me Multiple Choice

Students are given a passage and questions but no answers. Students read the passage and the questions. Students then hypothesize what the question is asking in small groups.

Working with a few questions at a time (determined by the number of students per class), tape answer choices on a student's back. Students must not only determine which answer goes with which question but what the correct answer is.

Benefit - students focus on the stem of the question, students are up and out of their seats, fun

Activity 5 - Write Multiple Choice Questions

Working in small groups, students will take a prompt from either the poetry or prose essay prompt and write multiple choice questions for it. Students must include a variety of types of questions (big picture, sentence level, theme, tone, etc.). Distractors should be viable options.

Benefit - allows students to consider different types of questions and distractors

Activity 6 - Written Explanation of MC Passage

Students will take the correct answers of a multiple choice passage and write an explicative of the passage as a whole. Students should introduce the passage giving an overall context then work their way through the questions explaining terms, answers, and providing text support for each answer.

Benefit - students are focused on the correct answer and forced to provide text support and reasoning for each answer, slows students down to think through reasons and justification for answers

General Multiple Choice Strategies

- Think of multiple choice questions for each work in an hour-glass shape. The first couple and last couple are big picture and typically deal with the poem or passage as a whole. The ones in the middle are more specific to certain paragraphs, sentences, phrases, and words.
- Questions generally go in order through the passage.
- The complexity level of questions, however, is varied. Each passage will have at least one or two questions to separate the 4s from the 5s. Do not let these questions weigh you down or eat up your time. If you cannot make a reasonable guess within one minute, mark it and come back to it if you have time. BUT make sure your bubbles correspond.

Multiple Choice Strategies

- Answer questions that require little thought quickly and save whole-text questions until last.
- Answers will not contradict each other; use prior answers to help decide when stuck between choices.
- Most, but not all, students choose to tackle the passages in order. Some students, however, will do the prose passages back to back and then the poetry passages.
- Scan the questions (not the answers) before reading a passage and use the questions to guide your reading. Not only will this help you notice details when you read but can also help with overall understanding of the passage.

Multiple Choice Strategies

Read the entire passage. Read poems at least twice (if not three or four times) before answering questions. You cannot answer context questions without reading the full passage.

- Read everything on the page – the title, footnotes, etc. Every little bit helps and can make a difference. (i.e. “The Author to her Book”)
- Annotating while reading takes time but yields for greater understanding of the passage. This is a non-negotiable for passages on the exam.
- You are not penalized for guessing, so narrow down as far as you can and make your best guess.
- Plan your strategy before test day. There are many ways to take a test, and you should know your plan. Whatever you do, don’t try anything new or different on exam day.

Socrative Directions

For explicit directions on using Socrative, visit the following site:

<http://www.aplithelp.com/multiple-choice-monday/>