**AP English Literature and Composition**

**Tackling Multiple Choice Questions** **(**adapted from Rankin, Estelle, and Barbara Murphy. *5 Steps to a 5 AP English Literature.* McGraw-Hill Companies, 2010 and http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/advancedacademics/resources/ap\_review\_downloads/literature&comp-shipe.pdf)

**What to Expect**

For the multiple-choice section of the AP English Literature exam, you are allotted 1 hour to answer between 45 and 60 (typically 55) objective questions on four or five (typically 5) prose and poetry selections. The prose passages may come from works of fiction, or nonfiction, or drama. You can expect the poems to be complete and from different time periods and of different styles and forms. The questions will require you to do all of the following:

• Follow sophisticated syntax

• Respond to diction

• Be comfortable with upper-level vocabulary

• Be familiar with literary terminology

• Make inferences

• Be sensitive to irony and tone

• Recognize components of style

.

**General Guidelines**

* Reading the text carefully is a must. Begin at the beginning and work your way through. **Do not waste time reading questions before you read the selection.**
* Read for the gist first. Search for overall content, theme, and tone.
* Move through the questions rapidly, making temporary guesses. Work at a pace of about one question per minute. Every question is worth the same number of points, so don’t get bogged down on those that involve multiple tasks (Roman numeral and EXCEPT questions). The questions do not increase in difficulty, so there may be some easy questions at the end. Questions are chronological, not in order of difficulty. Circle questions you will come back to later.
* Realize the questions are your friends. In a sequence of questions about a poem, the questions themselves can help you grasp more accurately the overall content, theme, and tone. Consider all the choices in a given question. Remember that all parts of an answer must be correct. This will keep you from jumping to a false conclusion. It helps you to really look at each possibility. You may find that your first choice is not the best or most appropriate one.
* Maintain an open mind as you answer subsequent questions in a series. Sometimes the answer to a later question will contradict your answer to a previous one. Reconsider both answers. Also, the phrasing of a question may point to an answer in a previous question.
* Analyze and interpret specific lines or segments of text, using the question as a guide but keeping the context of the whole passage in mind.
* Master literary terms in advance and use this knowledge to interpret accurately. Knowing the definitions is not enough; you must also be able to understand the term in the context of the poem and understand HOW and WHY the devices are being used.
* Do the device questions first; they can be answered quickly.