

Tips for Studying with Multiple-Choice Questions (AP US History)

- Before reading the passage, look at the source information (author, date, etc.) to see if it provides clues about the passage.
- Now, read the question (prompt) carefully. DO NOT READ THE ANSWER CHOICES YET.
 - Circle or make mental note of important words like EXCEPT, as in “All of the following are true except...” or NOT, as in “Which of these is NOT...”
 - Underline or make mental note of important clues in the question, including time periods (“In the mid-nineteenth century...”) or places (“In the New England colonies...”)
- Before looking at the choices, mentally review all you know about the topic of the question.
 - If you do not know much about the topic, look it up in your text and notes or make a list of these items to review later.
 - If you do know the topic fairly well, you may now look at the choices.
- The four answer choices are usually organized as follows:
 - One choice is completely wrong. Usually, this choice is the opposite of the correct answer. Anyone with any knowledge of the topic should be able to eliminate this choice first.
 - Identify this choice first and explain (to yourself) why it is wrong.
 - If you cannot explain why any of the choices are wrong, make a note of this topic and study it again.
 - One or two choices are seriously flawed. A student with decent knowledge of the topic will understand why these choices are wrong.
 - Try to identify these flawed choices next. Explain (to yourself) why these choices are wrong.
 - If you cannot explain why these choices are wrong, make a note of the topic and the subject of the choices and study this again.
 - Finally, two choices may appear to be correct, but one is clearly a better choice than the other. A student who wants to succeed in APUSH must understand the topic enough to see the difference.
 - Examine both of these choices and compare them. Do you see a flaw in either one? What is it that makes that choice wrong? Do you see something in one choice that makes it the best answer? Explain what that is.
 - If you cannot see why one choice is better than the other, go back to the question (prompt) and look for key words or phrases that might help you decide.
 - Then, look at the choices again. Is there a key word or phrase in either answer choice that might make one better than the other?
 - If you do not understand why one choice is better than the other, make a note of the topic and study this again. *Seeing the difference between these two choices is likely to be very significant to understanding this topic.*
- After examining a question (especially practice questions), focus on the main point (idea, concept, fact, information, etc.) of the question and answer. Commit those main ideas to memory.