

Lesson 4: Tips for Multiple Choice & Newsela

(approximately one hour)

A. Strategies for Multiple-Choice Questions (15 min.)

Educator Note: In this first section, you will be working with students to organically generate some strategies that can help them tackle multiple-choice questions, whether on the ELA Regents exam or in other settings. This is intended to foreshadow some of the procedures they will be using in the next two sessions as the practice on Part 1 of the exam.

Multiple-choice questions appear on a lot of different tests and quizzes, including the ELA Regents exam. There are some different strategies that can help you tackle these types of questions wherever you encounter them.

We're going to be looking at a few multiple-choice questions. They refer, obviously, to a passage you haven't read yet. It might seem counter-intuitive, but it can often be a good idea to look at the questions before you read a passage. Why might this be the case?

Answer: If you read the questions first, you know what information to look for when you read the passage.

What similarities do you notice between the following two questions?

(Hint: Pay attention to how the questions begin.)

Answer: Both questions begin with the word "Read" and each has four choices.

1. Read the section "No Pooping, Nesting or Stealing Food Allowed." Which selection from the section explains why companies benefit from using the hawk program?
 - a. Falconers in the Los Angeles area say they charge about \$65 an hour. Costs can go up to \$1,000 a day.
 - b. Keeping seagulls and pigeons away saves on the cost of cleaning up bird poop and nests.
 - c. Guests want to be able to eat French fries by the pool. When a seagull takes them, that is a problem, Mohrfeld said.
 - d. He said he has more job offers than he can handle. He has 26 workers and 60 falcons and hawks.

2. Read the paragraph below from the section "Not Everyone Is A Supporter." What conclusion can the reader make based on this paragraph?

"There are a lot of traditional falconers out there who have concerns about it," he said. Falconry is not something you do to make money, he said.

- a. Some groups teach falcons how to hunt for food.
- b. Some people think it is wrong to put falcons to work.
- c. Using predator birds has become a popular option.
- d. Using predator birds can cost companies a lot of money.

Reading comprehension questions will often direct you to the specific part of the text where the answer can be found. Sometimes, as in Question 2, the relevant passage will be reprinted in the question. Many times, however, it is your job to go back to the text and read the section the question refers to.

What are some strategies that can help us when a question refers to a specific part of the text?

Educator Note: Guide the students towards the idea that some type of annotation (such as underlining and numbering the specified sections) can help them locate where the important information is located.

Watch the short clip from the game show, "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-yh3u5h0syg>

What happens when the contestant (Jack Black) uses his "50-50"? How can we apply this strategy to a multiple-choice question?

Answer: When he uses the "50-50" option, two of the choices disappear. If we can eliminate obviously wrong choices when attempting a multiple-choice question, we can increase our chances of getting it right.

So, to review, here are some strategies that can help you with multiple-choice questions, wherever you might encounter them:

1. Read over the questions before you read the passage.
2. If the question refers to a specific section of the text, underline and label that section.
3. Do your best to eliminate at least two wrong answers.

B. Newsela Articles (40 min.)

There are three news stories from the “Newsela” website for you to practice using the strategies discussed above. Do your best to answer the multiple-choice questions for each article!

Educator Note: This lesson uses recent news articles from the Newsela website as these are often more interesting and easier to read than the passages on the ELA Regents. Each has pre-written questions you can use.

In addition, Newsela writes each news article at four to five different reading levels, making the high interest content accessible to low-literacy readers. If you think it would be appropriate for your students’ needs to use lower reading levels while they concentrate on their multiple-choice test-taking skills, Newsela can be a simple resource.

Newsela = news + ELA

See the Facilitator Guide for information about accessing the Newsela website for new articles at the reading levels you need.