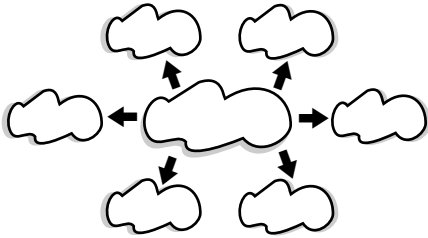


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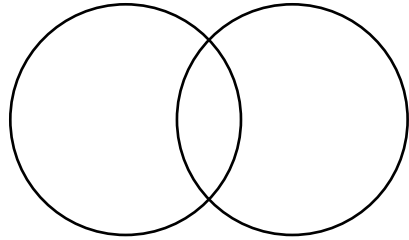
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Graphic Organizers

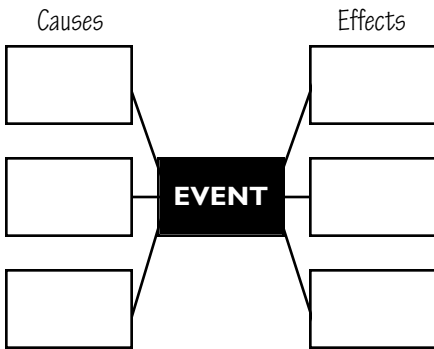
• Use a mindmap to brainstorm ideas:



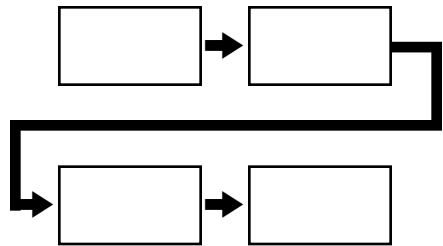
• Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast:



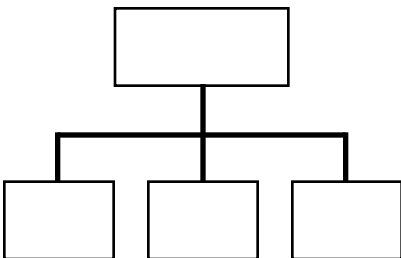
• Use a cause/effect chart to organize ideas:



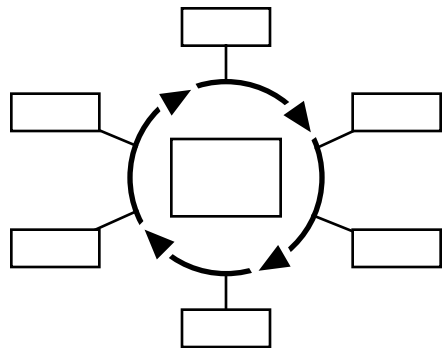
• Use a flowchart to show chronology:



• Use a tree chart to show main ideas and supporting details:



• Use a cycle chart to show stages in a process:



Thinking Skills

There are different levels of thinking that you use every day. These thinking skills have been described according to something called "Bloom's Taxonomy." This fancy term describes the different levels of thinking that you use to understand something, solve a problem, or judge an answer. By being aware of which thinking skills you are using to approach different tasks, you can pose different questions to consider the task from several perspectives.

SKILL

	DEFINITION	KEY WORDS	QUESTIONS
KNOWLEDGE	Demonstrate knowledge of previously learned material by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts, and answers	who, what, when, where, choose, find, how, define, label, show, list, name, relate, recall, select	How would you explain...? How would you show...? Can you select...? Who were the main...? Can you list three...?
COMPREHENSION	Demonstrate understanding of facts and ideas by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions, and stating main ideas	compare, contrast, demonstrate, interpret, explain, illustrate, outline, rephrase, summarize, show, classify	How would you compare...? How would you interpret...? Which statements support...? How would you rephrase...? Which is the best answer...? How would you summarize...? How would you classify...?
APPLICATION	Demonstrate ability to solve problems by applying acquired knowledge, facts, concepts, and strategies in new and different contexts	apply, build, construct, develop, interview, plan, select, solve, utilize, model, identify	How would you apply...? How would you solve...? What approach would you use...? What would result if...? How could you show...? What examples can you find...?
ANALYSIS	Demonstrate ability to examine and break information or concepts into parts by identifying different components, making inferences, and finding evidence to support generalizations	analyze, categorize, dissect, divide, examine, distinguish, infer, conclude, hypothesize	What do you think...? What conclusions can you draw...? How would you classify...? What evidence can you find...? What is the relationship...? How would you distinguish...?
SYNTHESIS	Demonstrate ability to compile information in a different way by combining concepts or parts in a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions	build, choose, combine, compile, construct, create, design, develop, imagine, invent, propose, solve, suppose, modify, improve, adapt, test, change	What would happen if...? How could you change...? How would you test...? How could you connect...? How would you construct...?
EVALUATION	Demonstrate ability to present and defend opinions by making judgments about information, the validity of ideas, or quality of work based on criteria	criticize, defend, determine, evaluate, judge, justify, recommend, interpret, prioritize, criteria, prove, assess, decide, support, estimate	What is your opinion of...? How would you evaluate...? How would you select...? How would you judge...? Why was it better or worse...?

Test-Taking Strategies

When you encounter a writing prompt or essay question, be sure to

R.E.A.D.

the question carefully:

Read the test question by paying careful attention to all parts of the prompt, including guidelines and specific requirements.

Evaluate the question by underlining or highlighting key words or phrases that tell you exactly what your response needs to include (see the list of command words below).

Arrange your response before you begin drafting by completing a brief outline or map of your ideas; you will probably only have time to produce a single draft of your response, so it's important to organize your ideas before you begin.

Draft your response, and be sure to fulfill the demands of the task; use details and descriptive language to develop your response.

Command Words

The **command words** in a question are designed to **tell you HOW to answer a question**. Command words not only indicate the type of answer that is being called for, but they also give an indication of the skills being tested. These command words are often found in essay questions. Use these command words in your planning and learn to spot them in titles and questions to help you develop better answers. The following example shows how responses to a question will be different with two different command words, even though the theme of the question is the same.

Command 1:

Describe how a wave breaks on a beach.

Answer:

"The top of a wave falls over the bottom crashing onto the beach."

Command 2:

Explain how a wave breaks on a beach.

Answer:

"The bottom of the wave is slowed down by friction from the sea bed, so the top topples over the bottom because it is moving faster."

The answer to question 1 describes what happened, and the answer to question 2 explains how it happened.

List of Common Command Words

Analyze

Analyze can mean a few different things. For example, it may mean that you need to take a complex process and explain its stages or steps. It can also mean that you need to explain how certain causes lead to certain effects. Analyzing is a lot like explaining but it requires a more detailed explanation of how you came to a particular conclusion about something.

Apply

Apply your knowledge of a concept to a particular situation. You need to relate your specific knowledge of the concept to the situation you have been given.

Compare/Contrast

This asks you to identify and explain the major similarities and differences between two or more positions, characters, or ideas.

Define

You must give the PRECISE meaning of the word, idea, or topic you are being asked to write about. Using examples is often helpful to make your definition clear.

Test-Taking Strategies

Describe

Use specific details to create a mental picture for the reader.

Discuss

This asks for a DETAILED explanation considering the possible outcomes and where possible, offering support for your ideas.

Evaluate

This asks you to judge or assess something, using whatever information or criteria are available.

Explain (how or why)

This needs a detailed response with reasons about HOW something takes place (e.g. how a character changes, how a bill becomes a law) or WHY something takes place (e.g., what motivates a character to change, the complex steps involved in a bill becoming a law).

Interpret

Use ideas and information from the text to develop your own ideas; interpreting often involves drawing your own conclusions and then explaining them to your reader. This requires you to think beyond the information you are provided.

Outline

This asks you to list the main ideas and supporting details related to the task or topic.

Reflect

Take time to look back and think about your work; as it relates to the portfolio assessment, reflecting involves looking at the work you have produced over time to find evidence of your strengths and opportunities for growth or to think about a past experience.

Relate

Make connections, usually between two passages, between two characters, or between your personal experience and the events of a story. Be sure to explain the connections that you see so that they are clear to your reader.

Suggest

This asks you to give your own opinion based on evidence presented to you.



TIP TO TAKE

Form your own questions as you read and practice asking yourself questions that require different thinking skills and use different command words.



Strategies for Answering Multiple Choice Questions

- **Consult your notes and/or the reading selections as needed.**

Some of the key ideas and details you have underlined or marked are likely to appear in the questions. However, don't rely just on your notes or your memory. You'll need to refer to the selections to answer some of the questions. For poetry, in particular, you may need to re-read certain lines a few times in order to answer a question.

- **Read each question carefully.**

This may seem obvious, but be sure you understand the question before considering the answers. Watch for particular words or phrases that offer clues to the correct answer. For questions on literary elements and techniques, choose your answer with special care. Watch for questions that ask you to identify an element common to both selections.

- **Beware of distracters.**

Distracters are choices that are designed to mislead you. These answers might contain key words that are relevant to the text but do not answer the question.

- **Learn the language of questions and answers.**

Consider "all of the above" and "none of the above." Examine the "above" alternatives to see if all of them or none of them apply *totally*. If even one does not apply *totally*, do not consider "all of the above" or "none of the above" as the correct answer. Make sure that a statement applies to the question since it can be true, but not be relevant to the question at hand.

Note negatives. If a negative such as "none", "not", "never", or "neither" occurs in the question, know that the correct choice must be a fact or absolute and that the others choices could be true statements, but not the correct answer.

Note superlatives. Words such as "every", "all", "none", "always", and "only" are superlatives that indicate the correct answer must be an undisputed fact.

Note qualifying words. "Usually", "often", "generally", "may", and "seldom" are qualifiers that *could* indicate a true statement.

- **Study the context to help you infer the meaning.**

If the question refers to one or more specific lines of text, re-read those lines before trying to answer. Also review the surrounding context. Poetry and other literary selections typically require you to "read between the lines." Context clues can help, especially when you're trying to analyze imagery or interpret symbolism. Don't rush to answer: re-read the relevant lines, and think about them before making your choice.

- **Take a moment to think about the question before looking at the answers.**

Try to think what the answer *should be*. This strategy can help to confirm your gut feeling, which is usually right.

- **Re-read the question as needed.**

Sometimes re-reading the question with each possible answer is helpful, particularly with sentence-completion questions.

- **Read, compare, and consider all the choices before picking one.**

This is especially important for literary selections because questions may deal with multiple levels of meaning, and the differences between the choices may be subtle.

- **Narrow your search.**

If you're not sure which answer is correct, cross out choices you know are *incorrect*. Then focus your attention on the remaining choices. Choose the best and most complete answer.

- **Don't spend too much time on a really difficult question.**

Make your best choice and move on to the next question. If you have time left over, you can return to the question you were unsure about. Also, you'll sometimes find that answering one question helps you to answer another.

- **Answer every question.**

Even if you are completely stumped by a question, don't leave it blank. Make your best guess. You have a 25% chance of getting it right!