

TIME TO SHINE. . . YOU CAN DO THIS!

INFO TO GO:

1. Control what you can: make sure you are well-rested/well-fed/well-hydrated.
2. Testing begins at 7:25. You have 120 minutes each day to complete the test. You should have your room number in your email!
3. Listen to the directions your proctors give you and read all directions on the screen.
4. **ELA Part I is on Wednesday, April 19.** This is reading and one extended writing response. **Thursday, April 20 is for Part II only.** It will also be reading and one essay.
5. Take your time (including the additional time... Don't be afraid to use it!) and use the tools that are available to you: scratch paper, online highlighters, line readers, notepad.
6. Pace yourself. You'll probably want at least 45 minutes to write.
7. Slow and steady. This is not a race. Use the time that is available to you. **If you don't understand, breathe and re-read.**
8. Take a break if you need it. Fight the urge to make assumptions, be ok with frustrating moments, and don't make hasty decisions. Remember -- the answers are in the text.

How to tackle multiple choice questions for ELA tests

- Consider making the passages full-screen. Be an active reader by previewing questions and jotting what you're looking for. Use the highlighter tool and scratch paper.
- Don't be afraid to go out of order. **Just remember to flag questions for review, come back, and answer all questions.**
- Read the questions and each choice carefully. Don't be afraid to read them a few times.
- For part A/B questions, invest time into making sure you're certain about part A before looking for evidence in part B. You're likely to find support for all answers there, and it can be misleading.
- Refer back to the portions of the passage mentioned in the question.
- Think of your answer options as T/F questions. One is True, three are False.
- For vocab questions, read the sentence or two before AND after the sentence containing the word in question. In fact, it may be good to look at the intention of the paragraph as a whole.
- Know what your ELA words are like *tone* (attitude of speaker), *structure* (pattern of organization), *theme* (message), *diction* (word choice), *mood* (feeling created), *figurative language* (metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, etc.)

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Tips for writing:

- Remember to read the directions to clarify what kind of essay you need and what they expect to see in your writing.
- Spend time figuring out what the prompt is asking and make sure you have a thesis and a plan that covers it all.
- **Plan before you write. Use the scratch paper or notepad feature; do not do this where you are supposed to write your essay. The only thing that should be in that space is an essay -- no outline! Use the general outline you've been taught to ensure you have an organizational plan before you draft.**
- Don't spend too much time up front trying to think of a hook. If you don't have one right away, just write your thesis and move on to the body. You can come back and write your intro.
- You need two pieces of edited/blended and attributed evidence per body paragraph.
- You need at least two sentences of elaboration following each piece of evidence.
- TRANSITIONS, TRANSITIONS, TRANSITIONS: The computer will be looking for these. Use them between and within your paragraphs.
- ***STAY AWAY*** from 1st and 2nd person pronouns. In the past it meant the difference between earning full credit and lesser credit.
- Content and organization is worth more than grammar, but an awareness of grammar is an easy way to earn 2 points. **SO PROOFREAD!**

Essay formats

Argumentative -- PICK A SIDE

Intro (hook, transition, thesis)

Concession (counterclaim **and** refutation)

Reason 1 (claim, text evidence, elaboration x2) ** BE SURE TO USE SOURCE MATERIALS AND ATTRIBUTE PROPERLY, but don't over rely on these. **Go for at least 40% of the writing/thoughts/ideas are your discussion/elaborations.**

Reason 2 (same as above)

Conclusion

Expository/explanatory -- EXPLAIN A TOPIC BY BREAKING IT DOWN

Introduction (engage reader, narrow to thesis)

Topic #1 with text evidence and explanation x2

Topic #2 with text evidence and explanation x2

Topic #3 with text evidence and explanation x2

Conclusion