

A.P. U.S. History Multiple Choice Questions Strategies

1. **Be Careful**—Always make sure you are answering the right question. Mark the answer sheet clearly but not so darkly that it cannot be erased. Do not leave any stray marks on the answer sheet.
2. **Use The Process of Elimination**—Cross out the obvious wrong answers.
3. **Guess If You Can Eliminate At Least 2 Answers**—You only lose $\frac{1}{4}$ point for wrong answers, so play the odds. Guess if you have a $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{3}$ chance of getting the answer right.
4. **Pace Yourself**—Each question is worth the same number of points: one. Don't spend too long on any single question. Either guess or mark it for later consideration.
5. **No Trivial Pursuit**—The A.P. exam does not ask arcane questions based on rote memorization. While facts are important they are always in a historical context.
6. **Focus on the Big Picture**—The A.P. exam is designed to illustrate basic principles of American history. Therefore, keep in mind that correct answers should not contradict the general trends of American history.
7. **Use Common Sense**—This strategy is seems obvious but really can help you on the multiple choice.
8. **Use Context Clues and Vocabulary**—Sometimes the wording of a question can be deconstructed to give you a sense of what the right answer is or at least help you eliminate some wrong answers.
9. **Be Careful of "Extreme" Wording**—Answers that contain "extreme" words such as "always," "never" and "completely" are much less likely to be correct than answers that contain more nuanced words such as "usually," "rarely," "seldom" or "often."
10. **Don't Fall For "Distracters"**—Some answers are designed to mislead you. Choose the answer that best fits. Remember, not all true statements are correct answers; it depends on what is being asked.
11. **Look For Opposites**—If two answers are opposites, one of them is often correct.
12. **Look For an Answer That "Sticks Out"**—If four answers are similar or can be grouped together, consider choosing the remaining answer. However, avoid answers that are ridiculous or do not seem to make sense.
13. **Trust Your Instincts**—When choosing between answers pay attention to what your hunch or first guess is. Don't try to outsmart or overanalyze a question. It may be your "right brain" at work. This is particularly important for students with a tendency to change their correct answers to incorrect answers.