

AP English Literature and Composition - Literary Terms Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

This is a sample study guide. To access the full version with hundreds of questions,

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Don't worry about getting everything right, your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations, and take breaks to retain information better.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning.

7. Use Other Tools

Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly — adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

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Questions

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- 1. Which term refers to addressing something nonhuman as if it were human?**
 - A. Personification**
 - B. Anthropomorphism**
 - C. Apostrophe**
 - D. Imagery**

- 2. What term describes a regularly repeated line or group of lines in a poem or song?**
 - A. Stanza**
 - B. Refrain**
 - C. Couplet**
 - D. Verse**

- 3. Which literary term describes language or writing that exposes follies or abuses by holding them up to ridicule?**
 - A. Satire**
 - B. Hyperbole**
 - C. Allegory**
 - D. Exposition**

- 4. What term is used to describe the repetition of the same consonant sounds or beginning several words with the same vowel sound?**
 - A. Assonance**
 - B. Alliteration**
 - C. Consonance**
 - D. Rhyme**

- 5. Which term describes the structure of poetry that contains distinct rhythmic patterns?**
 - A. Metric**
 - B. Stanza**
 - C. Verse**
 - D. Rhyme scheme**

6. What term describes a principal idea, feature, or repeated element in a literary work?

- A. Theme**
- B. Motif**
- C. Symbol**
- D. Element**

7. What do you call the use of deliberately outdated language in literature?

- A. Neologism**
- B. Archaism**
- C. Dialect**
- D. Jargon**

8. What literary device gives human-like qualities to non-human things?

- A. Personification**
- B. Alliteration**
- C. Metaphor**
- D. Imagery**

9. What term is used to describe the most exciting moment or turning point in a story?

- A. Climax**
- B. Prologue**
- C. Resolution**
- D. Exposition**

10. A question asked for effect that does not require an answer is known as what?

- A. Rhetorical question**
- B. Leading question**
- C. Hypothetical question**
- D. Open-ended question**

Answers

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1. C
2. B
3. A
4. B
5. A
6. B
7. B
8. A
9. A
10. A

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Explanations

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1. Which term refers to addressing something nonhuman as if it were human?

- A. Personification**
- B. Anthropomorphism**
- C. Apostrophe**
- D. Imagery**

The correct term for addressing something nonhuman as if it were human is apostrophe. In literature, apostrophe is a rhetorical device where a speaker directly addresses an absent person, an abstract idea, or a nonhuman object as if it were capable of understanding or responding. Apostrophe often lends emotional weight to the speaker's words, as it signifies a direct communication or a relationship that exists beyond the physical realm. For instance, in poetry, a character might address the stars or a lost loved one, invoking feelings of longing or reverence. This device serves to create intimacy and connection, despite the absence of a human listener. While personification and anthropomorphism both involve attributing human traits or behaviors to nonhuman entities, personification does so to create imagery or evoke feelings, whereas anthropomorphism specifically attributes human-like characteristics to animals or deities, often in a narrative context. Imagery refers to descriptive language that appeals to the senses, which is a different focus entirely. Thus, apostrophe is the term that most accurately captures the essence of directly addressing something nonhuman as if it were human.

2. What term describes a regularly repeated line or group of lines in a poem or song?

- A. Stanza**
- B. Refrain**
- C. Couplet**
- D. Verse**

The term that describes a regularly repeated line or group of lines in a poem or song is "refrain." A refrain often appears at the end of a stanza or between stanzas, serving both a thematic and rhythmic purpose. It enhances the musical quality of the poem or song and reinforces key ideas or emotions throughout the piece. This repetition creates a familiar structure for the audience and can underscore the main message being conveyed. In contrast, a stanza refers to a grouped set of lines in a poem, similar to a paragraph in prose, which may not necessarily involve repetition. A couplet specifically refers to a pair of lines, usually with end rhymes, and is itself a building block of stanzas but does not imply repetition. Verse is a broader term that can refer to any single line of poetry, the stanzaic form, or poetry in general, and doesn't specifically indicate the element of repetition. Thus, "refrain" is the most accurate term in this context.

3. Which literary term describes language or writing that exposes follies or abuses by holding them up to ridicule?

- A. Satire**
- B. Hyperbole**
- C. Allegory**
- D. Exposition**

The correct answer is satire, which is a genre or technique that employs humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to criticize or mock individuals, societal norms, or institutions. Satire is often used as a vehicle for social commentary, aiming to highlight follies and abuses in a way that prompts reflection or change. For example, Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal" employs satire to address issues of poverty and colonialism in Ireland by suggesting an absurd solution to provoke thought and discussion. Hyperbole, while it involves exaggeration, does not necessarily include the critical or mocking elements that characterize satire. Allegory uses symbolic figures and actions to convey deeper meanings and moral lessons but does not focus specifically on ridicule. Exposition refers to the introduction of background information in a narrative, which is not aligned with the purpose of ridicule or critique inherent in satire.

4. What term is used to describe the repetition of the same consonant sounds or beginning several words with the same vowel sound?

- A. Assonance**
- B. Alliteration**
- C. Consonance**
- D. Rhyme**

The term that best describes the repetition of the same consonant sounds or the beginning of several words with the same vowel sound is alliteration. Alliteration specifically refers to the occurrence of the same initial consonant sound in a series of words, often used for poetic effect or to enhance rhythm in language. In this case, alliteration highlights the impact of sound in writing, drawing attention to specific phrases or passages and creating a musical quality that can engage readers and enhance the overall mood of a piece. It is commonly found in poetry, prose, and song lyrics where the repetition of initial sounds can deepen the reader's experience. Other terms presented are not appropriate for defining this specific sound repetition. Assonance refers to the repetition of vowel sounds within nearby words, while consonance involves the repetition of consonant sounds in close proximity, but not specifically at the beginning of words. Rhyme pertains to the correspondence of sounds, typically at the end of words, rather than the initial sounds being discussed in this question.

5. Which term describes the structure of poetry that contains distinct rhythmic patterns?

- A. Metric**
- B. Stanza**
- C. Verse**
- D. Rhyme scheme**

The term that best describes the structure of poetry containing distinct rhythmic patterns is "metric." Metrics refer specifically to the structured patterns of rhythm in poetry, which are created by the arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables. These patterns form the underlying beat that gives a poem its musical quality and can vary widely, contributing to the flow and emotional effect of the work. While "stanza" refers to a grouped set of lines in a poem, it does not inherently include rhythmic patterns. "Verse" is a broader term that can refer to any section of poetry, but it does not specifically denote the rhythmic structure. "Rhyme scheme" deals with the pattern of rhymes at the end of lines but does not address the rhythmic patterns of syllables within the lines themselves. Thus, "metric" is the most accurate term in relation to the defined rhythmic structures within poetry.

6. What term describes a principal idea, feature, or repeated element in a literary work?

- A. Theme**
- B. Motif**
- C. Symbol**
- D. Element**

The term that aptly describes a principal idea, feature, or repeated element in a literary work is "motif." A motif often functions as a recurring image, idea, or phrase that reinforces the larger themes of the text. It helps to unify the work and can enhance the reader's understanding of the character's development or the overarching narrative by drawing attention to important concepts. In contrast, a theme refers to the overarching message or central idea that the author communicates throughout the work, while a symbol represents something beyond its literal meaning, usually standing for abstract ideas. The term "element" is quite broad and could pertain to various components of literature without the specific connotation of repetition or focus that motif carries. Thus, motif is the most precise term for describing these repeated elements or ideas in literature.

7. What do you call the use of deliberately outdated language in literature?

- A. Neologism**
- B. Archaism**
- C. Dialect**
- D. Jargon**

The use of deliberately outdated language in literature is referred to as archaism. This literary technique involves incorporating words and phrases from an earlier period into a work, which can evoke a sense of nostalgia, create a certain tone, or give a historical context to the text. By employing archaisms, an author can transport readers to a different era, enhancing the authenticity of the setting or the characters' voices. This is particularly effective in genres like historical fiction or poetry that aim to reflect the language of a specific time. In contrast, neologism involves the creation of new words or phrases, rather than the use of outdated ones. Dialect refers to a particular form of language that is specific to a region or social group, focusing on contemporary language variations rather than historical ones. Jargon pertains to specialized terminology used within a particular profession or field, which does not relate to the concept of using outdated language.

8. What literary device gives human-like qualities to non-human things?

- A. Personification**
- B. Alliteration**
- C. Metaphor**
- D. Imagery**

Personification is the literary device that attributes human-like qualities or characteristics to non-human entities, animals, or inanimate objects. This technique allows writers to create more relatable and vivid descriptions, enabling readers to connect emotionally with the subject being personified. For example, in literature, you might find phrases like "the wind whispered through the trees" or "the stars danced in the sky," where animate actions are applied to inanimate elements. This contributes to a deeper understanding of the emotions or themes within the text, enriching the reader's experience. While alliteration focuses on the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words, metaphor involves a direct comparison between two unlike things without using "like" or "as." Imagery refers to descriptive language that appeals to the senses, creating visual representations in the reader's mind. Each of these devices serves its own purpose in writing but does not convey human-like qualities to non-human things, which is the specific function of personification.

9. What term is used to describe the most exciting moment or turning point in a story?

- A. Climax**
- B. Prologue**
- C. Resolution**
- D. Exposition**

The term that describes the most exciting moment or turning point in a story is known as the **climax**. This is a pivotal point in the narrative where the tension reaches its highest peak, often determining the outcome of the plot and leading to the resolution of the conflict. It is the moment that the protagonist faces the greatest challenge or confrontation, which can lead to a significant change in the narrative direction or character development. The climax is crucial because it is often followed by the falling action, where the story begins to wind down and lead toward the conclusion. In contrast, a **prologue** serves as an introductory section that provides background information or sets the stage for the main story, rather than delivering excitement. The **resolution** occurs after the climax; it encompasses the events that follow, tying up loose ends and resolving the main conflict. **Exposition** is the part of the narrative that introduces characters, setting, and the initial situation, laying the groundwork for the story but not serving as the moment of greatest tension or turning point.

10. A question asked for effect that does not require an answer is known as what?

- A. Rhetorical question**
- B. Leading question**
- C. Hypothetical question**
- D. Open-ended question**

A **rhetorical question** is a figure of speech posed to make a point rather than elicit a response. It is often used in literature, speeches, and everyday conversation to provoke thought or emphasize a particular idea. Since the purpose is to stimulate the audience's thinking or to highlight a point, no direct answer is expected or necessary. Other types of questions serve different purposes: a **leading question** is designed to guide the respondent toward a specific answer; a **hypothetical question** asks someone to consider a scenario that isn't real; and an **open-ended question** encourages a detailed response rather than a simple yes or no. Each of these alternatives aims at gathering information or opinions, unlike a rhetorical question, which focuses on persuasion or emphasis.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://apenglishlitliteraryterms.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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