

AP ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION – LITERARY TERMS PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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THE FULL VERSION STUDY GUIDE

<https://apenglishlitliteraryterms.examzify.com>



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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. 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.

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. 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!

Questions

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- 1. What is a shorter poem that expresses an emotional state in a single, unified impression called?**
 - A. Sonnet
 - B. Lyric verse
 - C. Ballad
 - D. Elegy
- 2. 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
- 3. Which element in a narrative refers to the peak of action or the turning point?**
 - A. Exposition
 - B. Climax
 - C. Resolution
 - D. Falling action
- 4. What is the definition of a simile?**
 - A. A comparison using like or as
 - B. A direct comparison without using like or as
 - C. A humorous double meaning
 - D. A symbolic representation
- 5. Which word describes a work that is intended to teach excessively?**
 - A. Didactic
 - B. Pedantic
 - C. Expository
 - D. Descriptive

- 6. Which literary technique involves addressing an absent person or imaginary concept?**
- A. Apostrophe
 - B. Alliteration
 - C. Metaphor
 - D. Personification
- 7. What is the term for a recurring element that has symbolic significance in a story?**
- A. Theme
 - B. Motif
 - C. Characterization
 - D. Setting
- 8. Which narrative perspective is characterized by an external narrator who only knows the thoughts and feelings of one character?**
- A. First person
 - B. Third person limited
 - C. Omniscient
 - D. Second person
- 9. What term refers to the resolution of a story's plot?**
- A. Exposition
 - B. Rising action
 - C. Denouement
 - D. Climax
- 10. What type of poem is characterized as an Italian sonnet comprised of an octave and sestet?**
- A. Shakespearean sonnet
 - B. Petrarchan sonnet
 - C. Spencerian sonnet
 - D. Ballad

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What is a shorter poem that expresses an emotional state in a single, unified impression called?

- A. Sonnet
- B. Lyric verse**
- C. Ballad
- D. Elegy

A shorter poem that expresses an emotional state in a single, unified impression is known as lyric verse. This form of poetry is characterized by its focus on personal feelings and thoughts, often evoking a strong emotional response from the reader. Lyric poems typically do not tell a story or follow a narrative structure; instead, they are concerned with creating a vivid emotional experience and capturing a moment or feeling in a succinct manner. Other poetic forms, such as sonnets, ballads, and elegies, have specific structures or thematic focuses that distinguish them from lyric verse. Sonnet, for example, usually adheres to a strict rhyme scheme and is often used to explore themes of love or nature over a longer format. Ballads generally tell a narrative story and often incorporate dialogue and character interactions, while elegies are mournful lyrics specifically focused on loss or lamentation. Thus, lyric verse stands out due to its emphasis on emotional expression in a concise form.

2. 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.

3. Which element in a narrative refers to the peak of action or the turning point?

- A. Exposition
- B. Climax**
- C. Resolution
- D. Falling action

The peak of action or the turning point in a narrative is known as the climax. This moment typically represents the highest emotional intensity and crucial decision of the protagonist, where they confront their main conflict. At the climax, the stakes are at their highest, and the outcome of the story begins to unfold. It serves as a pivotal moment that sets the direction for the subsequent events in the narrative. In contrast, exposition introduces the background and context of the story, establishing characters and setting. The resolution comes after the climax and falling action, providing closure to the plot and resolving any remaining conflicts. Falling action refers to the events that follow the climax, leading towards the resolution, where tensions begin to decrease. Hence, identifying the climax is essential in understanding the structure and progression of a narrative.

4. What is the definition of a simile?

- A. A comparison using like or as**
- B. A direct comparison without using like or as
- C. A humorous double meaning
- D. A symbolic representation

A simile is defined as a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two different things using the words "like" or "as." This device helps create vivid imagery and enhance writing by allowing readers to understand the similarities between two dissimilar entities, thereby evoking an emotional response or a clearer understanding of a concept. For instance, saying "as brave as a lion" employs a simile to compare someone's bravery to that of a lion, enriching the description in a relatable way. In contrast, other options present different literary devices: a direct comparison without "like" or "as" refers to a metaphor; a humorous double meaning is characteristic of puns; and a symbolic representation relates to symbolism, where an object, character, or event represents a larger idea or concept. These distinctions clarify why the correct understanding centers specifically on the use of "like" or "as" in comparisons.

5. Which word describes a work that is intended to teach excessively?

- A. Didactic**
- B. Pedantic
- C. Expository
- D. Descriptive

The term that describes a work intended to teach excessively is didactic. Didactic literature is characterized by its primary purpose of instructing or educating the reader and often incorporates moral lessons or philosophical concepts. Works that are didactic often have an overt educational agenda, elaborating on themes or concepts in a way that emphasizes teaching, sometimes at the expense of storytelling or narrative flow. In contrast, pedantic also relates to teaching but emphasizes a superficial or overly formal level of detail, which may not be as universally instructive or relevant as didactic works. Expository refers to writing that aims to explain or inform but does not imply an excessive teaching style, while descriptive focuses on detailing the characteristics of a subject rather than imparting lessons. Thus, the strongest and most direct answer to suggest an excessive intent to teach is didactic.

6. Which literary technique involves addressing an absent person or imaginary concept?

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

The literary technique that involves addressing an absent person or an imaginary concept is known as apostrophe. In literature, apostrophe is a figure of speech where a speaker directly addresses someone or something that is not present in the physical realm, such as an idea, a deceased person, or even an abstract concept. This technique can create a sense of intimacy or emotional intensity by allowing the speaker to express their thoughts and feelings directly to the addressed entity, even though it cannot respond. For example, in literature, one might encounter a character speaking to the moon, expressing their feelings of longing or contemplation, thereby drawing the reader deeper into the emotional landscape of the work. The other techniques listed are distinct in function and application. Alliteration refers to the repetition of the same initial consonant sounds in a series of words, used primarily for rhythm and musicality within poetry or prose. Metaphor is a figure of speech that makes a direct comparison between two unlike things, suggesting they are alike in a significant way, which does not involve addressing a person or concept. Personification gives human traits and qualities to non-human entities or abstract ideas, allowing these non-human elements to act with human-like characteristics, but it does not involve direct address to an absent entity.

7. What is the term for a recurring element that has symbolic significance in a story?

- A. Theme
- B. Motif**
- C. Characterization
- D. Setting

The term that refers to a recurring element with symbolic significance in a story is "motif." A motif is typically a recurring image, idea, or theme that helps to develop and inform the overarching narrative or themes within a literary work. By repeating a particular motif, the author can reinforce key ideas or emotional responses, creating a deeper understanding of the text for the reader. In contrast, "theme" refers to the central idea or message that the author intends to convey through the narrative, rather than a specific recurring element. "Characterization" involves the techniques used by an author to create and develop characters, while "setting" refers to the time and place in which a story unfolds. Each of these terms serves a distinct purpose in literature and contributes to the narrative in different ways, but it is the concept of a motif that specifically captures the idea of a recurring symbol with significance in the story.

8. Which narrative perspective is characterized by an external narrator who only knows the thoughts and feelings of one character?

- A. First person
- B. Third person limited**
- C. Omniscient
- D. Second person

The third person limited narrative perspective is characterized by an external narrator who has insight into the thoughts and feelings of only one character. This allows readers to experience the story through the lens of that specific character's internal emotional landscape while keeping a certain distance from other characters' thoughts and emotions. The narrator describes actions, events, and observations from this one character's point of view, creating a focused and intimate connection with them while maintaining the narrative voice as separate from that character. In contrast, the first person perspective immerses the reader in the thoughts and experiences of a narrator who is also a character in the story. The omniscient perspective provides a broader view, as the narrator knows the thoughts and feelings of all characters in the story. The second person perspective directly addresses the reader using "you," which creates an engaging and immediate connection but does not confine the narrative to a single character's thoughts. Thus, third person limited distinctly stands out by limiting insight to just one character, making it the correct choice.

9. What term refers to the resolution of a story's plot?

- A. Exposition
- B. Rising action
- C. Denouement**
- D. Climax

The term that refers to the resolution of a story's plot is denouement. In literary structure, the denouement follows the climax and serves to tie up loose ends and resolve conflicts that have arisen during the narrative. It provides closure, often explaining the fates of the characters and revealing any final insights about the story's themes. While exposition introduces the characters, setting, and initial conflict, and rising action builds tension leading up to the climax, and the climax represents the turning point or moment of greatest intensity in the story, the denouement is specifically focused on concluding the narrative and answering any lingering questions. This makes it a crucial component in understanding how a story wraps up and delivers its final messages.

10. What type of poem is characterized as an Italian sonnet comprised of an octave and sestet?

- A. Shakespearean sonnet
- B. Petrarchan sonnet**
- C. Spenserian sonnet
- D. Ballad

A Petrarchan sonnet is indeed characterized by its structure consisting of an octave followed by a sestet. The octave typically follows an ABBAABBA rhyme scheme, creating a problem or situation, while the sestet can vary in rhyme scheme (commonly CDCDCD or CDECDE) and serves to resolve or reflect on the theme presented in the octave. This specific division allows for a clear transition in thought and mood within the poem, which is a distinctive feature of this form. In contrast, a Shakespearean sonnet features three quatrains followed by a final rhymed couplet, creating a different rhetorical structure and flow. A Spenserian sonnet, while also structured in quatrains, interlocks the rhyme scheme, giving it yet another distinct style. A ballad, on the other hand, is a narrative poem that often tells a story and does not conform to the structured form of sonnets; it is typically written in a series of stanzas with a refrain, focusing on narrative rather than thematic resolution. Thus, the Petrarchan sonnet is defined by its specific octave and sestet structure, making it the correct choice.

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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:

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

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