Multiple Choice – “Sister”  
Grade Seven

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Materials and Resources

• “Sister” by Leona Gom
• Close Reading Lesson: “Peeling Back the Layers – ‘Sister’”

Lesson Introduction

Remember when multiple choice questions and tests were just “busy work”? They most often consisted of three different types:

• fact-based questions (What is the name of the main character in *Lord Jim*)?
• nit-picky “gotcha” questions (What three items did Boo Radley put in the tree?)
• interpretive questions where the “right” answer was based on the teacher’s own opinion of the work’s meaning (The symbolic meaning of the scarlet letter is….)

Well, times have changed – and so have multiple choice questions. With the right kind of training, teachers can write multiple choice questions that allow students to practice the higher levels of thinking – applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating, as well as remembering and
understanding. Practice with high-level multiple choice questions is extremely valuable for students who are beginning to learn to interpret literature, not just read it superficially. But writing challenging multiple choice questions based on critical thinking may involve quite a shift in mindset for teachers who are used to writing only knowledge/comprehension-level questions.

A good source for teachers who want to find out more about writing multiple choice questions is *The AP Vertical Teams Guide to English*. In the final section, “Modification of Advanced Placement Examination Questions,” the book’s editors have provided for the teacher a clear explanation of how, why, and when to choose a multiple choice format for testing. In this chapter, teachers will find examples of each type of multiple choice question, sample “stems” and types of answer choices, and a list of errors that teachers typically make when trying to construct challenging, appropriate multiple choice questions.

Among the skills that can be tested using a multiple choice format are the following:

- diction
- figures of speech
- function (reason for the writer’s choices)
- vocabulary in context
- point of view
- sound devices
- literary elements
- inference
- syntax
- tone
- grammar
- main idea/purpose
- characterization
- literary techniques

Questions of theme, or meaning, are best addressed in an essay format because interpretations of the work’s meaning will vary, and what matters most when addressing theme is the way the student supports his or her answer with textual evidence.

Following this introduction, you will find examples of some multiple choice questions based on the annotated passages for a particular grade level. It is best to focus questions on a particular short passage meant for close, intense reading. Students who practice these skills through multiple choice questions become more sharply focused on the text and are prepared to think on a high level while reading.

Should multiple choice be the only format a teacher uses to test his or her students? Of course not; open-ended, analytical, and argumentative essays are of equal or even greater value in teaching students to think on a high level while reading and writing. But there is certainly a place for high-level multiple choice questions in the curriculum grounded in Pre-AP strategies. Practice with AP-style multiple choice questions is one tool in the workshop of teachers hoping to prepare their students to be close readers who interpret literature with subtlety and precision.

**Key to Multiple Choice**

1. B  
2. E  
3. A  
4. B  
5. D  
6. A  
7. E  
8. C  
9. A  
10. C  
11. A  
12. E  
13. D  
14. A  
15. D
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Use the poem “Sister” to answer the questions that follow.

1. At the time the photograph is taken, the speaker is
   A. camera shy
   B. quite young
   C. very obedient
   D. feeling resentment
   E. anticipating Christmas

2. The words “take her hand, come on” (line 6) are in italics because they
   A. are not the narrator’s words
   B. represent a command
   C. exist in memory
   D. are pleading
   E. are spoken

3. The speaker cannot remember holding her sister’s hand because
   A. many years have passed
   B. she dislikes contact with her sister
   C. the photographer has frightened her
   D. being disobedient is normal for the girls
   E. being sentimental is sometimes difficult

4. The description in lines 7 to 10 creates a mood of
   A. fear
   B. violence
   C. confusion
   D. evil
   E. annoyance

5. Repetition of the word “who” in lines 8 – 10 serves to
   A. indicate point of view
   B. create atmosphere
   C. develop the event
   D. create emphasis
   E. reveal old complaints
6. The word “squashed” (line 12) suggests that the girls’ past has been
   A. lost
   B. altered
   C. hidden
   D. exaggerated
   E. problematic

7. The statement “we are too different now” (line 15) can be MOST correctly identified as
   A. an lie
   B. a plea
   C. an apology
   D. a complaint
   E. an excuse

8. One of the main ideas of the poem is that
   A. relatives need to be supportive of one another
   B. family photographs can express only appearances
   C. time may change the feelings between people
   D. children naturally compete for the attention of elders
   E. only pleasant things are forgotten by people

9. The point of view in this poem can be classified as
   A. first person
   B. second person
   C. third person
   D. first person and third person
   E. first person and second person

10. In the final two lines of the poem, the speaker’s tone is one of
    A. hostility
    B. impatience
    C. longing
    D. confusion
    E. thoughtfulness

11. The poet’s purpose in beginning and ending the poem by referring to the sisters holding
    hands is to provide
    A. the framework for unifying the poem
    B. additional background information
    C. contrasting images of the two girls
    D. important plot details for the reader
    E. evidence that the girls are close
12. Alliteration is found in the words
   A. “something automatic” (line 3)
   B. “who hit who” (line 8)
   C. “squashed between us” (line 12)
   D. “we are too different now” (line 15)
   E. “with their secret sealed in” (line 20)

13. The quotation that indicates a turning point for the narrator is
   A. “Mostly we remember / who hit who first” (lines 7 – 8)
   B. “It becomes easier every year” (line 13)
   C. “we are too different now” (line 15)
   D. “But still I return to the old albums” (line 18)
   E. “My fingertips find the two small faces” (line 21)

14. In the last six lines of the poem, the narrator’s behavior suggests that she is
   A. reminiscing
   B. contented
   C. forgiving
   D. pleading
   E. upset

15. At the end of the poem, the narrator can BEST be described as feeling
   A. full of regret
   B. dissatisfied with her sister
   C. certain about her feelings
   D. hopeful to bond with her sister
   E. accepting of her loneliness