

Open Response questions are each worth four points. (That will total sixteen points on the four questions on the test. Multiple choice questions are worth only one point each.) Skipping an open response question, or writing a very short answer, will not earn you much credit. You should spend the same amount of time on these questions as you would spend on a short essay response.

Read the question or statement carefully. MCAS Open Response questions are specific. Decide what the question is asking or what the statement is stating. Frame the first sentence of your answer using the question or the statement as a starting point.

If the question asks, "Explain the significance of the statement..." then begin your sentence with something like this: "The meaning of the statement is..." or "The importance of the statement is..."

If the question asks, "Explain how the author uses humor..." then begin your sentence with something like this: "The author uses humor to lighten the mood in the story" or "The author uses humor several times in the story to show the funny side of life."

Your answer should be three paragraphs long, so try to plan three points to discuss. Take the time to create an outline for your answer. Since you are planning to write three paragraphs, create an A. B. C. plan. Even if the question or statement looks as if it can be answered by two or three sentences, a longer answer that includes more explanation will be a better answer that earns more points. Adding supporting details will make your answer more complete.

Include at least two short quotations from the passage you've been given to read that help to explain your answer. These quotations don't need to be long. Even a quotation of five or six words can be helpful in demonstrating what you are saying.

Double-check your work for proper spelling and capitalization. Avoid using slang or informal language. Write words out (he is), instead of using contractions (he's). Avoid using "I," and mention instead "he," or "the reader," or "the audience." Check for the correct use of quotation marks and punctuation.