

# Strategies for Multiple Choice Tests

Name:

Date:

Task:

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Multiple Choice tests can become easier, even if you don't know the answer, by employing certain strategies. Try and use just a few next time you work through a MC test.

- **READ THE QUESTIONS CAREFULLY:** twice if necessary. Avoid jumping to conclusions about what you think the question asks.
- **PREVIEW THE EXAM.** As you browse through, take note of those questions which seem easier (i.e., those questions you think you can answer) and perhaps plan to skip those which seem harder, setting time limits, and getting settled; keep to time divisions for questions as they are usually equally weighted.
- **START WITH QUESTIONS YOU CAN ANSWER READILY.** Don't waste time laboring over troublesome questions at the start. Be sure to get credit for items you know well.
- Come up with the answer in your head before looking at the possible answers, this way the choices given on the test won't throw you off or trick you.
- Read *all* the answer choices before selecting one.
- Cross out answer choices you are certain are not correct.
- Look for two answer choices that are opposites. One of these two answer choices is likely to be correct.
- Avoid choosing one of several answers that appear to be synonymous with one another.
- Look for hints about the correct answer choice in other areas of the test.
- Treat each answer as True/False, and choose the one that is most true.
- Do not change your initial answer unless you are sure another answer choice is correct. More often than not, your first choice is correct.
- Choose "all of the above" if you are certain all other answer choices in the item are correct. Do not choose "all of the above" if even just one of the other answer choices is not correct.
- Choose "none of the above" if you are certain all other answer choices in the item are incorrect. Do not choose "none of the above" if even just one of the other answer choices is correct.
- **RECYCLE THROUGH THE TEST.** Now try the questions you could not do on the first attempt. Sometimes the answer will occur to you simply because you are more relaxed after having answered other questions. Sometimes, too, your answer to one question provides a clue to the answer of another.
- **SET GOALS FOR TIME AND PACE YOURSELF ACCORDINGLY.** Allocate your time according to the relative worth of questions. Try to save a few minutes at the end for review and revision.
- **CIRCLE OR UNDERLINE KEY WORDS IN QUESTIONS.** Multiple choice tests examine your ability to read carefully and thoughtfully as much as they test your ability to recall and reason. Watch for words like "all," "always," "never," "none," "few," "many," "some," "sometimes."
- **TRANSLATE DOUBLE NEGATIVE STATEMENTS** into positive ones. Examples like "Not lacking" or "not none" become "having" and "some" and this can reduce confusion.
- **IF YOU MUST GUESS,** look for some of these possibilities: the style of an answer option is very different from all of the others - this may disqualify it; the grammar of the question stem is not in agreement with the grammar of an alternative; some alternative is not in the area or topic of the question, but comes from some other part of the course- this may disqualify it.
- **OVERALL,** remember that you are looking for the best answer, not only a correct one, and not one which must be true all of the time, in all cases, and without exception.

Sources: <http://www.how-to-study.com/MultipleChoice.htm>  
<http://www.yorku.ca/cdc/lsp/eponline/exam4.htm>

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<http://www.testtakingtips.com/test/multiple.htm>