

## How to Write Multiple Choice Exams

Test strategies:

- Read the directions carefully
- Answer the easy questions first

Answering options - Improve your odds by thinking critically:

- Cover the options, read the question, and try to answer it. Then select the option that most closely matches your answer.
- Read the question with each option. Treat each option as a true-false question, and choose the "most true".

Strategies to answer difficult questions:

- Eliminate options you know to be incorrect
- Question options that grammatically do not fit with the question
- Question options that are totally unfamiliar to you
- "All of the above:" If you know two of three options seem correct, "all of the above" is a strong possibility
- "Look alike options" probably one is correct; choose the best but eliminate choices that mean basically the same thing, and thus cancel each other out
- Echo options: If two options are opposite each other, chances are one of them is correct
- If two alternatives seem correct, compare them for differences, then refer to the question to find your best answer
- Use hints from questions you know to answer questions you do not.

Guessing:

- As a last resort, guess when you are unsure – do not leave any questions blank!

## Do's for Answering Multiple-Choice Questions

1. If the question is a problem that requires calculations, think about what procedure you need to follow to produce a solution. At this point, with some types of questions, it might be possible to make a rough estimate of the scale of possible answer you are seeking.
2. Solve the problem. Be tidy with your calculations; many errors are made through untidy writing!
3. Compare your answer to the options given. If you are satisfied, fill in the answer on the answer sheet.
4. If the answer that you have calculated is not one of the given options, check your procedure again, making any necessary changes, and recalculate your answer.
5. If you still do not arrive at one of the given options, put a big question mark by that question, and go on to the next. When you get to the end of the exam, go back to any questions that you did not answer the first time through.

### **Don'ts** for Answering Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Don't select an alternative just because you remember learning the information in the course; it may be a "true" statement in its own right, but you have to make sure that it is the "correct" answer to the question.
2. Don't pick an answer just because it seems to make sense. You are answering from your knowledge of the course content, not just from your general knowledge and logic.
3. Don't dismiss an alternative because it seems too obvious and simple an answer. If you are well prepared for the exam, some of the questions will appear very straight forward to you.
4. Don't be wowed by fancy terms in the question, i.e., don't say to yourself, "That sounds impressive, so it must be the right answer!"
5. Don't pick "c" every time you are unsure of the answer. You could end up picking "c" far too many times.
6. Don't pick your answer based on a pattern of responses, i.e., don't say to yourself, "This can't be another "b" answer as we have just had three in a row."

### **Math Problem Solving**

There are two steps to solving math word problems:

1. Translate the wording into a numeric equation
2. Solve the equation!

Usually, once you get the math equation, you're fine. However, getting to the equation can seem difficult. These strategies may help you translate, but practice will determine your success:

- **Read the problem entirely.** Get a feel for the whole problem
- **List information** and the variables you identify. Attach units of measure to the variables (gallons, miles, inches, etc.)
- **Define what answer you need**, as well as its units of measure
- **Work in an organized manner.** Working clearly will help you think clearly
  - Draw and label all graphs and pictures clearly
  - Note or explain each step of your process; this will help you track variables and remember their meanings
- **Look for "key" words** (underline them or highlight them!).

### **Information gathered from:**

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