

Basic Rules for Taking a Multiple-Choice Test

A) Typical Content of Multiple Choice Exams:

- Memory of details
- Facts
- Relationships
- Comprehension
- Problem-Solving

B) How to Prepare for a Multiple Choice Exam:

1. Keep up with reading. Read BEFORE the topic is covered in class.
2. Review class notes as soon after class as possible.
3. Combine and cross-reference concepts from the textbook with concepts discussed in class.
4. Definitions are important. Create and consistently review flash cards to help you memorize definitions.
5. Test your ability to distinguish concepts and ideas by the use of comparing and contrasting.
6. Construct diagrams, charts, tables, and lists to summarize relationships.
7. Repetition is important for memorization. Reciting aloud or rewriting important concepts are two methods of repetition.
8. Test your ability to recall information by writing down everything you can remember about specific topics without using your notes or textbook. This will help you recognize topics that you may need to spend more time studying.
9. At least five days before the exam, review your notes and textbook and identify the major concepts that have been covered. You should not be learning the information for the first time...this should be a *review!*

C) How to Take Multiple Choice Exams:

1. Determine what the question is asking by identifying key words in the stem.
2. Try to answer the question before looking at the answers. Attempt to anticipate the correct response prior to seeing the options that have been provided. But, make sure you read *every* answer before choosing.
3. Eliminate options you know to be incorrect. It may be helpful for you to jot down why this option has been eliminated.
4. Circle or underline key words in questions (watch for words like "all", "always", "never", "none", "few", "many", "some", "sometimes")
5. Look for grammatical clues. For example, if the stem ends with "an," then the correct response probably begins with a vowel.
6. Translate double negatives into positive statements.
7. Look for verbal associations. A response that repeats key words that are in the stem is likely to be correct
8. Responses that use absolute words, such as "always" or "never" are less likely to be correct than ones that use conditional words like "usually" or "probably."
9. "All of the above" is a strong possibility for an answer if you can verify that more than one of the other responses is correct.
10. The longest response could be the correct one, because the instructor may have needed to include details or qualifying information to ensure the correctness of the answer. But this isn't always the case!!!
11. Avoid choosing answers that are unfamiliar or that you do not understand. If you have studied *carefully*, a choice that is unfamiliar to you is probably incorrect. If you don't recognize the answer because you didn't prepare adequately, this tactic does not apply!
12. Use exam questions to help you answer other exam questions. Correlating information between questions may assist you in finding the right answers.
13. Do not spend too much time on any one question.
14. Do not keep changing your answers. Stick with your first impression, unless you misread the question the first time. *Be careful not to read things into the questions that aren't there.*
15. Overall, remember that you are looking for the BEST possible answer provided among the options.