



Multiple Choice Strategies

Multiple-choice questions consist of 3 parts:

1. a stem, which asks a question, poses a problem, or presents an incomplete sentence.
 2. the correct answers, which appears among
 3. a number of “distracters” or alternatives.
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1. Try to **answer the question in your own words first**. Read the question and try to answer it before looking at the choices. This may eliminate the distracters.
 2. **Read all choices**- don't stop with 2nd or 3rd choices, even if you are certain that you have found the correct answer. Your job is to pick the best answer that is available.
 3. You should be able to **eliminate** some of the answers. Crossing them out with your pencil helps you to eliminate distractions and focus on the best answers.
 4. **Examine** closely items that are very similar. Circle the part that is different. Try to express each in your own words or picture them and then analyze how they differ.
 5. It is possible for every alternative to be familiar. You must **understand the meaning** of each of the alternatives with respect to the context of the question. You can achieve this by studying for the test as though it will be a short answer or essay test.
 6. When you have choices that are combinations of previously listed choices- treat each choice when combined with the stem, as a **true or false statement**. Select the choice that has all true statements.
 7. Look for the level of **qualifying words**. Such words as *best, always, all, no, never, none, entirely, completely* suggest that a condition exists without exception. Items containing words that provide for some level of exception or qualification are: *often, usually, less, seldom, few, more, and most*.
 8. **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. You are being tested to see if you know the difference between what “looks right” and what “is right.”
 9. Make **educated guesses**. Never leave a question unanswered. If nothing looks familiar, pick the answer that seems most complete and contains the most information.
 10. If you know that two or three of the options are correct, **“all of the above”** is a strong possibility.
 11. If you cannot choose between two alternatives, try vividly **imagining** each one as the correct answer. If you are like most people, you will often feel that one of the answers is wrong. Trust this feeling—research suggests that feelings are frequently accessible even when recall is poor.
 12. **Study Tips**- study alone at first and study with others afterward. When you feel confident with the material study with one or more classmates. This allows others to pick the material, thereby exposing the gaps in your knowledge (just as the exam does).