

MULTIPLE CHOICE EXAMS

Follow these procedures when taking a multiple-choice exam:

1. Ensure that you are well-rested for the exam.
2. Survey the exam. How many questions are there? Be wise about your time. Divide it up. For example, if you have 120 questions and two hours for the test, aim for an average of one (1) question per minute.
3. Begin the exam, being careful not to rush.
4. Underline important words in the stem of the question.
5. Read **ALL** the choices before selecting the correct one. Also, make sure you read each choice entirely. Don't take the ending of any choice for granted.
6. Your first hunch is usually a good one. Pay attention to your intuition which may indicate which answer "feels" best.
7. Select not only a technically correct answer, but the most completely correct answer. Since "all of the above" and "none of the above" are very inclusive statements, these options, when used, often tend to be correct.
8. Be careful of:
 - a. Words that are **TOO** positive: all, every, always, best, invariably. These generally make an answer false.
 - b. Words that are **TOO** negative: never, worst, none. These also often make an answer false.
 - c. Note "hedge" words like: many, most, few, as a rule, probably, often, usually, sometimes, seldom, frequently. These often cause the response to be true since they do not over or understate the issue.
9. Use your knowledge of common prefixes, suffixes, and word roots to make intelligent guesses about certain terminologies. A knowledge of the prefix "hyper," for instance, would clue you that hypertension refers to high, not low, blood pressure.
10. Read the question carefully to see if a negative verb is used. If the question asks, "Which of the following are **not** applicable," be sure to gear your thinking accordingly. Underline the "not" in the question. Also, watch out for double negatives. For example, "it is not unlikely that" means that "it is likely that."
11. If two choices mean the same thing, you can usually eliminate both of them. If two choices are opposites, the correct choice is probably one or the other.
12. Look for the answer that may be different from the others. For example, if all choices but one are stated in milligrams and the last one reads "1 gr.," that choice may be a distracter. In that case, you can narrow your selection to the other choices.

13. If the choices are in pairs, the correct response is usually found in one of two very similar pairs. Often, the most correct choice will be the one that uses terms from the class.
14. Examine choices carefully, especially if two choices differ only by one or two words. Read the questions using the first possible answer and cover up the remaining choices. Do this again for the second possible answer, and then the third, fourth, etc. Cross out the choices you know are wrong, then pick the best answer from the remaining choices.
13. All else being equal, select the response you best understand. Long-winded statements are likely to be included as distracters and may be a lot of words signifying little or nothing.
14. When you do not know the specific facts called for in the question, use your skills of reasoning. When an answer involves amounts or time (mainly numbers), and you do not know the answer and cannot find any basis for reasoning (all else being equal,) avoid the extreme responses (the highest or lowest numerical values.)
15. If you meet a difficult question:
 - a. Eliminate the choices you know are wrong.
 - b. If you still can't decide on the correct choice, mark the question clearly in the margin, then go on.
 - c. Don't panic; very few students get 100%. You can get a lot of questions wrong before failing.
16. Finally, the best way to ensure selection of the correct option is to **know** the right answer. A word to the test wise is sufficient.
17. When you have gone over the test for the first time, go back to the questions you have missed. Perhaps other questions later on in the paper will suggest the answer. If you still don't know the right answer, guess, as long as there is no penalty for wrong answers.

Guessing:

- a. Use common sense and logic – you are looking for the best answer, not only a correct one.
 - b. A positive choice is more likely to be true than a negative one.
 - c. If questions are asking for a number response, consider the numbers in the middle. If the question is asking for the most or the least, consider picking the answer next to the most or the least.
18. Check that you have answered all the questions. If you are using an opscan sheet, make sure that the correct answers have been transcribed from your question paper to your opscan sheet.
 19. Don't hastily change any answer. Your instinctive first choice is probably correct.
 20. Use common sense throughout the exam. There are usually a number of questions on any multiple-choice exam that can be answered correctly if common sense is applied.
 21. Learn from your mistakes on an exam so that you will improve on the next. Once your exam is marked, study your mistakes and classify your errors as:
 - a) lack of knowledge,
 - b) carelessness,
 - c) misreading of the question.