

Multiple-Choice Test Taking Tips and Strategies

College entrance exams, classroom tests, and most other examinations contain multiple-choice questions. Since you will no doubt encounter these types of questions on tests if you are preparing to enter college, learning some test taking strategies will be very beneficial.

Read the entire question.

Read a multi-choice question in its entirety before glancing over the answer options. Students often think they know what a question is asking before reading it and jump straight to the most logical answer. This is a big mistake and can cost you dearly on multiple-choice exams. Read each question thoroughly before reviewing answer options.

Answer it in your mind first.

After reading a question, answer it in your mind before reviewing the answer options. This will help prevent you from talking yourself out of the correct answer.

Eliminate wrong answers.

Eliminate answer options which you're 100 percent sure are incorrect before selecting the answer you believe is correct. Even when you believe you know the right answer, first eliminating those answers you know are incorrect will ensure your answer choice is the correct choice.

Use the process of elimination.

Using the process of elimination, cross out all the answers you know are incorrect, then focus on the remaining answers. Not only does this strategy save time, it greatly increases your likelihood of selecting the correct answer.

Select the best answer.

It's important to select the *best* answer to the question being asked, not just an answer that seems correct. Often many answers will seem correct, but there is typically a best answer to the question that your professors is looking for.

Read every answer option.

Read every answer option prior to choosing a final answer. This may seem like a no brainer to some, but it is a common mistake students make. As we pointed out in the previous section, there is usually a *best* answer to every multiple-choice question. If you quickly assume you know the correct answer, without first reading every answer option, you may end up not selecting the *best* answer.

Answer the questions you know first.

If you're having difficulty answering a question, move on and come back to tackle it once you've answered all the questions you know. Sometimes answer easier question first can offer you insight into answering more challenging questions.

Make an educated guess.

If it will not count against your score, make an educated guess for any question you're unsure about. (Note: On some standardized tests incorrect answers are penalized. For example, a correct answer may be worth 2 points, an unanswered question 0 points, and an incorrect answer -1 points. On these tests, you can still make an educated guess, but only when you're able to eliminate at least one or two incorrect answers.)