

SUCCESS CENTER: Taking Different Types of Tests

After thoroughly preparing for your test and practicing strategies to manage test anxiety, it is also important to understand how to respond to different types of tests.

FOR ALL TESTS: Read the directions carefully. Scan the test, if possible, to see how many questions and determine how much time is available. Answer easiest questions first. Review questions and answers if time permits.

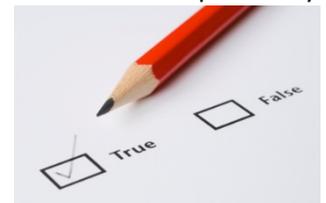
MULTIPLE CHOICE questions usually include a phrase or stem followed by three to five possible choices for answers.

- Does the question indicate one or more than one correct responses? (i.e., "Mark all that apply," or "A, B, and D.")
- Are you asked to identify the *incorrect* option? For example, "Which of the following is not true?"
- Is the wording in the question extreme or moderate (all, never, always, must, every, etc.)?
- **Cover the possible answers** and try to answer the question.
- Read each option and **eliminate the choices you know are incorrect.**
- If only one answer is to be selected, treat it as a true-false question. Choose the answer that is 'most true.'
- If you're stuck select "all of the above," if that is an option. The purpose of the exam is to teach as well as test, so "all of the above" is correct slightly more often than you might expect.
- During the test, you may pick up cues that may help you answer another question.
- Try not to read into the question. **Avoid second-guessing yourself.** However, change an answer if you notice an error in the way you read the question or remember a key detail.
- Choose the best answer, not necessarily the one you recognize.
- If you cannot choose between two alternatives, vividly imagine each one as the correct answer. You will likely 'feel' that one of the answers is wrong. Research suggests that feelings are often present even when information cannot be recalled, in the same way we may remember how we feel about a person even if we cannot remember the name.



TRUE/FALSE TESTS

- **Every part of the sentence must be true or the sentence is false.**
- If the question contains a negative (no, not, cannot), read the statement without the negative. If the statement is true without the negative, then the statement with the negative is usually false.
- **Qualifiers such as** "sometimes, often, frequently, ordinarily, generally" allow for exceptions and offer the possibility that the statement is true.
- **Absolute words** usually indicate false answers. "No, never, none, always, every, entirely, only" imply the statement must be completely true 100% of the time.
- **Long sentences** often include more than one phrase. Pay attention to the "truth" of each of these phrases. If one is false, it usually indicates a "false" answer
- **When you're absolutely unsure of the answer, mark it true; there is a tendency to include more true statements than false ones.**



SHORT ANSWER TESTS

- Focus on key words and facts and be concise. Do not elaborate beyond answering the question.
- Ask if the instructor requires answering the question in a complete sentence.

MATCHING TESTS

- Glance through both lists first to get an overview.
- If one list has longer statements, use it as the starting point.
- Answer the items you are sure of first.
- Go through the list more than once to eliminate incorrect options.
- Words that are grammatically similar sometimes match. For example, match verbs with verbs or nouns with nouns.
- Cross out items you've matched.

OPEN-BOOK TESTS

- **Prepare for an open book exam as thoroughly as you would for a closed book exam.** There will not be time to re-read and locate information during the test.
- Place sticky notes or paper clips on the index and table of contents pages in your text book so they are easy to find.
- Create a list of important pages of your text. Add any formulas or information.
- **Expect to apply knowledge, analyze elements or relationships, or evaluate new information.**

ESSAY QUESTIONS

- Underline or circle important words in the question such as *analyze, compare/contrast, apply, prove* or *trace* and use them to guide your response
- If the essay asks you to answer multiple questions, number them on the sheet and address each one.
- Think before you write. Make a brief outline and include important main ideas and supporting details.
- Get to the point and stick to the facts. Provide supporting evidence. Avoid wordy, rambling sentences by using brief transition words: for example, accordingly, similarly, finally.
- If you are running out of time, outline the remaining points you wish to make in your essay. You might get partial credit for these concepts even if they are not presented in essay form.
- Check your spelling and grammar.
- As you proofread, check if you have fully answered the question(s). If not, briefly insert or elaborate where necessary.

If you finish the test early, review your answers, compare questions to the answer sheet and make sure you've answered every question.

Sources:

Ellis, Dave. *Becoming a Master Student*. Houghton Mifflin, 2006.

"The Essay Exam." *Testing with Success Series, Study Guides and Strategies*, www.studygs.net/tsttak4.htm. Accessed 16 Jun. 2017.

Image of multiple choice test answer sheet, www.certmag.com/time-for-performance-based-testing-to-replace-multiple-choice. Accessed 25 Jun 2017.

Image of true false test. www.graduatewings.co.uk/verbal-reasoning-tests/. Accessed 25 Jun 2017.

Keesee, Gayla. "Test Taking Strategies." *Mack Gipson, Jr. Tutorial and Enrichment Center*, SlideShare, www.slideshare.net/gskeesee/test-taking-strategies. Accessed 26 Jun. 2017

"Multiple Choice Tests." *Testing with Success Series, Study Guides and Strategies*, www.studygs.net/tsttak3.htm. Accessed 16 Jun. 2017.

"Open Book Exams." *Testing with Success Series, Study Guides and Strategies*, www.studygs.net/tsttak7.htm. Accessed 16 Jun. 2017.

Plous, Scott and Houseworth, Steve. "Tips on Taking Multiple-Choice Tests." Wesleyan University, www.socialpsychology.org/testtips.htm. Accessed 16 Jun. 2017.

"Short Answer Tests." *Testing with Success Series, Study Guides and Strategies*, www.studygs.net/tsttak5.htm. Accessed 16 Jun. 2017.

"Test-Taking Strategies – Different Types of Tests." Massachusetts Institute of Technology, web.mit.edu/arc/learning/modules/test/testtypes.html. Accessed 16 Jun 2017.

"True/False Tests." *Testing with Success Series, Study Guides and Strategies*, www.studygs.net/tsttak2.htm. Accessed 16 Jun. 2017.