

# Multiple choice tests

**Multiple choice questions usually include a phrase or stem followed by three to five options:**

**Test strategies:**

- Read the directions carefully
  - Know if each question has one or more correct option
  - Know if you are penalized for guessing
  - Know how much time is allowed (this governs your strategy)
- Preview the test
  - Read through the test quickly and answer the easiest questions first
  - Mark those you think you know in some way that is appropriate
- Read through the test a second time and answer more difficult questions
  - You may pick up cues for answers from the first reading, or become more comfortable in the testing situation
- If time allows, review both questions and answers
  - It is possible you mis-read questions the first time

**Answering options**

Improve your odds, think critically:

**Cover the options, read the stem, and try to answer**

Select the option that most closely matches your answer

**Read the stem with each option**

Treat each option as a true-false question, and choose the "most true"

**Strategies for answering difficult questions:**

1. **Eliminate options you know to be incorrect**
  - If allowed, mark words or alternatives in questions that eliminate the option
2. **Give each option of a question the "true-false test:"**
  - This may reduce your selection to the best answer
3. **Question options that grammatically don't fit with the stem**
4. **Question options that are totally unfamiliar to you**
5. **Question options that contain negative or absolute words.**
  - Try substituting a qualified term for the absolute one.
  - For example, *frequently* for *always*; or *typical* for *every* to see if you can eliminate an option
6. **"All of the above:"**
  - If you know two of three options seem correct, "all of the above" is a strong possibility
7. **Number answers:**
  - toss out the high and low and consider the middle range numbers
8. **"Look alike options"**
  - probably one is correct; choose the best but eliminate choices that mean basically the same thing, and thus cancel each other out
9. **Double negatives:**
  - Create the equivalent positive statement
10. **Echo options:**
  - If two options are opposite each other, chances are one of them is correct
11. **Favor options that contain qualifiers**
  - The result is longer, more inclusive items that better fill the role of the answer
12. **If two alternatives seem correct,**
  - compare them for differences,
  - then refer to the stem to find your best answer