

Multiple choice questions are designed to test your memory of specific details. They are constructed with the following parts:

- Stem- the sentence or phrase that poses a question;
- Right answer- the element that provides the correct information to the stem question;
- Distractions- wrong or misleading answers to the stem questions

Distracters can be wrong in several ways. They often contain information that is the exact opposite of the correct answer. Distracters may also contain only partial information, or they contain both incorrect informative elements. Finally, some distracters are totally irrelevant to the information asked for in the stem. Knowing the way in which multiple choice questions are constructed will help you understand the logic behind the question and your answer choices.

Knowing the subject matter thoroughly has no substitute. Adequate study in preparation for a multiple choice exam will make you more confident and you likely score higher on the exam. Even with adequate preparation, however, you can increase your chances of finding right answers if you follow these suggestions.

1. Come to the exam with extra materials. Bring extra pens, pencils, and scratch paper to the test room. You never know when you might need a back-up pencil or paper to do calculations or to help out friends who forgot theirs.
2. Review the entire exam. Note the number of types of questions asked in the exam. Calculate the time you have for each section and estimate a schedule so you will have enough time to complete all sections.
3. Record your answers neatly. Take special care to be extremely neat and precise in recording your responses on the answer sheet. Smudges or incomplete erasures often disqualify an answer.
4. Work through the test slowly, calmly, and methodically. Occasional, brief rest breaks will help you maintain your concentration and control stress. Breathing deeply and relaxing your tense muscles will increase your memory recall.
5. Answer the easy questions first. As you work through the exam, do not get bogged down by a difficult question. If it will take time to analyze and find the answer, move on to easier questions and come back to the difficult ones after you have completed the rest of the exam. Take care not to get your answers out of order on the answer sheet if you skip questions.
6. Read the stem question and answers thoroughly. Even though you think you see the correct answer immediately, take the time to read the stem and try each answer. Test the information in each of the answers to determine why it is erroneous. This should help you eliminate the incorrect answers and verify the right one. Tricky questions are best uncovered with this technique.

7. Know the penalty for guessing. If the instructor penalizes wrong choices, it is better to leave an answer blank unless you can narrow down the choices to two. If there is no penalty for guessing, it is always best to select an answer, even if you have no clue as to the correctness of the choices.
8. Use the process of elimination to make guesses. When you are not certain of the correct answer, try to eliminate the answers you know are wrong. This will increase your chances of selecting the right answer if you have to guess. The odds are better if you can narrow down the correct answer to one of two choices. This is the process of “educated guessing.”
9. Determine if the test is instructor-created. Instructors who compose their own questions are usually not as systematic as computer-generated or testing-service testers. When an instructor composed the test, the following clues may point to the right answer:
 - The longest answer may be the correct choice
 - Middle answers are often correct
 - Correct answers will agree with the stem in indefinite article (a or an), number (singular or plural), and pronoun gender.
 - Qualifiers (such as *sometimes*, *may*, *could*) usually point to correct answers.
 - Absolutes (such as *always*, *never*, *all*) usually are incorrect.
 - Exactly opposite answers usually indicate that one of them is the correct answer.
 - Silly or humorous answers are often incorrect.
10. Look for the inter-question clues. The information provided in a stem may help you answer another question on the test. Keep an eye open for clues that will help you find the correct answer in a different question.
11. If a question is confusing, ask for clarification. Instructors sometimes compose ambiguous or vague questions. Asking for clarification will draw their attention to the problem, and you may get more information to help you find the right answer. If you are certain the question is a poor one, collect your evidence and politely talk with the instructor after the exam. Such effort shows that you are a serious and careful student.