



Tips For Answering Test Questions

Multiple-choice questions ask a question and give you lots of choices about which is the best answer. If you're not used to multiple-choice questions, you may be asked to do things in ways you've never done them, and that could make taking the tests seem harder than it should be for you. Here are some suggestions to help.

Answering Various Types of Questions

- **Always** read the entire question with all of the possible answers before choosing an answer.
- Identify key words or phrases in the question that will help you choose the correct answer-e.g., "what is the best answer," "select the answer that is most correct."
- Check yourself to make sure you understand what the question is asking-be sure you are responding to the question that is being asked.
- When there are several questions about a reading passage or chart, look for clues in other questions that will help you with those items about which you are unsure.
- If the test requires you to read passages and then answer questions about what you read, read the questions first. By doing this, you will know what you are looking for as you read. This also helps you go faster on the test.
- Sometimes two answers may seem to be correct. How do you choose between them?

Which of the choices below is closest in meaning to crawl?

- A. move
- B. carry
- C. creep
- D. skip

After reading all the choices, you can eliminate:

- B. carry
- D. skip

These words aren't related to crawl.

Now look at choices A and C.

Both words, *move* and *creep*, could be correct, Move is a good choice, but *creep* is better. It is the **closest** definition of the word crawl.

Many times, multiple-choice tests give you a limited amount of time to complete each section of the test. It is important to know if the test you are taking has time limits so you can make the best possible use of your time. If the test does have a time limit, follow the steps below.

Managing Your Time Wisely

1. Glance through the entire section of the test to familiarize yourself with how it is laid out before beginning to answer the questions.
2. Next, go through the section, question by question. If you're *sure* you know the answer to a question, mark it immediately and go on. If you're *unsure* of an answer, skip the question. **Do not spend extra time on questions you can't answer.**
3. Once you have been through all of the questions once, go back and find questions you have some knowledge about and use your "partial knowledge" to eliminate one or two response choices. Then choose between the remaining responses. If you can eliminate two wrong answers, your chance of guessing the right answer is greater.
4. Now, if any time is remaining, spend it on those questions about which you know nothing or almost nothing. Use your logic and general knowledge to help you make the best choice. (NOTE: As you go back through, do not change answers unless you are very uncertain about your first thought. Your first guess is usually right unless you are *sure* you have answered incorrectly.)

Ways Of Overcoming Test Anxiety

Sometimes when people take a test that is supposed to show how skilled they are, they get anxious and don't perform as well as they could. Staying calm and relaxed is one of the most important things you can do. Here are some things to help you relax when you are taking a test.

Learn and practice strategies such as those mentioned previously in this pamphlet.

Take advantage of the opportunity to take practice tests to familiarize yourself with the test format.

When taking practice tests, simulate actual testing conditions as much as possible e.g., follow the time limit, use an answer sheet, do only one section at a time, practice test-taking strategies.

Learn and practice some basic relaxation techniques such as imagining yourself in a relaxing place you have been, a place where you feel unhurried, peaceful, and calm.

Think about and write any other things you could do to relax when you're nervous or anxious during a test, then try them out while working on practice tests.



Tips for taking a Multiple-Choice Test

The goal of test-taking training is to develop an understanding of tests and a set of skills and techniques that enable you to use characteristics of the test and testing situation to provide an accurate measure of achievement.

General Suggestions

- Ask for help

If you are ever taking a test and you don't understand the directions, ask the person giving the test for help. It is very important that you understand what the test-makers are asking you to do.

- Time yourself

Don't spend too much time on any one answer. Do your best and then move on. Skip things you can't answer because you can always come back. Also, your mind might keep working on the problem you couldn't answer while you're doing other problems. (Remember, if wrong answers don't count against you; be sure to try to answer every question.)

- Do not change answers

On multiple-choice tests, do not change your answers unless you are very uncertain about your first thought. Your first guess is usually right unless you are sure you have answered incorrectly.

- Know if wrong answers count against you

Knowing whether or not you get points subtracted for wrong answers makes a difference in how you take the test.

- If the test counts wrong answers against you:
 - leave blanks if you don't know the answer
 - don't guess
- If the test does not count wrong answers against you:
 - make the most intelligent guess you can
 - answer all the questions

Note: Most of the standardized tests you will be taking (Stanford, SAT, ACT, etc.) do not punish students for having wrong answers; therefore, it is fine to make an intelligent guess. Be sure to fill in all the blanks.