

Test Taking Strategies - Multiple Choice Tests

General Strategies:

1. Read each question completely and carefully.
2. Read all of the answer choices before choosing an answer.
3. If the test is timed, pace yourself. At the start, glance through to determine the number of questions on the test. Regularly check the time and how many questions you have left to finish.
4. Take your time if the test is un-timed.

NOTE:The Keystone is NOT timed. You have as much time as you need to finish.

Answering Questions:

1. Use a "cover-up" strategy by trying to answer a question **before** looking at the choices.
2. Treat each answer choice as a true or false response. Select the "most true" answer.
3. Try to rephrase the question as a statement, using each answer in the sentence. Which statement seems most true?
4. Mark question numbers that you can't answer and continue working through the test. Sometimes a word or question will trigger your memory later in the test. Save time to return to the skipped questions at the end, even if it is simply to mark a guess.

Eliminating Choices on Difficult Questions:

1. When you are unsure of an answer, try to eliminate as many answers as possible. Eliminating one or more choices increases your odds! Physically cross them off if you are sure they are wrong.
2. Use your prior knowledge of word prefixes, suffixes, and roots to make intelligent guesses about unknown terms.
3. Be aware of the use of negative terms used in answers, such as *none*, *not*, and *never*.
4. Be aware of superlatives in answer choices, such as *all*, *more*, *always*, and *only*.
5. Negatives and superlatives usually indicate an undisputed fact.

Guessing Strategies:

1. It is always better to guess than leave an answer blank, so try to make an educated guess.
2. Underline or circle key words.
3. Cross off answers you know are wrong.
4. Use the process of elimination as a first step.
5. Use the wording of the question or answer as a clue to eliminate possibilities.
6. Choose the most precise answer for the key words in the question.
7. Avoid answers that seem out of context. If you've never heard of it, it probably isn't the right answer.
8. Choose a numerical answer from the middle of the range, avoid the extremes.

Final Test-Taking Advice:

1. Study early, study often. Study ahead of time and review in advance to avoid last-minute cramming. 10-15 minutes per night for a week is much more effective than 2 hours the night before the test.
2. Keep an open mind as you take the test. A question or answer can trigger your knowledge about another test item. Another good reason to read ALL of the answers!
3. Eat a healthy breakfast the day of the test.
4. Get a good night's sleep the night before the test.
5. Do your best and be confident in your abilities.