

# GENERAL TIPS FOR TAKING A MULTIPLE CHOICE TEST

## The exam.

- As you browse through, take note of those questions which seem easier (i.e., those questions you think you can answer) and perhaps plan to skip those which seem harder for later.

## The questions.

- Read each question carefully. Mistakes can occur when a question is read too quickly or only partially. It is in your best interest to read all questions completely before choosing a response. Likewise, you should read all possible answer choices before deciding on a particular response.
- Start with questions you can answer readily. Don't waste time laboring over troublesome questions at the start. Be sure to get credit for items you know well.
- Make note of key words in questions. Multiple choice tests examine your ability to read carefully and thoughtfully as much as they test your ability to recall and reason. Sometimes there are key words that will help you pick the correct answer. Pay close attention to these words. If you overlook one of these key words, you could miss a question that you really know. Some of these **KEY WORDS** are listed below:

BEST	GREATEST
NEVER	COMMON
LESS	NOT
EXCEPT	MORE
SOMETIMES	GENERALLY
MOST	USUALLY

- Try to answer multiple choice questions before reading the answer choices. Often, you can rule out two of the four answers immediately and you then have at least a 50-50 chance. Frequently when a question says "all of the above" or "none of the above," these are not the correct answer.
- Don't be misled by jargon or familiar phrases used in an incorrect statement.
- Express difficult questions in your own words. Rephrasing can make it clear to you, but be sure you don't change the meaning of the question.
- Answer all questions (unless you are penalized for wrong answers). Questions not answered are typically scored as incorrect.

## The possible responses.

- Choose only one response for each item. Your response will be considered incorrect if you select more than one answer choice. A multiple-choice question usually has two, and up to five, answer choices from which to choose. Be sure you consider all choices before deciding.
- When in doubt, eliminate all wrong answers and then guess (unless there is a penalty for wrong answers).

#### Throughout the test.

- Read, listen, and follow all instructions. If you do not follow all instructions exactly, you may not score well on the exam. Many studies have shown that people who score low on tests often have failed to follow directions.
- Keep an even pace. You should try to maintain a pace that will allow you to devote enough time to each question. Do not spend too much time on any one question. If you find yourself re-reading or having difficulty with a given question, skip it and come back to it later. You can return to any question in a test if you have time.
- Stay calm and don't give up. If you think that you are not answering the questions very well, or you are not sure how to answer the questions, keep going. Some questions may seem easier or more difficult than others.
- Ask for assistance, if necessary. Although monitors cannot answer specific questions about the test questions or answers, they can assist you with your instructions. If something goes wrong, you get confused or you have to leave your seat for a legitimate purpose, just raise your hand and a monitor will assist you.
- As you make a mark on your answer sheet, make sure that the number on you're your answer sheet matches the question number.

#### Finish up the test.

- Go back to the difficult questions. While looking over the test and doing the easy questions, your subconscious mind will have been working on the answers to the harder ones. Also, later items on the test might give you useful or needed information for earlier items.
- Double check your answers by rereading the questions to make sure that you haven't made any mistakes.
- Review your test before you submit your final responses. When you have finished, review your test and make sure you have answered all of the questions. Check the questions you were unsure of but make sure you have a good reason for changing the answer.

## STUDY AND PREPARATION TIPS

Assess your strengths and weaknesses.

- Make a list of your strongest and weakest areas. Think about the skills and abilities that are required for the job and try to assess how well you meet those requirements.

Plan and prioritize.

- Develop a plan for improving your weak areas by prioritizing what concepts, information, or material you should study.
- Then decide what will be your best method to study them. For example, some people find it helpful to set aside time alone and away from distractions to study. For others, it is helpful to study with a friend or in a group. Visual learners may want to read information or use flash cards. Auditory learners may need to speak out loud or use audio cassettes.
- Determine what works best for you and establish a plan to follow it through.

Study in a quiet place. Do not study when you are doing something else.

Brush up on basic skills.

- To improve your reading skills, you might consider setting aside time to read everyday. Practice active reading by asking yourself questions as you read, such as: What do I think about this? What is the point of this article or story?
- Reading could also improve your writing skills because you will become familiar with correct grammar, punctuation, and sentence flow and construction.
- To improve your math skills, you might consider math help books or math refresher courses.

Practice following instructions.

- Read sections of how-to books or instruction manuals you may have at home and practice taking notes or highlighting important aspects of the sections.

Practice taking tests.

- Some studies have found that many people do not perform well on tests because the test-taking experience is unnatural, unfamiliar, or intimidating. Also, if you did not do well on tests in school, you may have negative expectations that prevent you from doing well.
- Make up your own practice tests. Go to the library, bookstore or different websites to locate sources of information regarding the skills being assessed in the exam. Any guides that assist you in developing your basic skills can be helpful, and several websites offer on-line practice tests which will help you prepare for taking a computerized test.