

Multiple Choice Exam Strategies

There are two parts of every multiple-choice question that need to be analyzed: the stem and the options.

The stem is the first part of the statement and the options are the choices you can select for the correct answer. The goal for success is to eliminate the incorrect options, also called distracters, leaving you with one correct answer.

Steps to answering multiple-choice questions

1. Before looking at the possible options read the stem and finish the statement in your mind. Finally, check to see if the answer you created in your mind is an option below.
2. Read the stem with each possible option as a true-false statement. Disregard those responses that do not make sense (the distracters) and choose from the remaining options.

Additional multiple-choice exam strategies

Read the directions carefully

Check to see if you should select only one answer, or if more than one correct answer is possible. If nothing is mentioned, select only one response.

Choose the best possible answer

Although other answers might be partially correct, you should select the answer that is the most inclusive as the best answer.

Read all options before making a selection

Do not stop at the first possible selection! Read ALL options before making a selection so you can be sure it is the best option.

Record your response

Make sure that you record the correct letter on the line provided. You can first circle the correct response to make sure that you do not carelessly write down the wrong answer.

Adapted from: Wong, L. (2006). *Essential study skills* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

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