

A TEST TAKING SELF-ANALYSIS KEY FOR MULTIPLE CHOICE TESTS

If you don't do well on multiple choice tests, it's important to find out why. Read the following statements and note which apply to you. It is important to identify the problem area before you can work to improve your test-taking skills.

1. **Information Gap:** I don't remember encountering this material at all or I glossed over it or did not have it in my notes.
2. **Retention Gap:** I studied this but could not call it up from memory.
3. **Misinterpretation of Information:** I incorrectly understood the information when I initially read the text or heard it in lecture.
4. **Synthesis Gap:** I did not make connections between pieces of information.
5. **General Vocabulary Gap:** I did not know the correct meaning or assumed an incorrect meaning of general vocabulary.
6. **Course Specific Vocab Gap:** I did not know or assumed an imprecise meaning of a term.
7. **Inability to Decipher:** I could not get past the grammatical structure of the question or response.
8. **Jumping to Conclusions:** I did not fully consider all the responses.
9. **Rushed Response:** I did not have time to consider the question carefully.
10. **Over/Under Generalization:** I eliminated too much or did not eliminate enough.
11. **Misreading:** I made decoding errors in reading the question or response.
12. **Miskeying:** I knew the correct answer but copied the wrong response on the answer sheet.
13. **Memory Strategies Not Applied:** I didn't consciously apply a variety of memory strategies to transfer information into long-term memory.
14. **Test Answers Not Checked:** I didn't use extra test time to review my answers.

STRATEGIES FOR MULTIPLE CHOICE TESTS

1. Narrow your choices down by eliminating obviously wrong answers which are almost identical.
2. Try to decide what the answer to the question is before you read all of the choices. However, be sure to read all answers before finally selecting one. Sometimes two answers will be similar and only one will be correct.
3. Do not be afraid to change an answer if you feel strongly about it.
4. Do not be discouraged if you cannot answer a question. Leave it and go on. You may find the answer or clues to the answer in subsequent questions.
5. Beware of questions with "no", "not", and "none." These words easily change the meaning of questions.
6. If you have to guess:
 - Reject answers that use specific determiners such as: everyone, always, never, etc.
 - Look for grammatical inconsistencies which may help eliminate wrong answers.
 - Choose the longest, most precise answer.
 - Choose the answer that is in the middle.
 - Choose answers which use qualifying terms such as: often, most, etc.
 - Choose the answer which first caught your eye.

All of these hints work best when used together. **It is important to note that nothing will help you do better than studying for a test.**

Three Pass Strategy:

1. **Round One** : First read through the test . Cover up the possible answers and read only the stem of the question – look at the answers and if you are confident you know it, answer it. If you are not certain, place a “?” next to the question and move on to the next one.
 2. **Round Two**: On the Second pass through the test, concentrate on the questions that you placed a “?” next to. Eliminate the obviously wrong answers by crossing them out on the sheet. If you’ve eliminated the obviously wrong answers down to two, you now have a 50/50 chance.
 - Sometimes questions further down on the test will give you clues to previous questions; go back and change those as necessary.
 - Make certain to erase the “?” next to the questions you answer.
 - If you cannot come to a decision by reasoning, guess. But don’t erase the “?” next to guesses as you might be able to go back later and answer the question with certainty.
 - It is better to guess at an answer than to leave it blank. If you leave it blank you are certain to get it wrong.
 3. **Round Three**: In the final 5-10 minutes go back over your test one more time, and double check the questions with a “?” next to them.
-

Try taking a few breaks during the exam by stopping for a moment, shutting your eyes, and taking some deep breaths. Periodically clearing your head in this way can help you stay fresh during the exam session. Remember, you get no points for being the first person to finish the exam, so don't feel like you have to race through all the items -- even two or three 30-second breaks can be very helpful.

Compiled from:

http://www.softpanorama.org/Education/SAT/Strategy/multiple_choice_questions_exam_strategies.shtml