

A test not only measures how well you know the content, but how well you follow test directions, your knowledge of language, ability to eliminate nonsense answers, and express key concepts. The following guide will help you to develop your test taking strategies.

## Strategies for Taking Objective Tests

Students who do well on objective tests are concerned with implications and applications of the material and not with memorizing isolated facts.

- Read the instructions carefully, and listen for oral directions.
- Scan the test quickly to find out how much time you can spend on each section.
- Do what you know first.
- Circle the ones you skip so that you can find them easily.
- Accept the questions at face value; don't read anything in or out.
- Be careful when questions contain double negatives.
- Try to supply your own answer before reading the choices provided.
- Read all the answers carefully before you choose one.
- Eliminate the choices you know are incorrect.
- Guess, unless there's a severe penalty.
- When using a separate answer sheet, check frequently to make sure you are answering in the correct space.
- Write neatly.

## True-False Tests

- Usually there are **more true** answers than false on tests.
- Read each question carefully. Don't rush.
- If there is no guessing penalty, then guess. Go with your gut feeling. You have a 50% chance of getting the right answer.
- Qualifiers like "never," "always," and "every" mean that the statement must be true all of the time. Usually, these type of qualifiers lead to a **false** answer.
- Qualifiers like "usually," "sometimes," and "generally" mean that the statement can be considered true or false depending on the circumstances. Usually, these type of qualifiers lead to an answer of true.
- Sometimes two statements are connected by such words as "therefore," "consequently," or "because," implying that the two parts have a logical relationship. In most cases they do not have a logical relationship and are usually false.
- Beware of negatives. Statements that contain negative words and prefixes are difficult to sort out and answer. Circle the negative words and negative prefixes. Then try to get the meaning of the statement.

## Multiple Choice Tests

- Skim each question before reading the selection or passage.
- Read the selection.
- Reread the question, and come up with the answer in your head before looking at the possible answers. This way the choices given on the test won't throw you off or trick you.
- Read all the choices before choosing your answer.
- Eliminate answers you know aren't right.
- Numbers in the middle range are usually correct. If you have a choice of options that are all numbers, one of the middle numbers is probably the right choice. Test writers usually include a too high number and a too low number. You may eliminate them, then you have a fifty/fifty chance of choosing the correct option.
- Check for look-alike numbers. Test makers sometimes include two options that are alike except for one word. Such a pair seems to indicate where the test maker's interest was focused, so it is logical to assume that one of the pair is the correct answer.
- Circle qualifying words (not, except, never, no, none, best, worst, all, every) so they stand out.
- If there is no guessing penalty, always take an educated guess and select an answer.
- Don't keep on changing your answer. Usually your first choice is the right one, unless you misread the question.
- In "All of the above" and "None of the above" choices, if you are certain one of the statements is true, don't choose "None of the above;" or, if one of the statements is false, don't choose "All of the above."
- In a question with an "All of the above" choice, if you see at least two correct statements, then "All of the above" is probably the answer.

## Standardized Tests

- Try to get a practice test or study guide. This will give you some idea of what kinds of questions to expect on the actual test. It will help you to identify your weaknesses and provide practice to improve those areas.
- If you are considering taking a preparation course for a standardized exam be careful. Talk to your teachers and counselors before paying for a preparation course.
- Know how the test is scored. Is there a penalty for wrong answers? If there is, it might not be worth guessing the answer.
- Be realistic. There will be questions you cannot answer. Do not worry about them. Circle them and return if you have time. Computers might not let you skip and come back

## The Do's and Don'ts of Marking an Electronically Scored Answer Sheet

### Do

Use a #2 Pencil  
only the bubble you wish to fill in.  
Erase incorrect answers as completely as possible  
Use the correct mark.

### Don't

Write or draw anywhere on the Mark  
bubble sheet