

Tips for Multiple Choice Exams

Multiple Choice or Objective exams are based on your ability to recognise facts. Objective exams can be different in style. For example, multiple choice, true-false, matching and sentence completion are all objective exams.

Preparing for the Exam

Studying:

- Make sure you know which areas of your course will be included in the test. This allows you to study for the most relevant sections. Ask your lecturer/tutor for advice.
- Ask your lecturer/tutor if there is a penalty for guessing an answer. If there is, only guess if you feel there is a good chance of getting the answer right.
- See The Learning Centre resource 'Studying for Exams: Some Basic Guidelines' for study tips.

Before the exam:

- Make sure you know the time, place and materials required for the exam. Pack your bag the night before.
- Get a good night's sleep the night before the exam.
- Arrive with enough time to find your seat and get comfortable. Try to stay calm and alert.
- Avoid conversations with other students about how little study you/they have done, or how panicky you may be feeling. This will only cause stress.

Sitting the Exam

● **Read all directions carefully**

Be sure exactly what you have to do and listen for any oral directions or corrections.

● **Read quickly through the test**

Before you pick up a pen, skim quickly through the test. Doing this allows you to plan your time and to check that your test is complete and correctly collated.

● **When using a separate answer sheet . .**

Keep it to the right of, and close to, the exam booklet. Check frequently that you are answering a question in its properly numbered space.

● **Answer the 'easy' questions first**

Try not to get stuck on any hard questions. You will waste time and feel anxious. Go back and do the hard ones later.

Answering Multiple Choice Questions

● **Read each question carefully**

In objective tests the wording of the question and potential answers can be tricky. Consider all the options before choosing your answer, even if the first option seems correct. This is important when you have to choose the 'best' or 'most correct' answer in some multiple choice exams.

● **Try to supply your own answer before reading the choices provided**

Read the question and try to answer it yourself. Then read through the choices. Doing this allows you to make a clearer and more accurate choice.

● **Be alert for grammatical inconsistencies between the question and the potential answers**

A choice is nearly always wrong if the question and the answer don't combine to make a grammatically correct sentence.

● **Accept the question at face value**

Don't read anything in or out of the question, or assume it contains a 'trick'. Reading too much into a question usually results in a wrong answer.

● **Do not change your original answer**

In most cases your intuition is correct. Only change your answer if you have a very strong hunch that it's wrong, or you find new evidence.

Answering True - False Questions

'True-false' questions usually consist of a statement which is either correct or incorrect. You then answer true (if you think a statement is correct) or false (if you think a statement is incorrect).

● **In true-false questions, be alert for qualifying words**

Words like:

all, none, always, never

which generally make a statement **false**

and

most, some, usually, seldom

which tend to make a statement **true**

● **In true-false tests, be alert for multiple ideas or concepts within the question**

All parts of the statement must be true or the entire statement is false. If you really can't make a perfect match between the question and the answer, choose the alternative that is more nearly true than the other choices.

● **Be aware of the wording used**

The following words are commonly used in true-false questions:

All-most-some-no

Always-usually-sometimes-never

Great-much-either-no

More-equal-less

Bad-good, Is-is not

Further Reading

Cadogan, J. 1995, *Survive Exams: Study Effectively and Succeed*, New Hobson Press, NSW.

For suggestions and comments please contact Pam Mort, The Learning Centre UNSW 9385 3890, p.mort@unsw.edu.au