

Strategies for Different Test Formats

MATCHING

Matching usually consists of dates, people, places and vocabulary.

- Read the directions carefully.
- Read each column before you answer.
- Determine whether there are equal numbers of items in each column.
- Many times, instructors will include more items than necessary.
- Match what you know first.
- Cross off what you have already used, so that you no longer look toward it as an option.
- Use the process of elimination for the answers you might not be sure of.

TRUE/FALSE

Typically this is the trickiest of the testing formats.

- Read each statement carefully to determine whether it is true or not.
- Pay attention to words that could make a statement true, such as few, some, many or often.
- Pay attention to words that could make a statement false, such as never, all, every, or only.
- Pay attention to double negatives, such as not unlawful.
- Remember that if *any* part of a statement is false, then the *entire* statement is false.
- Answer every question, unless there is a penalty for guessing. At least you have a 50/50 chance of answering the question correctly.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

- Read every question and try to answer it before you read the answers provided.
- Look for similar answers; one of them is usually the correct response.
- Answers that contain extreme modifiers, such as always, every, and never, are in most cases incorrect.
- Cross-off answers that you *know* are incorrect.
- Even if you know that “A” is the correct answer, be sure to read *all* the options before selecting your answer.
- When the options are all numbers, usually the highest and lowest are incorrect.
- A joke is typically wrong. Except if your prof is named Edward Smith and you’re discussing the captain of the *Titanic*.
- The most comprehensive answer is often correct.
- The longest answer is often correct.
- Don’t linger on any questions. Sometimes other questions or answers can trigger the questions you missed.
- If you must, make an educated guess, and answer all questions unless there is a penalty for guessing.

SHORT ANSWER AND FILL-IN-THE-BLANKS

You are to supply the answer to a question or statement yourself.

- Read each question carefully, and be sure that you know what is being asked.
- Be brief in your response.
- Give the same number of answers as there are blanks.
- Don't assume that the length of the blank indicates the length of the correct answer.
- Your initial response is *usually* correct.
- Pay close attention to the word immediately preceding the blank. For example, if it is an, then your response will begin with a vowel.
- Look for key words in the sentence that may trigger your response.
- Be sure to reread the sentence with your response to decide whether your answer fits the statement.

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Essay tests can be the easiest of the test formats to take because they provide you with the chance to show your instructor what you really know. Essay tests require you to supply an answer.

- Try to be as concise and informative as possible. Sometimes more is not better. Your professor would rather see 1 page of intelligent and well-organized material than 5 pages of fluff.
- Always write a thesis statement for each answer.
- Be sure to outline your thoughts before you write.
- Watch spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Use specific details, such as dates, places, people, where appropriate.
- Answer all parts of the question.
- When you conclude your answer, try to summarize your main points for clarity.
- Write neatly.
- Always proofread your answer.
- Stick to the facts; try to avoid overly opinionated answers.