



### Important Tips for Conquering Multiple Choice Tests

#### *A: Your multiple test approach*

1. Skim all the questions and prioritize how you will answer them (don't read the answers yet):
  - a. Don't try to read the questions to fully understand them but rather just look at them one by one to help you recognize there are no surprises awaiting you.
  - b. As you skim the test prioritize how you will answer the questions as follows:
    - i. Circle the questions you feel you know the answer to- these are questions you believe you have a probability of getting correct 90% of the time or greater. By answering the questions you are most confident about first you will get a good start to the test (confidence breeds confidence).
    - ii. Star the questions you think you know the answer to (confidence getting correct roughly 75%-90%).
    - iii. Do not mark up any of the other questions (e.g. those that you have less than a 75% confidence in getting right).
2. First, answer the questions you circled—this will give you a good start and you will not run out of time at the end of the test on questions you will likely get correct- no wasted points!

**Remember:** read the question and all the answers carefully so you don't make any silly mistakes.
3. Next, answer the questions you starred – you will take longer on these questions because you will have to think harder about these (see tips below in section B).

**Important:** If you draw a blank on a question move to another one: don't dwell on it too long --go back to that one(s) at the end.
4. Last, answer the questions you did not circle or star as these will take longer and there will be guessing involved (see tips below in section B).

**Important:** watch the clock so you don't run out of time here as you want to ensure you save enough time to check your test (#6).
5. As you answer all the test questions be sure to check off whether you feel you know the answer or not as this will help you when you review your answers at the end (this is called Certainty Marking). Put a check mark ✓ next to the questions you are confident you answered correctly; put a / next to the questions you may have got correct (educated guess) and finally but an X next to the others (wild guess).
6. Review your answers (prioritizing time based off of your certainty marking—see #5) and ensure you didn't make any obvious mistakes but do not second guess yourself too much.

*B: Things to consider:*

1. When you don't know the answer with a high degree of confidence here are some tips to consider:
  - a. Cover up the answers and try to 'answer' the question in your head first. Then, look for the answer that is closest to what you determined in your head.
  - b. Eliminate the obvious/outliers: consider that there are 3 wrong answers if there are 4 choices- so pick off the wrong answers one by one if you don't know the right one. Cross out the answers that you know are not correct (or you can reason may not be correct): this way if you end up 'guessing' you will not be guessing from 4 answers, but instead maybe 2-3 which increases your odds of getting the answer correct.
  - c. Similar answers (look alike options) usually contain the correct answer: instructors use similar answers to make the questions more difficult to answer. Here is an example: Who was the 14<sup>th</sup> US president? A) Abraham Lincoln B) Theodore Roosevelt C) George Washington D) George Bush. George Washington was thrown in there to confuse the test taker (e.g. George and George).
  - d. Longer answers are typically correct: this is because correct answers typically require qualifiers and wrong answers do not need caveats.
  - e. Doubt answers that don't grammatically fit with the question.
  - f. If you are certain that at least two answers are correct then the correct answer is likely "All of the above"
  - g. Be systematic when you are facing confusing answers such as "all of the above", "three of the above", or a range of range of answers, then a choice among them, for example, "1.a; 2.b; 3.c; 4.d; 5.a, b, c; 6.b, c and d" etc.  
Examine the following example, which will illustrate how to be systematic about answering confusing items:

Which of the following facilitates the healing process?

- a) Resting the injured part of the body
- b) Protection of the wound from further injury
- c) Adequate nutrition
- d) Emotional support from friends and family
- e) Depriving the patient of fluids
- f) a, b, d, e
- i) All of the above
- j) None of the above

You may find the wording of this question confusing. Remember to be systematic. Do not get overwhelmed by all the choices. First, draw a line separating the single answers (top section) from the combination answers (bottom section). Second, deal with the single answers. Read and decide which answers, "a, b, c, d, or e", are true and which of those are false. Once you have knocked out one of those choices (e, in this case) from the top section, go to the bottom section and eliminate any answers that contain the false answer among the choices.