

Multiple Choice Test Tactics

PREVIEW THE TEST: Read through the test quickly and answer the easiest questions first. Read through the test a second time and answer more difficult questions. You may pick up cues for answers from the first reading, or become more comfortable in the testing situation.

ANSWERING OPTIONS: Cover the options, read the question, and try to answer without looking at the possible answers. Choose the test answer that most closely matches your own.

TEST TACTICS: There is no good substitute for studying carefully and knowing the right answer, but you can prevent silly mistakes by understanding these key strategies:

Strategy 1: Look for answers that are grammatically correct.

Read the question prompt with each answer option. Do they make sense grammatically? Does the answer match the question being plural or singular?

- ❖ EXAMPLE – Small salamanders are:
 - A. Mole
 - B. Tarpon
 - C. Fowl
 - D. Newts** (salamanders is a plural word, so the answer needs to be plural).



Remember that you are looking for the **BEST** answer – the one that answers the question most completely and accurately.

Strategy 2: Eliminate silly or suspicious choices.

Choose options that make sense based on logical reasoning and your background knowledge. In the following example, you must identify “Washo”. Assume that you know Washo’s fame is related to research in the field of psychology.

- ❖ EXAMPLE – Washo is:
 - A. One of the teaching assistants in this course.
 - B. A chimpanzee that was taught American Sign Language.**
 - C. A gorilla who became a sexual deviant in captivity.
 - D. The world’s only known talking chimpanzee.

Strategy 3: Responses that look or sound like the word(s) to be defined are usually incorrect.

Allusion, elusive, and illustration all resemble the word *illusion* and are ‘distracters’ because they look similar and divert your attention from the correct response.

- ❖ EXAMPLE – An illusion is:
 - A. Something that is not really there.**
 - B. An allusion.
 - C. The same as elusive.
 - D. Another word for illustration.

Strategy 4: Watch for responses that are essentially the same.

Choices A, B, and D are essentially the same thing, stated in different ways. Since these responses are the same, they cannot be the correct choice, assuming you are allowed to choose only one answer.

- ❖ EXAMPLE – The chemically inactive substances used in experiments to determine drug effectiveness are:
 - A. Prescription medications.
 - B. Federally controlled pharmaceutical drugs.
 - C. Placebos.**
 - D. Similar to physician-prescribed drugs.