

IELTS® Strategy

Multiple Choice Strategies for Listening Comprehension and Reading Comprehension plus how to write an essay!



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Getting Started with the IELTS®

CONGRATULATIONS! By deciding to take the IELTS®, you have taken the first step toward a great future! Of course, there is no point in taking this important examination unless you intend to do your best to earn the highest grade that you possibly can. That means getting yourself organized and discovering the best approaches, methods and strategies to master the material. Yes, that will require real effort and dedication on your part, but if you are willing to focus your energy and devote the study time necessary, before you know it you will be finished the exam with a great mark!

We know that taking on a new endeavour can be a scary, and it is easy to feel unsure of where to begin. That's where we come in. This study guide is designed to help you improve your test-taking skills, show you a few tricks and increase both your competency and confidence.

The IELTS® Exam

The IELTS® exam is composed of three sections, reading, listening and writing. The reading section consists of reading comprehension questions. A short passage is given, followed by a series of questions. The listening section consists of listening comprehension questions, where you listen to a short passage and the answer questions. The writing section contains an essay question.

While we seek to make our guide as comprehensive as possible, it is important to note that like all exams, the IELTS® Exam might be adjusted at some future point. New material might be added, or content that is no longer relevant or applicable might be removed. It is always a good idea to give the materials you

receive when you register to take the IELTS® a careful review.

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Test Strategy

This is a book about improving your score by using proven test strategies. This is different from other books such as a study guide, or a practice test. Even though we do provide lots of information to study and practice test questions, this book is about how to tackle multiple choice questions.

But do not worry - that is not all! While you are learning different strategies for answering multiple choice questions, you can also practice your reading and listening comprehension skills, plus review tips on how to write an essay, which are more than half your score on the IELTS®.

A Better Score Is Possible

Worried about that big exam coming up? Do you think you're just not a good test-taker, especially when it comes to standardized tests? The good news is that you're not alone. The bad news is that millions of people are left behind through objective testing, simply because they're not good test-takers - even though they may know the material. They don't know how to handle the format well or understand what's expected of them.

This is especially true of the multiple-choice test. Test-takers are given lots of support for taking essay-style tests. They're helped with skills such as grammar and spelling. However, little is offered for the multiple-choice exam. This although thou-

sands of people find multiple-choice to be the most challenging kind of test. Here are some reasons that so many people have difficulties with multiple-choice:

The Broad Range. Because the questions are so short and quick, a lot of ground is covered in the test. Who's to know what to study with so much material covered?

Time Limits. Most standardized tests have time limits, which adds an extra layer of pressure.

Trickery. Many test-designers think that it is too easy to guess a multiple-choice question correctly, so they intentionally make the questions tricky.

Bluffing Not Allowed. With an essay test, you can try to bluff your way through it. Not so with multiple-choice. The answer is either right or wrong.

Difficult to Write. It's not easy for a test-writer to design a good multiple-choice test. Sometimes, they make them overly difficult.

Shuffled Content. Multiple-choice tests tend to throw the questions in at random, in no particular order. You could be answering a question about the 1700s and then about the 2004 Presidential election.

These challenges mean that students have to be familiar with a wider range of material than on other kinds of exams. You'll need to know specific vocabulary, rules, names, dates, etc.

There are, however, a few advantages to you, the test-taker, with a multiple-choice test. For instance, because there are more multiple-choice items on a test than other types, each question tends to have a lower point value. You can afford to miss a few and still be okay. Also, if you're doing a fill-in-the-blank or essay test, you have to rely totally on memory for the answer. With a multiple-choice exam, you know that the correct answer is somewhere in the question. You just have to decide which one it is. Often, seeing the right answer will trigger your memory, and you'll recognize it instantly.

Keep in mind, though, the test-writer knows that one advantage of multiple-choice is the fact the answer is on the page.

Answering Multiple-Choice Step-by-Step

HERE IS A TEST QUESTION:

H Which of the following is a helpful tip for taking a multiple-choice test?

- a. Answering “B” for all questions.
- b. Eliminate all answers that you know cannot be true.
- c. Eliminate all answers that seem like they might be true.
- d. Cheat off your neighbor.

If you answered B, you are correct. Even if you are not positive about the answer, try to eliminate as many choices as possible. Think of it this way: If every item on your test has four possible answers, and if you guess on one of those four answers, you have a one-in-four chance (25%) of getting it right. This means you should get one question right for every four that you guess.

However, if you can get rid of two answers, then your chances improve to one-in-two chances, or 50%. That means you will get a correct answer for every two that you guess.

So much for an obvious tip for improving your multiple-choice score. There are many other tips that you may or may not have considered, which will give your grade a boost. Remember, though, that none of these tips are infallible. In fact, many test-writers know these tips and deliberately write questions that will confound your system. Usually, however, you will do better on the test if you put these tips into practice.

By familiarizing yourself with these tips, you increase your chances and who knows; you might just get a lucky break and increase your score by a few points!

Answering Step-by-Step

It might seem complicated and unnecessary to follow a formula for answering a multiple-choice question. After you have practiced this formula for a while, though, it will come naturally and will not take any time at all. Try to follow these steps below on each question.

Step 1. Cover up the answers while you read the question.

See the material in your mind's eye and try to envision what the correct answer is before you expose the answers on the answer sheet.

Step 2. Uncover the responses.

Step 3. Eliminate or Estimate. Cross out every choice that you know is ridiculous, absurd or clearly wrong. Then work with the answers that remain.

Step 4. Watch for distracters. A distracter is an answer that looks very similar to the correct answer, but is put there to trip you up. If you see two answers that are strikingly similar, the chances are good that one of them is correct. For instance, if you are asked the term for the distance around a square, and two of the responses are “periwinkle” and “perimeter,” you can guess that one of these is probably correct, since the words look similar (both start with “peri-”). Guess one of these two and your chances of correcting selecting “perimeter” are 50/50. More on this below.

Step 5. Check! If you see the answer that you saw in your mind, put a light check-mark by it and then see if any of the other choices are better. If not, mark that response as your answer.

Step 6. If all else fails, guess. If you cannot envision the correct response in your head, or figure it out by reading the passage, and if you are left totally clueless as to what the answer should be, guess.

Watch out for this strategy if the test you are taking penalizes for wrong answers. Only a few tests do this, and if so, then guessing is NOT a recommended strategy!

There is a common myth that says choice “C” has a statistically greater chance of being correct. This may be true if your professor is making the test, however, most standardized tests today are generated by computer and the choices are randomized. We do not recommend choosing “C” as a strategy.

That is a quick introduction to multiple-choice to get us warmed up. Next we move onto the strategies and practice test questions section. Each multiple-choice strategy is explained, followed by practice questions using the strategy. Opposite this page is a bubble sheet for answering.

ANSWER SHEET

	A	B	C	D	E		A	B	C	D	E
1	<input type="radio"/>	26	<input type="radio"/>								
2	<input type="radio"/>	27	<input type="radio"/>								
3	<input type="radio"/>	28	<input type="radio"/>								
4	<input type="radio"/>	29	<input type="radio"/>								
5	<input type="radio"/>	30	<input type="radio"/>								
6	<input type="radio"/>	31	<input type="radio"/>								
7	<input type="radio"/>	32	<input type="radio"/>								
8	<input type="radio"/>	33	<input type="radio"/>								
9	<input type="radio"/>	34	<input type="radio"/>								
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17	<input type="radio"/>	42	<input type="radio"/>								
18	<input type="radio"/>	43	<input type="radio"/>								
19	<input type="radio"/>	44	<input type="radio"/>								
20	<input type="radio"/>	45	<input type="radio"/>								
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23	<input type="radio"/>										
24	<input type="radio"/>										
25	<input type="radio"/>										

Multiple-Choice Strategy

Practice Questions

THE FOLLOWING ARE DETAILED STRATEGIES FOR ANSWERING MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS WITH PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR EACH STRATEGY.

Answers appear following this section with a detailed explanation and discussion on each strategy and question, plus tips and analysis.

Strategy 1 - Locate Keywords

For every question, figure out exactly what the question is asking by locating key words that are in the question. Underline the keywords to clarify your thoughts and keep on track.

Directions: Read the passage below, and answer the questions using this strategy.

Free-range is a method of farming where domesticated animals roam freely, or relatively freely, rather than being kept in a pen or cage. Free-range can mean two different things depending on who you talk to. One definition, when talking to a farmer, is a technical description of a farming method. You may have seen free-range or free-run eggs in the supermarket. This is a consumer oriented definition. There are numerous benefits to farmers who practice free-range farming. Certification as a free-range producer allows farmers to charge higher prices and also reduce feed costs. That's not all - free-range methods also improve the general health of animals, which produces a higher-quality product. In addition, free-range farming allows multiple crops on the same land - another significant savings for farmers. Free-range certification is different from organic certification.

1. The free-range method of farming

- a. Uses a minimum amount of fencing to give animals more room.
- b. Can refer to two different things.
- c. Is always a very humane method.
- d. Only allows for one crop at a time.

2. Free-range farming is practiced

- a. To obtain free-range certification.
- b. To lower the cost of feeding animals.
- c. To produce higher quality product.
- d. All of the above.

3. Free-range farming:

- a. Can mean either farmer described or consumer described methods.
- b. Is becoming much more popular in many areas.
- c. Has many limits and causes prices to go down.
- d. Is only done to make the animals happier and healthier.

4. Free-range certification is most important to farmers because:

- a. Free-range livestock are less expensive to feed.
- b. The price of the product is higher.
- c. Both a and b
- d. The animals are kept in smaller enclosures, so more can be produced.

Answers to Sample Multiple-Choice Strategy Questions

Strategy 1 - Keywords in the question tell what the question is asking

1. B

The question asks about the free range *method* of farming. Here method refers to *type* of farming. “Method” here is the keyword and can be marked or underlined.

2. D

The Question is, “Free-range farming is *practiced* ...” The keyword here is “practiced.” Looking at the choices, which all start with “to,” it is clear the answer will be about *why* free range ... Also notice that one choice is “All of the above,” which here, is the correct answer. However, when “All of the above” is an option, this is a potential Elimination Strategy. Simply find one choice that is incorrect and you can use Strategy 5 - Elimination to eliminate two choices and increase your odds from one in four, to one in two.

3. A

The question is, “Free range farming husbandry ...” From the question, and the *lack* of keywords, together with the choices presented, the answer will be a definition free range farming husbandry.

4. C

The question is, “Free-range certification is *most important* to farmers because ... “ The keywords here are “most important.” Circle the keywords to keep them clear in your mind. Be careful to choose the best possible answer.

Practice Questions Answer Sheet

	A	B	C	D	E		A	B	C	D	E
1	<input type="radio"/>	21	<input type="radio"/>								
2	<input type="radio"/>	22	<input type="radio"/>								
3	<input type="radio"/>	23	<input type="radio"/>								
4	<input type="radio"/>	24	<input type="radio"/>								
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Reading Comprehension Practice Questions

Questions 1 - 4 refer to the following passage.

Passage 1 - If You Have Allergies, You're Not Alone

People who experience allergies might joke that their immune systems have let them down or are seriously lacking. Truthfully though, people who experience allergic reactions or allergy symptoms during certain times of the year have heightened immune systems that are, “better” than those of people who have perfectly healthy but less militant immune systems.

Still, when a person has an allergic reaction, they are having an adverse reaction to a substance that is considered normal to most people. Mild allergic reactions usually have symptoms like itching, runny nose, red eyes, or bumps or discoloration of the skin. More serious allergic reactions, such as those to animal and insect poisons or certain foods, may result in the closing of the throat, swelling of the eyes, low blood pressure, an inability to breathe, and can even be fatal.

Different treatments help different allergies, and which one a person uses depends on the nature and severity of the allergy. It is recommended to patients with severe allergies to take extra precautions, such as carrying an EpiPen, which treats anaphylactic shock and may prevent death, always in order for the remedy to be readily available and more effective. When an allergy is not so severe, treatments may be used just to relieve a person of uncomfortable symptoms. Over the counter allergy medicines treat milder symptoms, and can be bought at any grocery store and used in moderation to help people with allergies live normally.

There are many tests available to assess whether a person has allergies or what they may be allergic to, and advances in these tests and the medicine used to treat patients continues to improve. Despite this fact, allergies still affect many people throughout the year or even every day. Medicines used

to treat allergies have side effects of their own, and it is difficult to bring the body into balance with the use of medicine. Regardless, many of those who live with allergies are grateful for what is available and find it useful in maintaining their lifestyles.

1. According to this passage, it can be understood that the word “militant” belongs in a group with the words:

- a. sickly, ailing, faint
- b. strength, power, vigor
- c. active, fighting, warring
- d. worn, tired, breaking down

2. The author says that “medicines used to treat allergies have side effects of their own” to

- a. point out that doctors aren't very good at diagnosing and treating allergies
- b. argue that because of the large number of people with allergies, a cure will never be found
- c. explain that allergy medicines aren't cures and some compromise must be made
- d. argue that more wholesome remedies should be researched and medicines banned

3. It can be inferred that _____ recommend that some people with allergies carry medicine with them.

- a. the author
- b. doctors
- c. the makers of EpiPen
- d. people with allergies

Answer Key

Passage 1 - If You Have Allergies, You're Not Alone

1. C

This question tests the reader's vocabulary skills. The uses of the negatives "but" and "less," especially right next to each other, may confuse readers into answering with choices A or D, which list words that are antonyms of "militant." Readers may also be confused by the comparison of healthy people with what is being described as an overly healthy person—both people are good, but the reader may look for which one is "worse" in the comparison, and therefore stray toward the antonyms. One key to understanding the meaning of "militant" if the reader is unfamiliar with it is to look at the root of the word; readers can then easily associate it with "military" and gain a sense of what the word signifies: defense (especially considered that the immune system defends the body). Choice C is correct over choice B because "militant" is an adjective, just as the words in C are, whereas the words in B are nouns.

2. C

This question tests the reader's understanding of function within writing. The other choices are details included surrounding the quoted text, and may therefore confuse the reader. A somewhat contradicts what is said earlier in the paragraph, which is that tests and treatments are improving, and probably doctors are along with them, but the paragraph doesn't actually mention doctors, and the subject of the question is the medicine. Choice B may seem correct to readers who aren't careful to understand that, while the author does mention the large number of people affected, the author is touching on the realities of living with allergies rather about the likelihood of curing all allergies. Similarly, while the author does mention the "balance" of the body, which is easily associated with "wholesome," the author is not really making an argument and especially is not making an extreme statement that allergy medicines should be outlawed. Again, because the article's tone is on living with allergies, choice C is an appropriate choice that fits with the title and content of the text.

3. B

This question tests the reader's inference skills. The text does not state who is doing the recommending, but the use of the "patients," as well as the general context of the passage, lends itself to the logical partner, "doctors," B. The author does mention the recommendation but doesn't present it as her own (i.e. "I recommend that"), so A may be eliminated. It may seem plausible that people with allergies (D) may recommend medicines or products to other people with allergies, but the text does not necessarily support this interaction taking place. Choice C may be selected because the EpiPen is specifically mentioned, but the use of the phrase "such as" when it is introduced is not limiting enough to assume the recommendation is coming from its creators.

Listening Comprehension Answer Sheet

	A	B	C	D	E		A	B	C	D	E
1	<input type="radio"/>	21	<input type="radio"/>								
2	<input type="radio"/>	22	<input type="radio"/>								
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19	<input type="radio"/>										
20	<input type="radio"/>										

Directions: Scan the QR code below with any smartphone or tablet for an audio recording of the listening comprehension passages below. Or, have someone read them to you. Listen carefully to the passages and answer the questions that follow.

What is a QR Code?

A QR code looks like a barcode and it's used as a shortcut to link to content online using your phone's camera, saving you from typing lengthy addresses into your mobile browser.

Questions 1 - 4 refer to the following passage.

Passage 1 - Caterpillars

Butterflies and moths have a three stage life cycle. Caterpillars are the first or larval stage. Caterpillars can be either herbivores, feeding mostly on plants, or carnivores, feeding on other insects. Caterpillars eat continuously. Once they are too big for their body, they shed or molt their skin.

Some caterpillars have symbiotic relationships with other insects. A symbiotic relationship is where different species work together in a way that is either harmful or helpful. Symbiotic relationships are critical to many species and ecosystems.

Some caterpillars and ants have a symbiotic or mutual relationship where both benefit. Ants give some protection, and caterpillars provide the ants with honeydew nectar.

Ants and caterpillars communicate by vibrations through the soil as well as grunting and squeaking. Humans are not able to hear these communications.



Scan for audio

1. What do most larvae spend their time doing?

- a. Eating
- b. Sleeping
- c. Communicating with ants.
- d. None of the above

2. Are all caterpillars herbivores?

- a. Yes
- b. No, some eat insects

3. What benefit do larvae get from association with ants?

- a. They do not receive any benefit.
- b. Ants give them protection.
- c. Ants give them food.
- d. Ants give them honeydew secretions.

4. Do ants or larvae benefit most from association?

- a. Ants benefit most
- b. Larvae benefit most
- c. Both benefit about the same
- d. Neither benefits

Conversation 4 - Outside**Questions 25 refers to the following conversation.**

- Narrator:** Sarah, Peter, Tom and Carol walk outside. They talk about the dinner.
- Peter:** That is a good restaurant.
- Tom:** They have good music, too.
- Sarah:** I enjoy the music.
- Tom:** So do I!
- Carol:** The waiter is friendly, too.
- Tom:** It is expensive but I like it.



Scan for Audio

25. What are the friends talking about?

- a. The weather
- b. Work
- c. The weekend
- d. The restaurant

Answer Key

1. A

Caterpillars spend most of their time eating.

2. B

Some caterpillars are herbivores, others eat other insects (carnivores).

3. B

From the passage, the ants provide some degree of protection.

4. C

The association is mutual so they both benefit.

25. D

They are talking about the restaurant.

How to Write an Essay

Writing an essay can be a difficult process, especially if you have time constraints such as during an exam. Here are three simple steps to help you to write a solid, well thought out essay:

1. **Brainstorm** potential themes and general ideas for your essay.
2. **Outline** your essay step by step, including subheadings for ease of understanding.
3. **Write** your essay carefully being aware of proper grammar and sentence structure.

Brainstorming

You should first spend time thinking about the general subject of the essay. If the essay is asking a question, you must make sure to answer this fully in your essay. You may find it helpful to highlight key words in your assignment or use a simple spider diagram to jot down key ideas.

Example

Read the following information and complete the following assignment:

Joseph Conrad is a Polish author who lived in England for most of his life and wrote a prolific amount of English literature. Much of his work was completed during the height of the British Empire's colonial imperialism.

Assignment: What impact has Joseph Conrad had on modern society? Present your point of view on the matter and support it with evidence. Your evidence may include reasoning, logic, examples from readings, your own experience, and observations.

Joseph Conrad

Background? sailor, adventure, Polish immigrant, Youth, Nostromo, Heart of Darkness

Themes in his works? ivory, silver trading, colonialism, corruption, greed

Thoughts? descent into madness, nature of evil

Outlining (or planning)

An outline or plan is critical to organize your thoughts and ideas fully and logically. There are many ways to do this; the easiest is to write down the following headings:

1. Title
2. Introduction
3. Body
4. Conclusion

You should then jot down key ideas and themes that fit logically under the appropriate heading. This plan is now the backbone of your essay.

Tip: Even if you are not required to produce an outline or plan for the assignment, you should always leave it with your essay in the exam booklet or the back of the assignment paper. Simply draw a line across it and write ‘plan’ or ‘outline’. This demonstrates to the reader the approach you use in formulating and finally writing your essay.

Writing the essay

Your introduction is what will help the reader to decide whether they want to read the rest of your essay. The introduction also introduces the subject matter and allows you to provide a general background to the reader. The first sentence is very important and you should avoid starting the essay with openers such as ‘I will be comparing...’

Example

Born as Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski on December 3rd, 1857, Joseph Conrad led

How to Take an Oral Exam

About oral exams

For many students, the experience of taking an oral exam is one that is very different to taking a written exam, although you may find that preparation for an oral exam is similar to a written exam.

An oral exam allows you to demonstrate to the assessor a variety of skills including:

- Speaking skills
- Presentation skills
- Communication skills

There are two typical types of oral exams, formal and informal. A formal oral exam will usually have a set of questions that have been prepared beforehand and these are often 'competitive' exams. An informal oral exam often has less structure and gives you a chance to elaborate on your answers.

Your assessor may construct a question based on an answer that you have just given to an earlier question and your assessor may be looking for you to demonstrate other skills in your answers, such as problem solving skills.

- Questions in oral exams are usually open-ended, which means that they require evaluative answers, not just six or seven words.
- Sometimes an oral exam will look for how much knowledge you may have around your subject.

Preparing for an Oral Exam

There are two main steps for preparing for an oral exam. They

are revise and practice.

Revise

Like a written exam, you will not know what questions there are in an oral exam, so it is important that you revise fully beforehand.

Make a list of what you will need to revise and make sure that you spend more time revising your weaker topics. Try to make a study plan that covers all topics in the revision time you have available.

Rather than just revising individual topics, try to think about how these topics relate to each other, for example, X works because Y has certain components that X needs for it to work properly.

There are many approaches to revising for any exam, including:

Using index cards to write bullet points

- Writing key points on post-it's and sticking them around the house
- Recording notes and playing them back
- Using family and friends to help you revise

There is no right way of revising for everyone; you should consider what has worked for you in the past, with both oral and written exams.

- Never leave your revision until last minute.
- Think about possible questions for your subject.
- Take time to answer some practice questions.
- Get a friend to ask you some questions (this way you have no idea what they will ask you).

How to Prepare for a Test

MOST STUDENTS HIDE THEIR HEADS AND PROCRASTINATE WHEN FACED WITH PREPARING FOR AN EXAMINATION, HOPING THAT SOMEHOW THEY WILL BE SPARED THE AGONY OF TAKING THAT TEST, ESPECIALLY IF IT IS A BIG ONE THAT THEIR FUTURES RELY ON. Avoiding the all-important test is what many students do best and unfortunately, they suffer the consequences because of their lack of preparation.

Test preparation requires strategy. It also requires dedication and persistence. It is the perfect training ground for anyone planning a professional life. Besides having several reliable strategies, successful students also have a clear goal and know how to accomplish it. These tried and true concepts have worked well and will make your test preparation easier.

The Study Approach.

Take responsibility for your own test preparation.

It is a common, and big mistake, to link your studying to someone else's. Study partners are great, but only if they are reliable. It is your job to be prepared for the test, even if a study partner fails you. Do not allow others to distract you from your goals.

Prioritize the time available to study.

When do you learn best, early in the day or in the dark of night? Does your mind absorb and retain information most efficiently in small blocks of time, or do you require long stretches to get the most done? It is important to figure out the best blocks of time available to you when you can be the most productive. Try to consolidate activities to allow for longer periods of study time.

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Find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed.

Do not try to squeeze in quality study time in any old location. Find a quiet place with a minimum of distractions, such as the library, a park or even the laundry room. Good lighting is essential and you need to have comfortable seating and a desk surface large enough to hold your materials. It is probably not a great idea to study in your bedroom. You might be distracted by clothes on the floor, a book you have been planning to read, the telephone or something else. Besides, in the middle of studying, that bed will start to look very comfortable. Whatever you do, avoid using the bed as a place to study since you might fall asleep to avoid your work! That is the last thing that you should be doing during study time.

The exception is flashcards. By far the most productive study time is sitting down and studying and studying only. However, with flashcards you can carry them with you and make use of odd moments, like standing in line or waiting for the bus. This isn't as productive, but it really helps and is definitely worth doing.

Determine what you need to study.

Gather together your books, your notes, your laptop and any other materials needed to focus on your study for this exam. Ensure you have everything you need so you don't waste time. Remember paper, pencils and erasers, sticky notes, bottled water and a snack. Keep your phone with you if you need it to find out essential information, but keep it turned off so others can't distract you.

Have a positive attitude.

It is essential that you approach your studies for the test with an attitude that says you will pass it. And pass it with flying colors! This is one of the most important keys to successful study strategy. Believing that you are capable actually helps you to become capable.

How to Take a Test

EVERYONE KNOWS THAT TAKING AN EXAM IS STRESSFUL, BUT IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE THAT BAD! There are a few simple things that you can do to increase your score on any type of test. Take a look at these tips and consider how you can incorporate them into your study time.

Reading the Instructions

This is the most basic point, but one that, surprisingly, many students ignore and it can cost them big time! Since reading the instructions is one of the most common, and 100% preventable mistakes, we have a whole section just on reading instructions.

Pay close attention to the sample questions. Almost all standardized tests offer sample questions, paired with their correct solutions. Go through these to make sure that you understand what they mean and how they arrived at the correct answer. Do not be afraid to ask the test supervisor for help with a sample that confuses you, or instructions that you are unsure of.

Tips for Reading the Question

We could write pages and pages of tips just on reading the test questions. Here are the ones that will help you the most.

- **Think first.** Before you look at the answer, read and think about the question. It is best to try to come up with the correct answer before you look at the options given. This way, when the test-writer tries to trick you with a close answer, you will not fall for it.
- **Make it true or false.** If a question confuses you, then look at each answer option and think of it as a “true” “false” question. Select the one that seems most likely to be “true.”

- **Mark the Question.** Don't be afraid to mark up the test booklet. Unless you are specifically told not to mark in the booklet, use it to your advantage. More on this below.

- **Circle Key Words.** As you are reading the question, underline or circle key words. This helps you to focus on the most critical information needed to solve the problem. For example, if the question said, "Which of these is not a synonym for huge?" You might circle "not," "synonym" and "huge." That clears away the clutter and lets you focus on what is important. More on this below.

- **Always underline these words:** all, none, always, never, most, best, true, false and except.

- **Cross out irrelevant choices.** If you find yourself confused by lengthy questions, cross out anything that you think is irrelevant, obviously wrong, or information that you think is offered to distract you. Elimination is the most valuable strategy!

- **Do not try to read between the lines.** Usually, questions are written to be straightforward, with no deep, underlying meaning. The simple answer really is often the correct answer. Do not over-analyze!

How to Take a Test - The Basics

Some tests are designed to assess your ability to quickly grab the necessary information; this type of exam makes speed a priority. Others are more concerned with your depth of knowledge, and how accurate it is. When you receive a test, look it over to determine whether the test is for speed or accuracy. If the test is for speed, like many standardized tests, your strategy is clear; answer as many questions as quickly as possible.

fill in or the answer you need to circle is 'C', do not allow yourself to get distracted and select 'B' instead.

Answering a question twice.

Some multiple-choice test questions have two very similar answers. If you are in too much of a hurry, you might select them both. Remember that only one answer is correct, so if you choose more than one, you have automatically failed that question.

Mishandling a difficult question.

We recommend skipping difficult questions and returning to them later, but beware! First, be certain that you do return to the question. Circling the entire passage or placing a large question mark beside it will help you spot it when you are reviewing your test. Secondly, if you are not careful to skip the question, you can mess yourself up badly. Imagine that a question is too difficult and you decide to save it for later. You read the next question, which you know the answer to, and you fill in that answer. You continue to the end of the test then return to the difficult question only to discover you didn't actually skip it! Instead, you inserted the answer to the following question in the spot reserved for the harder one, thus throwing off the remainder of your test!

Incorrectly Transferring an answer from scratch paper.

This can happen easily if you are trying to hurry! Double check any answer you have figured out on scratch paper, and make sure what you have written on the test itself is an exact match!

Don't ignore the clock, and don't marry it, either.

In a timed examination many students lose track of the time and end up without sufficient time to complete the test. Remember to pace yourself! At the same time, though, do not allow yourself to become obsessed with how much time has

elapsed, either.

Thinking too much.

Generally, your first thought is your best thought. If you worry yourself into insecurity, your self-doubts can trick you into choosing an incorrect answer when your first impulse was the right one!

Conclusion

CONGRATULATIONS! You have made it this far because you have applied yourself diligently to practicing for the exam and no doubt improved your potential score considerably! Passing your up-coming exam is a huge step in a journey that might be challenging at times but will be many times more rewarding and fulfilling. That is why being prepared is so important.

Good Luck!

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