

Multiple Choice Test Tips

One way to improve scores on multiple choice exams is to do what "A" students do. Below are 9 tips for earning better scores from students who earn high grades. Keep in mind that the number ONE test-taking tip is to know your subject well.

1. **Evaluate each possible answer in relation to the question or statement** and **NOT** in relation to other answers unless choosing the best answer among several correct ones.
2. If the correct answer isn't obvious, **read the question along with each answer**. It's easier to spot a match this way.
3. **Analyze questions and code answers**. For example, mark obviously *incorrect* answers with a "-" or "no" and possibly *correct* answers with a "+" or "poss" and then choose among the "+" or "poss" options.
4. If the correct answer to a question is not known, code the question to be considered later (possibly with a large ? in the margin) and **skip the question for now**. Look for clues to this answer in later questions and answers. Jot these clues in the margin to use when reconsidering skipped questions.
5. **Before turning in an exam, reread each question and answer**. Unless you are **ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN** an answer is wrong, **DO NOT CHANGE IT**. First impressions are more often right than wrong.
6. If you have to guess, **avoid choosing options you never heard of or options with absolutes in them** such as always, never, only, none, ever, etc.
7. **Circle "Key Words"**. "Key words" reveal the subject of a question and what to look for in an answer. Example - **Which is a false statement about the nucleolus?**

The "Key Word" **false** tells you to look for a *wrong* answer while the word **nucleolus** tells you the subject to which the false statement relates.

8. Budget time for each question. **Divide the number of minutes available for taking an exam by the number of questions plus one**. This way you'll know approximately how much time to spend on each question and leave time to re-check answers. Allow more time for essay answers.
9. The number one test taking technique is to **KNOW YOUR FACTS COLD**. There is no substitute for knowing your subject well when taking a test. All the test taking techniques in the world won't help much if you don't know your material.