

Test Taking Strategies for Multiple Choice Tests

Many learners find the following strategies helpful when taking multiple choice exams. These strategies are most useful *when guessing* is the best option you have. These 11 strategies can *increase* chances of getting the right answer but they **do not guarantee it** because guessing on exams as a habit will not lead to academic success.

While these 11 strategies can be helpful, there is no more effective test taking technique than **knowing the material well**.

When you aren't sure of a correct answer *and have to guess...*

1. Choose the most general answer when other choices are specific.
2. Choose the longest answer when others are much shorter.
3. Choose the answer with a middle value when other answers are higher or lower.
4. Choose neither of the similar answers.
5. Choose one of two opposite answers.
6. Choose the answer that agrees grammatically. Examples: a, and an = singular, are = plural.
7. Choose the answer most synonymous with key words in the question or statement.
8. Count the number of blanks in fill in questions or statements.
9. Choose from among familiar answers. Avoid unknown options.
10. Choose the most logical answer to you.
11. Avoid answers with absolutes in them. Examples: always, never, every, none, all, only

For practice, apply the above 11 multiple choice test strategies to the following sample quiz over material that you have not been assigned. Circle the answer you believe to be correct and record the number(s) of the strategy/strategies on page 1 that you use to determine your answer.

Sample Quiz

1. The word tale is synonymous with:

- A. lyric
- B. fable
- C. legend
- D. both B and C are correct
- E. none of the above is correct

NUMBER(S) OF THE STRATEGIES USED:

2. Bendalaine's opera "The Three Bells" focuses on

- A. marital problems
- B. domestic strife
- C. the problem of aging
- D. conflict between an old man and his wife

NUMBER(S) OF THE STRATEGIES USED:

3. The government department responsible for judicial affairs of government is

- A. the U.S. Department of Justice
- B. the U.S. Department of Foreign Services
- C. the U.S. Department of Agriculture
- D. the U.S. Department of Interior

NUMBER(S) OF THE STRATEGIES USED:

4. Which is an example of an instrument that measures the level of self-esteem?

- A. the Strong-Campbell Vocational Interest Blank
- B. the Kidder Personal Preference Inventory
- C. the Vassey Adult Intelligence Scale
- D. the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale

NUMBER(S) OF THE STRATEGIES USED:

5. The economic policy practiced by both Britain and France during the seventeenth century that restricted trade by the colonies to the mother country was:

- A. salutary neglect
- B. Feudalism
- C. socialism
- D. capitalism
- E. mercantilism

NUMBER(S) OF THE STRATEGIES USED:

6. Which of the following is typically or most often, expressed by those organizational members classified as "professional" employees?

- A. A high degree of antagonism towards management
- B. A perception that personal goals conflict with goals of management, or organization as a whole
- C. Frustration at being grossly unpaid

NUMBER(S) OF THE STRATEGIES USED:

7. All of these statements about mitosis are true except it

- A. is a process of nuclear cell division
- B. it has 4 phases: prophase, metaphase, anaphase, telophase
- C. is the type of cell division common only to germ cells
- D. is a vital process of growth and development

NUMBER(S) OF THE STRATEGIES USED:

8. At the present time, there are relatively few women in positions of corporate management. One reason is:

- A. until 5 years ago, no women had completed a master's degree in business
- B. research has proven that women do not possess any skills required for corporate leadership
- C. women have no interest in pursuing management careers
- D. there is a general lack of formal and informal training programs to develop women managers

NUMBER(S) OF THE STRATEGIES USED:

9. The main reason early settlers did not assimilate the culture of the American Indians was

- A. the American Indians had no culture
- B. religious and ideological differences were too great
- C. most early settlers were captured by Indians
- D. the Indian fighting methods were too primitive

NUMBER(S) OF THE STRATEGIES USED:

10. A salve made of jipsen weed is put on an inflamed area of the skin because jipsen

- A. has a toxic effect
- B. heals every kind of wound
- C. has no effect on inflamed areas
- D. is soothing

NUMBER(S) OF THE STRATEGIES USED:

11. Tenable means:

- A. ridiculous
- B. believable
- C. ludicrous
- D. absurd

NUMBER(S) OF THE STRATEGIES USED:

12. Sagendorf's conclusion regarding human learning is that:

- A. learning ability of individuals is definitely influenced by their physical condition.
- B. either extreme tiredness or ill health can diminish one's ability to learn.
- C. learning is not affected by a learner's physical condition.
- D. all of the above

NUMBER(S) OF THE STRATEGIES USED:

13. Z. T. Billingsley's novel, *Urban Living* deals with:

- A. migration to the countryside
- B. the stresses associated with metropolitan living
- C. our natural resources
- D. modern business techniques

NUMBER(S) OF THE STRATEGIES USED:

14. The gypsy butterfly is characterized by its ability to:

- A. make rapid changes in coloration
- B. stabilize in large colonies
- C. confines itself to a relatively limited geographical area
- D. differentiates scents

NUMBER(S) OF THE STRATEGIES USED:

15. Fantasy and make-believe are pastimes that are:

- A. experienced only by the very young
- B. always indicates psychological instability
- C. never demonstrated by intelligent adults
- D. sometimes beneficial when moderate in dimension

NUMBER(S) OF THE STRATEGIES USED:

16. The biological significance of the chambered nautilus is:

- A. no other crustacean has ever propelled itself by jet blasts
- B. it has inhabited only those sea depths man cannot reach
- C. it is essentially unchanged by evolutionary processes
- D. no living specimen has ever been found

NUMBER(S) OF THE STRATEGIES USED:

17. The 17th century French biologist La Seur is credited with:

- A. discovering a cure for lung cancer
- B. discovering a vaccine to prevent polio
- C. disproving Darwin's theory of evolution
- D. hybridizing several flowering plants

NUMBER(S) OF THE STRATEGIES USED:

18. The Roman philosopher Tuscus believed that:

- A. the fall of Rome was inevitable
- B. nothing could be done to save the Roman Empire
- C. man, properly aware of the impending fall, could prevent it
- D. the of decay and decline of Roman rule was irreversible

NUMBER(S) OF THE STRATEGIES USED:

19. The bill of the woodpecker robin is

- A. blunted and short
- B. sharp and long
- C. virtually nonexistent
- D. curved and small

Adapted from: Congos, Dennis H. (2011) Starting Out in Community College. Chicago, IL: McGraw-Hill

NUMBER(S) OF THE STRATEGIES USED:

20. Which of these statements related to Emily Dickinson is correct?

- A. For a part of her life, she was a recluse.
- B. She always wrote poetry dealing with melancholia
- C. She never exhibited any talent for poetry other than free verse
- D. She always dealt with the most trivial themes of existence in her poetry

NUMBER(S) OF THE STRATEGIES USED:

Score this quiz yourself using the answer key below.

1. d	6. b	11. b	16. c
2. c	7. c	12. c	17. d
3. a	8. d	13. b	18. c
4. d	9. b	14. a	19. b
5. e	10. d	15. d	20. a