Studying for Success Study Skills Program
Step by Step Approach to Writing Multiple Choice Exams

1. Cover up the alternatives:
   - You’re more likely to choose the correct answer if you’ve thought through the question without the interference of information presented in alternatives.
   - Begin by covering the alternatives. Then carefully read the question before looking at the alternatives.
   - Circle or underline key words. Pay special attention to words that narrow response options such as "principal" function, "primary" criticism, and "major".

2. Read and process:
   - Ask yourself “what is this question really asking?”
   - You can underline key words, and keep track of absolute and qualifying words such as: “every”, “all”, “usually”, “often”, etc.
   - Rephrase the question in your own words.

3. Predict an answer:
   - While not all questions are written so that an answer can be predicted without looking at the alternatives, many are.
   - By predicting the answer before you look at the alternatives you’re less likely to be swayed by an alternative with closely related but incorrect concepts or applications.
   - Even if you can’t predict an answer, you may be able to identify closely related concepts that are likely to surface in alternatives.

4. Process each statement:
   - Uncover the alternatives.
   - Do the options allow for only one correct alternative, or does a response allow for two or more alternatives to be correct? (e.g., the response (d) indicates that both a and b are correct.)
   - Read each alternative for meaning, not just to recognize familiar terms or phrases.

5. Identify the correct response:
   - Now you’re ready to mark the correct alternative on your answer sheet. Choose the correct answer and move on to the next question!
   - If you can’t decide on an answer try steps 6-8.

6. Reread the question:
   - If you do not know the answer, reread the question.

7. Eliminate wrong answers:
   - If two options still look equally appealing, compare each to the question making sure that the one you eventually choose answers what is asked, or is the "neatest" fit (i.e., doesn't require additional information to be correct).

8. Guess:
   - If you're still unsure, guess (if there's no penalty for wrong answers).
   - With all of the question processing you’ve done, at least you’ll be making an educated guess!

If you aren't sure that you made the correct choice, put a big question mark beside the question and move on to the next question. Avoid getting bogged down on one question. If time permits, return to any problematic questions you’ve flagged after completing the test, and try them again.

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