

# Different Types Of Test Formats And Questions

## Multiple Choice Exams:

How to attack the exam:

- Read all directions thoroughly and then quickly preview the entire test before starting.
- Are there sections of the exam weighted more heavily? Do the questions get progressively more difficult? If there is a difference between sections, set a rough time schedule for each section.
- Plan time to review your answers and change answers if appropriate.

How to attack each question:

- Answer easy questions first. If an item is too difficult to answer quickly, skip it and go back to it later.
- Read the entire question before looking at the answer choices and if possible, answer the question without looking at the answer choices. Then examine all the answer choices before deciding which is correct.
- If the correct answer is not immediately apparent, eliminate any non-plausible choices. Is there an answer that differs from all the others?
- Remember that the instructor is usually looking for the best answer, so if two answers appear possible, make a choice.
- Use clues from previous questions. If you were certain of the answer for a previous question and it contradicts some of the possible answers on an item, then you can eliminate them.

## Quantitative Questions:

Understand the problem by answering a series of questions.

- What is the unknown and what information do you need to find it?
- Will drawing a sketch help?
- Are there multiple parts to the question? Not answering each part is an easy way to lose points.
- Find a way to solve for what is unknown.
- Write down all that is given or known.
- If it makes sense, draw a sketch to help visualize the problem.
- Write down all relevant formulas
- Use proper notation that is consistent with that used in the formulas.
- Solve the problem using the procedure you developed in previous step.
- Work neatly and carefully and show your work for each step. This will help the grader follow your work, which might lead to partial credit. It will also make it possible for you to figure out where you went astray if your answer is incorrect.
- Include the units for your answer.

Check your Answers.

- Carefully recheck your answer.
- Does your answer make sense to you? Is the quantity reasonable? Did you use all of the data that you originally decided was pertinent? Is your answer in correct units?

### **True/False Questions:**

- Beware of superlatives, such as best, worst, largest, smallest, most, least, etc. Few circumstances are always present. Equally few are never present. Remember that some actually are always or never; but be careful!
- Check the statement for qualifying words. A qualifying word is any single word that changes the overall meaning of the statement. For instance, does the meaning of the statement change if the adjectives and adverbs are eliminated? Qualifying words are often keys to choosing the correct answer.
- Look carefully at the subject and the verb in the statement. Do they belong together?
- Be careful of reading too much into a statement. The more you know about a subject, the less you will see statements about the subject as true or false. Most statements are neither completely true nor completely false. Ironically, choosing between true and false becomes more difficult with broader knowledge. In one sense, the true/false test penalizes you for knowing more.
- Try to prove each statement false. It is easier to prove a statement false than to prove it true. Every element in a statement must be true for the statement to be true. If just one element in a statement is incorrect, the statement is false. If you can find no error in a statement, accept it as true; don't try to prove it. This will keep you from reading too much into the statement.

### **Essay Test Taking:**

- Read through the entire exam before beginning so that you can plan how much time to take on each question.
- If a question appears that you did not anticipate, do not panic. Start with what you do know: the overall structure of the course.
- Then ask yourself how that topic of the question relates to the structure.
- Read the question carefully to determine what kind of response is required. Does the question simply require you to recall material from the course? Or, does the question require that you analyze a new situation using what you have learned?
- Start by outlining your answer. This might come from a pre-developed outline for a question you anticipated or can be developed on the spot. This will help you organize your answer and keep you from forgetting key points if you have to hurry to finish an answer.
- Start with a strong introductory paragraph that establishes your argument with a clearly written thesis.
- Make it easy for the grader to follow your argument by properly forming paragraphs and using marker words such as “first, second, third” or “the counter argument.”
- Provide details that support your argument. Each piece of information should be clearly connected to your argument. Do not include extraneous information just because it is something that you remembered.
- Finish with a conclusion that demonstrates that you have addressed the question and made an argument. This will solidify your answer in the mind of the grader and give you a chance to assess that you effectively answered the question.

### **Short-Answer Questions:**

The best preparation for short-answer questions is to overlearn the details of the material. Extensive use of study cards is helpful. The best strategy for answering these questions is to first answer the easiest questions as quickly as you can. Next answer the harder questions, and then end with the ones you know little about.