

GENERAL TEST TAKING STRATEGIES

Pace Yourself

Don't get clock fever. It's easy to get overwhelmed when you're looking at a full page of questions, your mind is full of random thoughts and the clock is ticking down. Determine how much time you can afford to spend on each question and stick to this plan! Some questions will take less time than allotted so when you get to the end, if you have additional time, you can go back to the ones that you skipped due to time constraints and deal with them then.

Read Carefully

Read the question and answer choices carefully. You have plenty of time to read each question thoroughly and make sure you understand what is being asked. Don't get stuck though, read carefully but efficiently.

Make Predictions

As you read and understand the question, try to guess what the answer will be. Remember once you begin reading the possible answers provided your mind will immediately become cluttered with answer choices including incorrect ones. Quickly scan the choices to see if your prediction is in the list of answer choices. If it is then most likely your predicted answer is the correct one.

Does Your 'choice' Answer the Question

Make sure that you didn't misread the question. Once you have made your selection, always go back, and check it against the question to make sure it answers the question.

Benchmark

After you read the first answer choice, decide if you think it sounds correct or not. If it does, mentally mark that answer choice as your 'benchmark'. Go on to the next and compare each other choice to your 'benchmark' until you find another that you like better. Consider your 'benchmark' to be 'correct' until proven otherwise.

Eliminate Answers

Eliminate choices as soon as you realize they are wrong. Be sure to consider all answer choices though. Just because one appears right, doesn't mean that the next one won't be even better. Test writers will usually put more than one good answer choice for every question, so read all of them.

Tough Questions

If you are stumped on a problem or it appears too hard or too difficult, don't waste time. Move on! Remember though, if you can quickly check for obviously incorrect answer choices, your chances of guessing correctly are greatly improved. Before you

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completely give up, at least try to narrow down the possible answers. Eliminate what you can and then guess at the remaining answer choices before moving on.

Answer Selection

The best way to pick an answer choice is to eliminate all of those that are wrong, until the only one is left and confirm that it is the correct answer. Sometimes an answer choice may immediately look right but be careful! Take a second to make sure the other answer choices are not equally obvious. There are only two times that you should stop before checking other answers. First is when you are positive that the answer choice that you have selected is correct. Second is when time is running out and you must make a quick guess!

Face Value

When in doubt, use common sense. Always accept the situation in the problem at face value. DON'T READ TOO MUCH INTO IT. Don't over complicate the problem by creating theoretical relationships or explanations that will warp time or space. These are normal problems rooted in reality. Use your common sense to interpret anything that isn't clear.

Contextual Clues

Look for contextual clues that will help you find the answer that is most right and is correct. Understand the context in which a phrase or statement is made. This will help you make important distinctions.

Time Management

On technical questions, don't get lost on the technical terms. Don't spend too much time on any one question. If you don't know what a term means, since you don't have a dictionary, odds are you aren't going to get much further. If you don't recognize the term, work with the other clues that you have, the other answer choices and terms provided, but don't waste too much time trying to figure out a difficult term.

Don't Panic

Panicking will not answer any questions for you. When you first see the question, if your mind goes blank, take a deep breath. Force yourself to mechanically go through the steps of solving the problem and using the strategies you've learned.

Check Your Work

Don't miss any questions through careless mistakes. Make sure all questions have been answered and that you haven't accidentally skipped any. Only change answered questions if you are POSITIVE that the initial answer you provided is incorrect and you can defend it! Your first instinct is usually correct.