

True-False Questions

1. Read the question carefully. One word may make the difference in whether a statement is true or false.
2. Remember that statements containing absolutes, such as *never*, *always*, *all*, *every time*, and *none* are often false.
3. Answer *true* right away if you're positive the statement is correct. If you're not sure, reread the question carefully and try to think of exceptions to the statement.
4. It's easier to write a statement with one or more exceptions, or a false statement, than a true one. If you just don't know the answer and time is running out, mark *false*.

Short-Answer Questions

1. Don't look for hidden meanings in short-answer questions. Their purpose is simply to test your recall of key facts, words, and phrases.
2. Reread the question several times.
3. Watch for context clues in the question or in other questions on the test.
4. Answer the easy questions first. Then go back to the harder questions. The answers to some questions may help you recall the answers to others.
5. If you think there might be two correct answers, look to see how many lines follow the question. If there's only one short line, write the best answer.

Essay Questions

1. Essay answers of a few sentences or paragraphs should be as carefully worded and well organized as a full-length essay or report. Plan your time carefully.
2. Know your facts. Make sure you have prepared for the test thoroughly so you can concentrate on your writing, rather than trying to think of something to say. Underline key words in the question to help guide your answer (e.g., *describe*, *explain*, or *compare*).
3. Start with a brief outline so that your answer will be organized. If you run out of time, your outline will show your teacher where you were headed.
4. Rewrite the question in the form of a statement and announce what you're going to write about in the opening paragraph. Use the main body of your answer to make your point. End your essay with a concluding paragraph that summarizes your main ideas.
5. Write legibly. What you have written won't count for much if your teacher can't read it.
6. Use complete sentences and transition words such as *first*, *second*, and *finally*.

Contact the OHS Student Services Department for more information: 608-783-4571

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Taking Different Types of Tests

Study Skills for Success



**School District of
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**Comprehensive
School Counseling
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OHS Student Services

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Types of Test Questions

Different types of test questions require different types of strategies. Some of the types of test questions you may need to answer include multiple-choice, true-false, short-answer, and essay.

Multiple-Choice Questions

Multiple-choice tests are common but can be challenging. Multiple-choice questions have a “stem,” which sets up the problem, and the “options,” or the choices. The following are suggestions for reading multiple-choice test questions using a **systematic approach**:

1. Read the **stem** of the question carefully, making sure you know what is being asked. Students often miss questions because they read the stem too quickly.
2. **Circle** words that reverse the usual way we look at questions to call your attention to them. For example, circle “not,” “never,” “always,” etc.
3. **Underline** words in the question that are key to what is being asked. This may keep you from reading too much into the question.
4. After you have read the question and **before** you look at the options, **think about what the answer should be**. If you look at the choices immediately after reading the question, you may limit your thinking and you may become confused between similar options.

5. **Look at all the options before you decide**. Don’t pick the first option because it appears to be right. Other options may be more to the point. **Analyze** each option. Treat each stem and option as a separate true-false statement. Read each option and decide if it is an adequate answer to the stem. Is it
 - ...probably right?
 - ...probably wrong?
 - ...I’m unsure about this option.This method will help you discriminate among close options.
6. As you are analyzing, remember that **absolutes**, such as “always, never, every” may suggest an incorrect answer since it is hard to write a question that covers all possible situations. Words such as “sometimes, usually, often” may suggest a correct answer because they do allow for exceptions.
7. If there are words or phrases in the stem that have only a **vague meaning** to you, try to define them and use that definition to find the answer. However, don’t get fixated on those words or phrases.
8. **Resist the urge to guess immediately at a question that looks difficult, unfamiliar, or vague**. You may know more about the material than you think you do. Talk to yourself about what you know about the topic. This process may then trigger a **linkage** and you

may “find” information in your mind, which can be useful in answering the question. Also, don’t respond immediately to a question based on your familiarity with the material (“Oh, I know that!”) without reading the stem and all options carefully.

9. **Commit yourself to answering a question before going on to the next one**. If you are unsure, respond with your best educated guess. This will force you to reason through the question as much as possible and will help you to avoid giving up.
10. **Use guessing strategies with caution**. Don’t rely on them in preference to your own knowledge. For example, don’t pick “C” because you heard that many correct options are “C.” Instead, systematically consider every answer. **An educated guess is not a wild guess!**

