

A SYSTEMATIC METHOD OF ANSWERING MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

READ the stem of the question.

- a. Check for unknown words or words that may have a specific definition for the particular subject area. If a word is unknown ask the instructor or make an intelligent guess at meaning.
- b. Note key words or key information to be used while answering the questions. Underline these if the stem is long.

Mentally SIMPLIFY and/or CLARIFY the stem to insure understanding.

- a. Condense the stem; shorten it by using only key words.
- b. Translate the stem; put it in your own words; ask it in a different way. Good "question" words to keep in mind are: who? what? when? where? why? how?

Mentally ANSWER the question posed in the stem.

- a. Think of the answer(s) in your own words.
- b. Do this before looking at any of the choices.

SEARCH the choices and **ELIMINATE** those that don't match your answer from step three.

- a. Read each choice as if taking a true-false test.
- b. Put a + by the choice(s) that do match what you thought of in step 3, (true).
- c. Put a - by the choice(s) that do not match what you thought of in step 3, or simply draw a line through it (false).

CHOOSE the best answer.

- a. You will be left with 1 or more choices that match what you thought of in step 3. Here is your answer! or
- b. You will have eliminated all but 2 or 3 choices. If left with several matches and you are required to give only one answer, use logical reasoning or guessing rules to pick the best one.

Special Cases

Questions that require computation (math, chemistry, business, pharmacy):

- a. Proceed with steps # 1 and # 2 to determine the formula and/or principle to be applied in computation.
- b. Complete the computation to arrive at an answer before looking at any of the choices.
- c. Search to find the answer; if your answer does not match, check your computations/procedures; check to see which formula or concept applies; check for mis-reading of the question.

Negative questions

These are tricky and confusing because they ask for what is **not**, rather than what **is**.

Example: "Which of the following is **not** an example of the executive powers of the President?"

- a. After you have read the stem, translate the question so that it is positive; "What are the executive powers of the President?" or "Which of the following **are** executive powers?"
- b. *ANSWER* the new question.
- c. *ELIMINATE* those choices which answer the positive (new) question.
- d. *CHOOSE* from what is left as answer to the original (negative) question.

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