

## **WRITING MULTIPLE CHOICE TESTS**

### **BEFORE THE TEST**

- A. These types of tests involve understanding and memorizing information from class and correctly analyzing information provided in the test. Plan your time carefully and study in advance, not just the night before.
- B. For the questions that are source based (based on comprehending a reading passage or correctly analyzing a table, graph, chart, or some other graphic organizer), extra reading before exams and reviewing/creating tables, charts, etc. will help in your exam preparation.
- C. Try to get copies of old exams. They can give you an indication of the kinds of material covered and the types of questions that will be asked.
- D. Practice writing "mock" multiple choice exams (including the "old exams" that you may have gotten under B above) and limit your time for each question during your practice session to make it more "test-like".
- E. When writing the "mock" test, mark or highlight any question that you went back and changed. Check to see if you originally selected the wrong answer and changed it to the correct one or, alternatively, if you originally selected the correct answer and changed it to the wrong one. If you tend to change right answers to wrong ones, be very cautious about changing any answers come exam time. Studies show that the stronger you are in a subject, the more likely you'll make a change to the write answer.
- F. Get a good night's sleep and eat a healthy breakfast!

### **AT THE TEST**

- I. Arrive on time but not too early. Standing around talking with other test-takers usually makes a person more nervous, not less.
- II. If you have a choice, sit where you will be least distracted. Consider bringing earplugs to block out all noises.
- III. Read the directions carefully and quickly review the test instead of just starting on the first question. Remember, you can start wherever you like.
- IV. Answer the questions you know and build some confidence!
- V. Here are some **Do's** when answering multiple choice questions:
  - 1) Narrow your choices down by eliminating obviously wrong answers.
  - 2) Think about the answer to the question before reading all the choices but read them all before selecting one.
  - 3) Do not be afraid to change an answer if you feel strongly about it.
  - 4) Don't get discouraged if you can't answer any particular question. Just move on to the next one and keep in mind that you may find a clue later in the test to the one you can't answer.
  - 5) Beware of questions with "no", "not", and "none." These words easily change the meaning of questions.

- 6) If you have to guess, re-read the question carefully. Eliminate any choice that you know is incorrect. If two options still look right, compare each to the stem of the question (the first part or origin), and ensure your choice actually answers what is asked.
- 7) Review your test and answer sheet at the end to ensure you answered all the questions and that your answers on the sheet correspond with the question numbers on the test.

**VI.** Here are some **Don'ts** when answering multiple choice questions:

- 1) Don't select an alternative just because you remember learning the information during the course. It may be "true", but you have to make sure that it is the "correct" answer to the question being asked.
- 2) Don't pick an answer just because it seems to make sense. You are answering from your knowledge of the course content, not just from your general knowledge and logic.
- 3) Don't dismiss an option because it seems too obvious. If you are well prepared, some of the questions will seem easy.
- 4) Don't be wowed by fancy terms in the question, i.e., don't say to yourself, "That sounds impressive, so it must be the right!"
- 5) Don't pick your answer based on a pattern of responses, i.e., "This can't be another "B" because we just had two "B's" in a row."

**VIII.** Here are some **strategies to answer difficult questions:**

- Eliminate options you know to be incorrect
- Question options that grammatically don't fit with the stem
- Question options that are totally unfamiliar to you
- Question options that contain absolute words like always, every, never, etc.
- **"All of the above"** If you know two of three options seem correct, "all of the above" is a strong possibility.
- **"Look alike options"** Probably one is correct.
- **Double negatives** Create the equivalent positive statement in your head or on paper and consider it.
- **Echo options** If two options are opposites, one of them is likely correct.
- **If two alternatives seem correct** compare them for differences and refer back to the stem of the question to find your best answer.

**AFTER THE TEST**

Avoid the post-mortem (talking with others about specific questions and how you answered them); it is more likely to upset you than make you feel better. Get some food, rest, and exercise before starting to prepare for the next exam. If this was your last test, celebrate a job well done!!!!!!