

## HOW TO TAKE OBJECTIVE TESTS

These rules apply to teacher-made (non-standardized) tests on which four and occasionally five alternative answers appear. The rules should **not** be used in the following cases: (a) if there is a penalty for guessing, (b) if more than four (or occasionally five) alternative answers appear, and (c) if the test is a standardized test. In most other cases, these rules may prove very helpful.

1. Skim through all the test questions and answers before you answer any questions. This will help you to know what to expect and may help you to answer some of the questions. (Sometimes an instructor may give you an answer to one question in another question or answer on the test.)
2. As you read the questions, use common sense, experiences you have had, and information you know to select correct answers.
3. Watch out for negatives and double negatives. When a statement contains a double negative, cross out both negatives. That will turn the statement into a simple positive statement. When statements contain three negatives, cross out two of the negatives-- the double negative.
4. Also beware of absolute statements, those statements containing words like *always*, *never*, *all*, or *none*. An absolute statement is one for which there are no exceptions. Absolute statements are usually false. (Note that this handout does **not** state that absolute statements are *always* false, just *usually* false.
5. First answer only those questions for which you **know** the answers. Make a mark in the margin next to those questions which you do not understand or cannot answer, and go on to the other questions. Do not spend too much time on them until after you have finished the rest of the test.
6. Once you have answered all of the questions you know, then go back and make educated guesses on those that you skipped. Make sure that you have not left any questions unanswered.
7. Always leave time to look over your test. If possible, try to go through the test a third time to look primarily for clerical error, such as coloring in the wrong dot. Be very skeptical about changing your answers because approximately 80% of the time your first impression is correct. **Do** change an answer, however, if you have a good reason, such as when you remember some pertinent information which you had not thought of before or when you realize that you had misread the question or answer.

### Specific Rules for True-False Tests:

1. Assume that the statement is true unless you can determine that it is false.
2. Keep in mind that for a true-false question to be true, all parts of it must be true. In other words, if the statement is partly true or partly false, it should be marked *false*. Test each part of the statement for accuracy.

3. When an absolute such as *always* or *never* appears in a statement, the statement is usually false. Conversely, if a qualifying appears in the statement, the statement will usually appears in the basement, the statement or usually
4. Remember that when a true-false question states a reason, the statement is usually false.

### **Specific Rules for Multiple Choice Tests :**

1. Think of each question as a list of true-false questions, and determine which statements are true and which are false. To do this, read the question part itself plus the first possible answer (choice a); for the item to be true, the whole statement must be true. Then follow the same procedure for each of the remaining choices.
2. Make sure that you read each of the choices before determining the best answer.
3. Cross out the distracters and select as the correct answer the option that is **not** a distracter.
4. If you have no idea whatsoever what the answer is, choose *b* or *c*. Teacher-made tests have been extensively studied, and it has been found that *b* or *c* are correct approximately 30% of the time each, rather than 25% as might be expected. This is probably because teachers like to "hide" the answer in the middle of the choices, rather than to put it at the beginning or end.
5. Often an answer that is conspicuous by its length (either much longer or much shorter) is correct. This is because, rather than to spend a long time thinking up appropriate alternative answers, a teacher will lift his question straight from the textbook, and then simply put down three other choices.
6. If you know that two of the choices are right, and only one answer is allowed, then "all of the above" must be correct.
7. If two direct opposites appear as choices, one is usually correct.
8. If alternative *e* appears less than 10% of the time, it will be correct at least 80% of the time. For example on a 100-question test, if *e* appears less than ten times, it should be correct at least eight times.

### **Specific Rules for Matching Tests :**

1. Use the longest list as your starting point.
2. Cross out the items that are matched.

### **Specific Rules for Fill-in-the-Blank Tests:**

1. Decide what type of answer is required.
2. Give sound, intelligent answers.