

## Educated Guessing Strategies for Multiple Choice Tests

**Note:** Guessing strategies are **not** a substitute for good study habits and test preparation. They are **not** foolproof and will **not** guarantee the correct answer. They will, however, help when you are not completely sure of the answer, must narrow down the choices or choose between two reasonably good answers.

### 1. Frequency of Occurrence Strategy:

Look for items that appear in more than one of the choices

The following languages are spoken in the Comora Islands:

- a) Spanish and Arabic
- b) Arabic and French
- c) German and Italian
- d) French and English

B is correct; French and Arabic appear twice

### 2. Root and Prefix Clues Strategy

Latin or Greek roots: Knowing these will help in gleaning a partial meaning of certain words

Cuprous metal would appear:

- a) Bronze-like
- b) Gold-like
- c) Silver-like
- d) Copper-like

CU=Copper

### 3. Negative Prefixes

Knowing these can help in selecting a similar answer with a negative meaning, for example:

- (dis)- disorganized
- (im)-imbalanced
- (ir)-irresponsible
- (il)-illogical
- (in)-incomplete
- (un)-unimportant

To prevent infection, it is recommended that hospitals use:

- a) cleaning fluids
- b) air filters
- c) chemical reactants
- d) disinfectants

D-dis=not or non

#### 4. Eliminate Extremes

When numerical options vary greatly, chances are that the best response is in the middle ranges. Eliminate the highest and lowest options.

The average number of volcanic eruptions recorded annually is:

- a) 2500
- b) 25
- c) 1000
- d) 750

Choose between c and d

#### 5. Similar Choice Strategy

Certain questions have answers that are closely related or almost identical, except for one detail. This should be your clue to choose one of the two similar answers. The similar choices cannot both be correct, but either of them may be the correct answer.

A good communication technique to use when confronting someone is:

- a) an 'I' message
- b) an eye message
- c) a sharp remark
- d) silence

Choose between A and B, which are similar sounding

#### 6. Opposite Choice Strategy

In some cases, the best choice is between two very different or opposite choices.

The meaning of cognizant is:

- a) ignorant
- b) aware
- c) insensitive
- d) remorseful

Choose between A and B, which are opposites of each other

## 7. Umbrella Option Strategy

When one option encompasses the other options or is more inclusive, choose it.

Test anxiety can be reduced by:

- a) practicing relaxation techniques
- b) deep breathing
- c) muscle relaxation techniques
- d) visualization exercises

Choose a)

## 8. Avoid Absolutes

If an 'absolute' such as always, never, every, all, none, etc. is present, consider the option false.

The drop out rate in high schools is on the rise because:

- a) all students are unmotivated
- b) some students are disillusioned with school
- c) students never take high school seriously
- d) every high school student has emotional problems

B is correct. It is the only answer without an absolute

## 9. The Exception or Most Different Answer Strategy

Read the question carefully and pick the option that is different from or does not belong with the other options.

Which of the following would be an example of cognition?

- a) driving a car
- b) swimming
- c) hiking
- d) studying for an exam

D is the most different option

## 10. Longest Answer Strategy

Sometimes the correct response is longer than the others. When more time is put into developing a response, chances are it is correct.

Of the following, this is the most effective therapeutic method for controlling depression:

- a) hypnosis
- b) psychotherapy
- c) combining the therapeutic techniques with doctor-prescribed anti-depressant medication
- d) psychoanalysis

C is both the longest and the correct response

## 11. Key Word Strategy

Choose a response that has the same or similar words in it as the question.

The loci system of memorization is generally more effective than repetition because:

- a) it creates a location or loci in which to store information
- b) it forces one to repeat information again and again
- c) it makes information go directly into long-term memory
- d) it is easier to use

A is correct. Loci appears in both the question and the answer

## 12. Grammatically Correct Strategy: Eliminate responses that are not grammatically correct

In the Sahara, you would most likely see an

- a) addax
- b) chipmunk
- c) monkey
- d) leopard

A is the correct answer, because “an” needs to be followed with a vowel sound.