# Multiple-choice Exam Techniques

## Before you begin to write

- Read exam instructions carefully.
- Skim read the whole exam paper.
- Consider time allocation.

## Go through the whole paper, answering the questions you are sure of

- Begin by reading the first question. Answer it in your head. Look at the options given. Is your answer there? Answer on paper according to instructions.
- Put a mark beside the questions you leave unanswered. Move on.
- Go back and answer missed questions or those you were not so sure of.
- Even if you do not know the answer, have a sensible guess. You have a good chance in multi-choice of choosing the right answer.

## Many questions can be answered by a ‘process of elimination’

Straight away you can see that one or two answers are impossible. The other answers are possible. Be logical and go for the one that you think fits best.

## Reading the questions very carefully is a key to passing multi-choice exams

Read slowly, thinking as you go. If the question asks for...

- the **best** way
- the **main** purpose
- the **normal** approach
- the **most suitable** method

...this suggests that two of the answers will be similar. Both appear to be correct; but one of them is slightly better. It is the **best** answer.

## Read ALL of the answers

Even if (a) appears to be correct as soon as you read it, you must consider **all of the answers**. You might find that (d) is even better than (a).

## Look carefully at the grammar within the question

For example:  

Q: A bird that does not fly is an:

a) Robin  
b) Parrot  
c) Emu  
d) Orioles

Cross out a) and b) because they begin with consonants. They cannot follow ‘an’. Cross out d) because it is plural. A plural cannot follow ‘an’. Clearly the correct answer is c) because it makes grammatical sense.
Watch for answers with similar meanings

Q. Nouns express:

a) movement
b) action
c) names of things, places or people
d) doing/activity

When you see how similar a), b) and d) are, you can assume that the ‘odd one out’ or c) is the correct answer.
Remember that if two or more options are identical, they must be incorrect.

Questions are often grouped in sections

For example, in a Culinary Arts exam, there will be a poaching group; a microwave group; a grilling group; etc.

One question might be:

What is the correct range of temperatures for poaching?

The following question might be:

Tender, fragile foods are best cooked by:

The answer is: poaching (because we are still in the poaching section).
The next question might be:

Stewing can be defined as:

Clearly we have changed to the stewing section.

Finally, read over your answers to double-check for accuracy

Make sure you have completed ALL questions

Think very carefully before altering any of your original answers

Often your first choice is the best choice. It’s easy to talk yourself out of it, so don’t. Change it only if you are absolutely sure it is incorrect.

All the best for your next multi-choice exam.