Test Formats

True/False

True/false tests are the easiest to complete, as you have a 50% chance of choosing the correct answer.

- However, this kind of test can be tricky, since a single word can make a true sentence false. Read the statement carefully:
  - *True:* In the **story** "The Three Little Pigs," the first little pig's house is made of straw.
  - *False:* In the **poem** "The Three Little Pigs," the first little pig's house is made of straw.
- Some true/false questions make general statements that seem true, but are not **always** true.
- Certain words—such as often, usually, rarely, and sometimes—may indicate a true answer:
  - *True:* Fifth-grade students are **sometimes** loud.
- Watch out for certain words—such as all, only, always, never, and none. These words may make the statement false:
  - *False:* Fifth-grade students are **always** loud.
- Search for the word or detail that can make the statement false.

Matching

Some tests or parts of a test will ask you to match items in one list to items in another list. Even though you don't know every item, you may be able to figure them out.

- Count to see which list has fewer items, since every item in the shorter list will have a matching item in the longer list, with a few left over.
- Answer the questions that you know with certainty first. Mark off each item as you use it, so you won't use it again—unless the directions say that items can be used more than once.
- Make educated guesses for items that you aren't sure of, using clue words to aid you:
  - If asked to find a match for "The French general who fought in the American Revolution," look for a foreign name.
  - If asked to find a match for "Famous scientific research team," look for an answer that contains more than one name.
  - If asked to find a match for "The famous man who gave the 'I Have a Dream' speech," eliminate any women's names as possible answers.
- Finding clues can help you match items that you don't know.

Fill-in-the-Blank

Fill-in-the-blank questions usually require an exact answer. Read the sentences carefully, using the information in them to figure out the missing words or phrases.

- Watch out for tricky words like those used in true/false tests—often, usually, rarely, sometimes, all, only, always, never, and none.
- Be sure that your answer fits grammatically into the sentence.
  - "_____ is the capital of Colorado" would be filled in with a proper noun, so selecting an adjective—like smiling—shows that you did not read the statement clearly.
- Pay attention to the number and length of the blank spaces in the sentences. Although the length of the space can be at times misleading, most of the time, the space provided gives you a clue about the answer.
- If you are unsure of the answer, fill in the most likely answer, as you may get partial credit.

Solomon, B., Bugno, T., Kelly, M., Risi, R., Serret-Lopez, C., & Sundly, J. (2011). *The student success path*. San Diego, CA: AVID Press.

Test Formats

Multiple-Choice

- It is important that you read the answers first when answering multiple-choice questions.
- Answer all of the questions that you know first. Read all of the choices for each question and choose the one that answers the question or seems right, since only one answer is correct.
- Go back and look over the questions with answers that you did not know or of which you were unsure. Make an educated guess. Do not leave any items unanswered.
- Read the questions carefully, looking for trick words.
- Sometimes, one of the answer choices may be "all of the above" or "none of the above." Use your common sense in these instances:
    - If you know that at least one choice is incorrect, then "all of the above" can't be right.
    - If you know that at least one choice is correct, "none of the above" can't be right.
- If this test has a "bubble" answer sheet, be sure to fill in the bubble in the correct space.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary tests ask you about the meaning of words, often directing you to pick out the word whose meaning is the same as the meaning of a given word.

- First, try to come up with a simple definition for the given word before you look at the choices.
- Eliminate choices that you know are wrong.
- If tasked with finding a word whose meaning is the *same* as a given word, think of a sentence using the given word. Then, replace that word in the sentence with your choice. If the sentence does not make sense, the word that you chose is not correct.
- If tasked with finding a word whose meaning is the *opposite* of a given word, think of a sentence using the given word. This time, look for the word that gives your sentence the opposite meaning.
- Sometimes, you can look at the parts of a word to help you figure out its meaning.

Essay

Essay tests ask for you to respond to a prompt with written paragraphs.

- Read each essay question carefully, looking at all of the words in each question: Does the test ask you to compare/contrast, to describe, to discuss, or to solve a problem? Be sure to respond to what the question asks.
- Keep track of your time so that you can finish all parts of your test.
- If some essay questions are worth more points than others, spend more time answering those more valuable questions.
- As you read the essay questions, look for key words that give you clues as to what you must write about.
    - Some key words tell you how to approach the subject, such as: comment, compare, define, describe, discuss, explain, prove, and respond.
    - Some of the words ask you to give your opinion.
    - Some of the words ask you to present information.
    - Some of the words ask you to focus on one idea.
    - Some of the words ask you to give several ideas or details.
- Be sure to answer all parts of the question.

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