

Multiple choice questions



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Multiple choice questions are often used in online assignments and exams. Multiple choice questions require understanding and application of your study materials or lectures. This requires **careful preparation** and **knowledge** about the best strategies for completing multiple choice questions.

Preparation strategies

Prepare as you do for other types of exams. Complete any practice questions that are provided.

The number of allocated marks per question indicates how long you should spend answering that question. For example, a question worth 1 or 2 marks should only take 1 or 2 minutes to answer, if that. In the exam, be aware of the time and do *not* exceed this time for each question.

Some people like to answer the questions as they go; others like to read through all the questions before they attempt to answer them.

General format

The most common multiple-choice format is a **statement or question** which assesses knowledge of facts.

Some questions are designed to test **analysis and application of your knowledge** of key facts, concepts or formula through a specific scenario or by analysing data, for example in a table or graph.

Key words in the multiple-choice question often give you a clue to the correct answer. For example, words like **only**, **always**, **sometimes**, **rarely**, **not**, **only**, and **best** place limitations on the situation or problem.

Step by step tips for answering multiple choice questions

1. Read instructions first. Are marks taken off for wrong answers? Is the question worth more than one mark?	5. Eliminate the answers that are definitely incorrect.
2. Read carefully to identify key words and look for negatives e.g. "Which of these is not an example of...".	6. Choose the correct answer from the remaining options – the best answer to the question. (Sometimes it is tricky as a couple of answers <i>could</i> be right!)
3. Make note of qualifiers like only, always, sometimes, rarely.	7. Sometimes the most obvious answer e.g. "All of the above" is right – however, not always!
4. Note exact words such as must and never. These could change the meaning of a question or answer.	8. Make sure to answer every question – even if you are unsure, you have a one in four chance of being right!

Example

Multiple choice answers:

Generally, there are four or five possible answers made up of the following:

- 1 or more incorrect answers
- 1 or more 'distracters'
- at least 2 correct answers, one of which is a more accurate or fuller answer than the other/s.

Example:

Multiple choice questions usually:

- a) test recognition of facts
- b) are easy because the answers are given in the test
- c) cover a whole year's worth of material
- d) require students to choose the best answer from the four possible ones

answer (d)

Final tips

- Multiple choice questions may appear short and easy *but* you may not be able to complete them quickly.
- Take care to read the questions and all the multiple choice options before you answer.
- If you get stuck, do the "easiest" questions first, then come back and check the others before submission.
- Check how many marks each question is worth – don't spend too long on questions worth 1 or 2 marks.
- Answer all questions – you have a 1 in 4 chance to get it right!

Further support

Contact your student learning advisors via the Support for Learning team here:

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