

Strategies for Writing Multiple Choice Tests

- Study the way you'll be tested, that is, by doing multiple-choice questions. Use the textbook website, and review each quiz and midterm as they are returned to you. Review the questions you get incorrect. This will focus your studying in the areas you are weakest. If you don't understand the material you are studying, email an instructor, as s/he may be able to clarify it for you.
- Read the questions carefully, watching for keywords like "not" and other tricky wording.
- When possible, determine an answer before looking at the alternatives provided. Cover the choices, then write your answer in the margin. Select the option that comes closest to your initial thoughts.
- Eliminate choices as best you can; if you can get it down to 2 options, you have a 50/50 shot at getting it right.
- If you aren't sure of an answer, skip the question -- return to it later. When in doubt, it is often wise to change your initial answer, but only if you have a reason for that doubt. If you are simply guessing, don't bother changing it – go with your gut in that case.
- Get a good night's sleep the night before the test, and eat something (snack or meal, as appropriate). If you are fatigued or hungry, you won't be able to focus. Loss of concentration leads to careless mistakes. You can have the knowledge of the world, but if you can't concentrate, you'll never be able to put that information to use; you won't be able to access it.
- Take your time, and do what you need to relax during the test. If you get anxious, put the pencil down, close your eyes, and breathe, slowly and deeply, for a minute or two. Calm your mind. You have plenty of time on these tests, so don't panic. Anxiety interferes with concentration as much as fatigue, so it's important that you employ strategies that will reduce your anxiety during the test.