

# Types of Exam Questions

## Multiple Choice

- Decide on answer *before* reading choices
- Look for answers contained in *other* questions
- If questions are based on a passage of text, read the *questions* first and search for answers
- If unsure
  - eliminate obviously incorrect choices.
  - eliminate choices that contain qualifiers.
    - ⇒ all, always, never, must, every, none
  - eliminate choices where grammar doesn't flow from stem to choice.
  - choose one of two answers that are similar
    - ⇒ independent/interdependent
  - use logic to determine best answer.

## True and False

- Answer questions you *know* first.
- If any part of statement is false, the *entire* statement is false.
- If the question contains a *definite* qualifier like *all, every, never, or always*, it is likely false.
- If the question contains an *indefinite* qualifier like *some, a few, occasionally, or sometimes*, the answer is likely true.

## Fill-in-the-Blank

- Make sure that your answer fits *grammatically* into the sentence
- See if the answer is somewhere *else* in the test

## Short Answer

- Begin your answer by *re-stating* the key part of the question.
- Plan your answer to *fit* the allotted space.

## Matching

- First, match the *obvious* pairs.
- Next, use *logic* to match the remaining pairs.
- *Cross out* pairs as you match.

## Essay

- Underline *key* words in question and do what is *requested*.
  - Define, describe, discuss/compare, contrast.
- *Brainstorm* by making a concept map or list.
- *Organize* your ideas in a concept map or informal outline.
  - Think “in terms of...”
  - Have at least 3 main points to discuss.
  - Think of question words (who, what, when, where, why, how, how do you know? so what?).
  - Consider sequence: Time? Order of importance? Events?

(Continued from page 1)

- *Reword* question to form first sentence of introduction.
- Provide *context* and *intention* in intro.
- *Support* each main point with details, discussion, evidence, etc.
- Write a strong *conclusion* that summarizes and answers “So what?”
- *Edit* for content and organization of thinking.
  - Did I answer the *question*?
  - Is my answer *logical*?
  - Do my ideas *flow*?
  - Have I *supported* my main points?
- *Proofread* for spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.
- *Rewrite*, using legible handwriting for good copy.

## Math

- Do a *memory dump* of formulae.
- *Estimate* the answer before calculating it.
- Check *answer* against estimation. Is it close?
  - If not, check calculations for arithmetical error.
- Write out *every* step of solution.
  - You get points for knowing steps even if the calculation is wrong.
- Revisit each *question* to make sure you have answered it completely.
- Double-check all *calculations*.

From *On Course* by Skip Downing  
(Houghton-Mifflin, 2005)