

### ***Twelve Tips for Success on Multiple Choice Tests***

1. When you receive your test, look it over and come up with a **time strategy**.
2. Try **covering up the options** so that you are focused only on the stem (the first part of the question).
3. Underline/note **key words** in the question. Determine what is being asked.
4. If you have a question with **negatives** (such as not, avoid, least, except), circle the negative and note its effect on the overall meaning of the question. You may want to re-phrase the question for yourself.
5. Note **qualifying words** (such as can, may, most, frequently), which indicate greater latitude, versus **absolute words** (such as will, must, all, always), which are more restricting.
6. If you can answer **without looking at the options**, do so by making a mental or written note.
7. Read each of the options **carefully**, even if you see your answer among them. Again, note key words and qualifiers.
8. If you know the correct answer, select it and **move on** to the next question. If you don't know the answer, move on quickly and come back later.
9. When trying to choose among alternatives, **take one option at a time** and combine it with the stem to make a **true/false** statement.
10. If you find yourself unable to decide between two options, ask yourself **what makes those two options different**. Then go back to the stem to test each option again.
11. **Remember to go back to unanswered questions** and try to answer them. If you are not penalized for wrong answers, be sure to guess at the ones you couldn't answer.
12. When reviewing your work, **don't change an answer** unless you have a good reason (such as new information discovered within the test) to reject the old answer.

### ***Common Pitfalls***

#### **Pacing:**

Do you tend to rush through exams? Or are you overly slow and careful? Work at a pace that is comfortable for you, but beware of either extreme.

#### **Overanalyzing:**

Be sure to focus only on the exam item and its specific question. Avoid reading into a question, making it more complicated than it actually is.

#### **Second guessing:**

If you work through the exam calmly and methodically, you can avoid second guessing yourself. Once you have committed to an answer, don't go back and change it unless you can identify a good reason to reject your original selection.

**Unfamiliarity of questions:**

Don't expect exam questions to look exactly like your lecture and study notes. Different exam questions require different levels of thinking. You may be asked to apply, analyze, or evaluate the information you're given. When you see an exam question that looks unfamiliar at first, try to figure out what you know about it and work from there. You probably know more than you think you do! Have confidence in your ability to problem-solve based on what you know.

**Familiarity of answer options:**

Don't select an option just because it's the one you're most familiar with—especially if that familiarity is telling you that it doesn't quite meet the criteria of the question! While it may feel uncomfortable to select an answer option that you're less familiar with, if it's the best option based on what you do know, be brave enough to select it. Good multiple choice test-takers take leaps toward what's probable rather than getting stuck looking for certainty.

For personalized help with test-taking strategies, make an appointment with your UNE Learning Specialist:

*Portland Campus:* Nora Krevans, (207) 221-4259 or [nkrevans@une.edu](mailto:nkrevans@une.edu)

*Online Programs:* Henri Moser, (207) 221-4352 or [hmoser@une.edu](mailto:hmoser@une.edu)