

True/False Questions

Every part of a true sentence must be "true"

If any one part of the sentence is false,
the whole sentence is false despite many other true statements.

Pay close attention to

negatives, qualifiers, absolutes, and long strings of statements

Negatives can be confusing.

If the question contains negatives, as "no, not, cannot"

Drop the negative and read what remains.

Decide whether that sentence is true or false.

If it is true, its opposite, or negative, is usually false

Qualifiers are words that restrict or open up general statements.

Words like "sometimes, often, frequently, ordinarily, generally" open up the possibilities of making accurate statements. They make more modest claims, are more likely to reflect reality, and usually indicate "true" answers.

Absolute words restrict possibilities.

"No, never, none, always, every, entirely, only"

imply the statement must be true 100% of the time and usually indicate "false" answers

Long sentences often include groups of words set off by punctuation.

Pay attention to the "truth" of each of these phrases.

If one is false, it usually indicates a "false" answer

Guessing:

Often true/false tests contain more true answers than false answers. You have more than 50% chance of being right with "true". However, your teacher may be the opposite. Review past tests for patterns...

Multiple choice tests

Multiple choice questions usually include a phrase or stem followed by three to five options:

Test strategies:

- Read the directions carefully
Know if each question has one or more correct option
Know if you are penalized for guessing
Know how much time is allowed (this governs your strategy)

- Preview the test
Read through the test quickly and answer the easiest questions first
Mark those you think you know in some way that is appropriate
- Read through the test a second time and answer more difficult questions
You may pick up cues for answers from the first reading, or become more comfortable in the testing situation
- If time allows, review both questions and answers
It is possible you mis-read questions the first time

Answering options

Improve your odds, think critically:

Cover the options, read the stem, and try to answer

Select the option that most closely matches your answer

Read the stem with each option

Treat each option as a true-false question, and choose the "most true"

Strategies for answering difficult questions:

1. **Eliminate options you know to be incorrect**
If allowed, mark words or alternatives in questions that eliminate the option
2. **Give each option of a question the "true-false test:"**
This may reduce your selection to the best answer
3. **Question options that grammatically don't fit with the stem**
4. **Question options that are totally unfamiliar to you**
5. **Question options that contain negative or absolute words.**
Try substituting a qualified term for the absolute one.
For example, *frequently* for *always*; or *typical* for *every* to see if you can eliminate an option
6. **"All of the above:"**
If you know two of three options seem correct, "all of the above" is a strong possibility
7. **Number answers:**
toss out the high and low and consider the middle range numbers
8. **"Look alike options"**
probably one is correct; choose the best but eliminate choices that mean basically the same thing, and thus cancel each other out
9. **Double negatives:**
Create the equivalent positive statement
10. **Echo options:**
If two options are opposite each other, chances are one of them is correct
11. **Favor options that contain qualifiers**
The result is longer, more inclusive items that better fill the role of the answer
12. **If two alternatives seem correct,**
compare them for differences,
then refer to the stem to find your best answer

Guessing:

- **Always guess when there is no penalty**
for guessing or you can eliminate options
- **Don't guess if you are penalized for guessing**
and if you have no basis for your choice
- **Use hints from questions you know**
to answer questions you do not.
- **Change your first answers**
when you are sure of the correction, or other cues in the test cue you to change.

Remember that you are looking for the best answer,
not only a correct one, and not one which must be true all of the time, in all cases, and without exception.

Short answer tests

A teacher's primary purpose

in giving a short-answer test is to test whether you have a foundation of knowing the material, usually factual.

Prepare for the test

Develop summary sheets of the course material information.

Focus on key words, events, vocabulary, concepts

Organize and categorize the material, then review

When taking the test

- **Respond directly to the question or directive**
Focus on keywords and ideas called for
Eliminate those that do not directly address the information requested in the test item
- **Respond and write concise answers**
Connect key facts into short sentences according to the test instructions
- **If you can think of several answers**
let the instructor know. The instructor may give you a clue to the correct answer he/she's looking for
- **A guess made with common sense**
could get you more test points than if you leave an answer blank

The Essay Exam

Organization and neatness have merit

Before writing out the exam:

- **Write down their key words**, listings, etc, as they are fresh in your mind. Otherwise these ideas may be blocked (or be unavailable) when the time comes to write the later questions. This will reduce "clutching" or panic (anxiety, actually fear which disrupts thoughts).

Set up a time schedule

to answer each question and to review/edit all questions

- If six questions are to be answered in sixty minutes, allow yourself only seven minutes for each
- If questions are "weighted", prioritize that into your time allocation for each question
- When the time is up for one question, stop writing, leave space, and begin the next question. The incomplete answers can be completed during the review time
- Six incomplete answers will usually receive more credit than three, complete ones

Read through the questions once and note if you have any choice in answering questions

- Pay attention to how the question is phrased, or to the "directives", or words such as "compare", "contrast", "criticize", etc. See their definitions in "[Essay terms](#)"
- Answers will come to mind immediately for some questions

Before attempting to answer a question, put it in your own words

- Now compare your version with the original. Do they mean the same thing? If they don't, you've misread the question. You'll be surprised how often they don't agree.

Think before you write:

Make a brief outline for each question

Number the items in the order you will discuss them

- **Get right to the point**
State your main point in the first sentence
Use your first paragraph to provide an overview of your essay.
Use the rest of your essay to discuss these points in more detail.
Back up your points with specific information, examples, or quotations from your readings and notes

- **Teachers are influenced by compactness,** completeness and clarity of an organized answer
- **Writing in the hope** that the right answer will somehow turn up is time-consuming and usually futile
- **To know a little and to present that little well is,** by and large, superior to knowing much and presenting it poorly--when judged by the grade received.

Writing & answering:

Begin with a strong first sentence

that states the main idea of your essay.

Continue this first paragraph by presenting key points

Develop your argument

- **Begin each paragraph** with a key point from the introduction
- **Develop each point** in a complete paragraph
- **Use transitions,** or enumerate, to connect your points
- **Hold to your time** allocation and organization
- **Avoid very definite statements** when possible; a qualified statement connotes a philosophic attitude, the mark of an educated person
- **Qualify answers when in doubt.** It is better to say "toward the end of the 19th century" than to say "in 1894" when you can't remember, whether it's 1884 or 1894. In many cases, the approximate time is all that is wanted; unfortunately 1894, though approximate, may be incorrect, and will usually be marked accordingly.

Summarize in your last paragraph

Restate your central idea and indicate why it is important.

Review:

Complete questions left incomplete,

but allow time to review all questions

Review, edit, correct

misspellings, incomplete words and sentences, miswritten dates and numbers.

Preparing for and taking math exams

Preparation:

- **Begin preparing early**
Pay attention during class: every minute you daydream in class is many more minutes of studying later.
Do assigned homework problems: math is a building process and in order to understand the next step you need to comprehend the present, and previous, ones
- **Simulate test conditions**
After you have studied and think you know the material, practice it under test conditions.
Solve unassigned homework problems and see if you can finish them in the allotted time for the exam
- **Know your professor**
Study a copy of the exam of a previous class if available;
Talk with someone who taken the professor before, preferably someone who has succeeded in the same class
- **Form a study group of 3-4 dedicated students**
Not only will other students be able to help you with problems, but by helping others you will better learn the material. If you are unable teach another student a topic you believe you know, chances are you don't know that topic very well after all. If you can't teach it, you don't know it!

Testing:

- **Read through the exam**
Reading through the whole exam you can
 1. know what is expected of you
 2. prioritize items on the test
 3. pace yourself.
- **Carefully read the instructions**
Make sure you are answering the question that is being asked!
Often students know how to solve a problem, but they misread or misinterpret the question itself
- **Check that you have correctly rewritten the problem**
If you use a scratch piece of paper make sure that you correctly rewrite the problem.
Don't skip steps. Start from the beginning;
- **Clearly write each step of the solution**
Be neat and don't rush writing numbers down.
Keep checking your solution as you are working.
Neatness makes it easier to recheck your work;
- **Double check your math, especially your calculator entries**
Double check your calculator work immediately.
The chances of hitting a wrong number are high, but the chances of hitting the same wrong number are not;
- **Don't Dilly Dally**
If you get stuck on a problem move on and come back to it later.
When you are finished, recheck all your work.