TAKING OBJECTIVE TESTS

Objective tests include true-false, fill-in-the-blank, matching, and multiple-choice questions. The word *objective* refers to the scoring and indicates there is only one correct answer.

**Preparation:**
Most objective tests call for *recognition* learning. In other words, the right or best answer is given; but you must be able to recognize it. For recognition learning, you theoretically don't need as much memory work as for essay exams. However, you should check with your instructor and find out if the items will be general or specific. General questions will require a more thorough learning than specific questions. Either way you will probably need to spend much of your time on memory work.

- Review and drill yourself for memory and understanding.
- Flashcards are good for objective exams as you can use them for terms, dates, etc.
- Try making outlines and tables with all the facts.
- If you have no time to read the material and carefully learn, it will be helpful to skim the material to pick up key facts, hoping enough information will *stick* to be able to recognize the right answers.

**General Directions:**
Objective tests rely heavily on your being able to read quickly and well and to reason out the answer.

- Read the directions for the whole test and each sub-section.
- Note the number of items and set up a rough time schedule depending upon the amount of time you have available.
- Ask if you will be penalized for an incorrect or blank answer. If there is no difference, then you should guess when you don't know the answer.
- Read each question thoroughly, stating it in your own words where possible and asking yourself what information the question is looking for.
- Answer the easy items first to get the maximum number of points.
- Don't spend too much time on any one item; your time is limited. Come back to those you don't know.
- Change your answer only if you have a reason to do so. Research says that three out of four times your changes are incorrect.
- Don't waste time reviewing those answers you are confident of.

**True-False Questions:**
- When reading items, note if there is more than one fact to the statement and check the correctness of each part. If one part is false, the item is wrong unless there is some qualifying word such as *usually*.
- Words like *always* and *never* tend to indicate that the statement is incorrect, especially if you can think of one exception.
- When the statement is given negatively, state the item without the *no* or *not* and see if it is true or false—then reverse the statement.

**Matching Items:**
- Be sure to find out if each item is to be used only once or whether some are used for more than one answer.
- Check off the answers that you have used already so as to reduce the time looking for the rest.
- Analyze the words as with new vocabulary to see if any parts of the term or word you know will then allow you to associate it with the right answer.

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Fill-in-the-Blank Items:
- Check the number of lines per answer to see if they indicate the number of letters or words you are to come up with.
- If you can't remember the exact word, write something related or an explanation.
- Use appropriate word endings to fit the blank.

Multiple Choice Questions:
- If the question is long and complex, underline the subject and verb.
- Hypothesize what answers might appear in the alternatives, so that you can guide the selection instead of the alternatives guiding you.
- Read all the alternatives, saying probable or not probable before making a decision.
- Ask yourself if you are dealing with a fact or the understanding of some fact.
- If a question is in the negative, for example, one of the following is not a cause, it will help you to look for three true answers and the one remaining false answer will be the correct one.
- Watch for association words from the stem to the alternatives that may help to guide you.
- Note also appropriate grammatical structures from the stem to the alternative.
- General statements are more likely to be correct than specific statements, especially if you think of one exception.
- In questions that have more than one right answer, mark each item as true or false. By the time you finish all the alternatives, you will have the answer.