

Test-Taking Strategies and Practice

Multiple Choice Questions:

A multiple-choice question consists of **two parts**: 1. A stem, which could be in the form of a question, statement and/or incomplete sentence. 2. The distractors are a set of alternatives (choices) from which to select the right answer. Only ONE of the alternatives is the correct/best answer.

Below are steps to follow to answer multiple choice questions without a stimuli (graphs, pictures, charts, maps, document excerpts, etc).

1. First read the stem carefully and try to answer the question or complete the sentence before looking at the alternatives.
2. Look for **key words or clues** in the stem. They may direct you to the correct answer.
3. Re-read the stem with each alternative or distractor. Don't make your final decision on the correct answer **until** you have read **all of the alternatives**.
4. Eliminate alternatives that you know are wrong.
5. Look for clues to help you rule out incorrect alternatives.

How to Analyze Primary Sources:

*** Please see separate document for specific instructions regarding different types of Primary Sources (Stimuli).**

Primary sources are materials that have been written or made by people who were at historical events, either as observers or participants. Primary sources include journals, diaries, letters, speeches, newspaper articles, autobiographies, wills, deeds, and financial records.

1. Look at the source line to learn about the document and its author. Consider the reliability of the information in the document.
2. Skim the document to get an idea of what it is about.
3. Note any special punctuation. Ellipses (. . .), for example, indicate that words or sentences have been removed from the original.
4. Use active reading strategies. For instance, ask and answer questions on the content as you read.

5. Use context clues to help you understand difficult or unfamiliar words.
6. Before rereading the document, skim the questions. This will help you focus your reading and more easily locate answers.

Charts

Test questions may include several types of charts, such as, tables, flow charts, Venn diagrams, and info-graphics. Charts, like tables, organize information in columns and rows for easy viewing.

Steps to follow:

Step 1

- Locate and read the **main title of the chart** and read the heading of each column.
- Predict what information might be in the chart based on the title and the headings.

Step 2

- Review the chart and begin the task to discover the relationship between the columns of information, examining one row at a time.

Step 3

- Draw conclusions from the information in the chart.

Source: NOAA, "Tropical Cyclone Rainfall in Florida."

Storm Rainfall (Highest Tropical Cyclone Rainfall in Florida History)		
Name	Year	Maximum Rainfall Amount
Hurricane Dennis	1981	25.56"
Hurricane Dora	1964	23.73"
Hurricane Easy	1950	45.20"
Hurricane Georges	1998	38.46"
Hurricane Jeanne	1980	24.98"
Tropical Storm Debby	2012	28.78"
Tropical Storm Fay	2008	27.65"
Tropical Depression #1A	1992	25"

Annual rainfall in Los Angeles, California: 15 inches

Skill Builder: Chart Analysis

The purpose of a chart is to organize information into visual form. When looking at this document, do the following:

Step 1: Making Predictions Locate and read the title of the NOAA chart (above). Predict what information might be in the chart based on the title. Define any terms as necessary.

Step 2: Examining Chart and Selecting Evidence

Charts divide information into categories using columns and rows. Convert the information in each line into a sentence: e.g. "In the year 1981, a big storm in Florida called Hurricane Dennis dropped 25.56" of rain on the state."

Step 3: Making inferences Based on the information in a particular sentence, make an inference about the dangers of Hurricane Dennis?

Line and Bar Graphs

Graphs show statistics in a visual form. Line graphs are particularly useful for showing changes over time. Bar graphs make it easy to compare numbers or sets of numbers.

1. Read the title and identify the broad subject of the graph.
2. Study the labels on the vertical and horizontal axes to see the kinds of information presented in the graph. Note the intervals between amounts and between dates. This will help you read the graph more efficiently.
3. Look at the source line and evaluate the reliability of the information in the graph.

4. If the graph presents information over time, look for trends—generalizations you can make about changes over time.
5. Draw conclusions and make inferences based on information in the graph.
6. Read the questions carefully and then study the graph again.

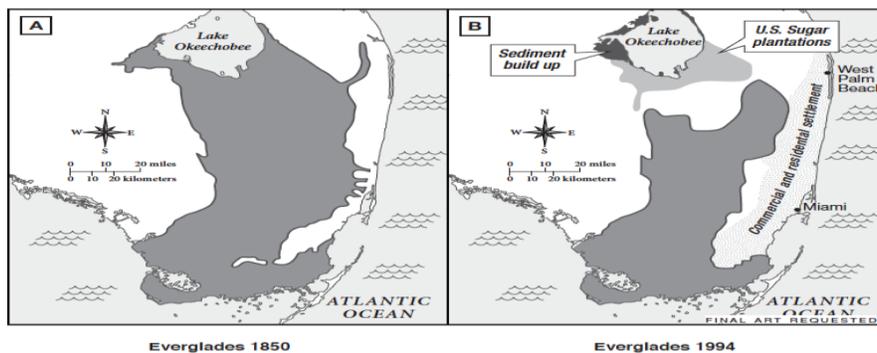
Maps

Generally, there are three kinds of maps— physical maps, political maps, and thematic maps. Physical maps display physical features, such as mountains, rivers, lakes, seas, and oceans. Political maps show countries and the political divisions within them— states or provinces, for example. They also show the location of major cities. Thematic, or special-purpose maps focus on a particular topic, such as population density, election results, or major battles in a war.

1. Decide if the map is physical, political, or thematic (this assists with determining the purpose of the map- what is the map trying to convey?).
2. Read the title of the map to identify the area shown and the subject covered.
3. Find map key. What information can we gather with this tool?
4. Look at the symbols on the map to try to identify patterns.
5. Use the compass rose to determine directions on the map.
6. Use the scale to determine distances between places shown on the map.
7. Read the questions, and then carefully study the map to determine the answers.

Document A

Source: Website of the National Academy of Sciences: The National Academies Press. "Progress Toward Restoring the Everglades: The First Biennial Review, 2006."



Analyzing a Photograph

1. Study the photograph and form an initial impression.
2. Read the title and interpret the title of the photograph.
3. Divide the photograph into quadrants and study each section. What new details emerge?
4. Make an inference and think briefly of what the photograph is trying to tell you.
5. What additional questions were raised by your examination of the photograph?
6. If you still have questions regarding the photograph revisit the stem and the title of the photograph.



Analyzing Political Cartoons

Political cartoons are illustrations designed to express social, political and historical messages of a set time or event. If a test taker does not correctly analyze the cartoon, it could lead to choosing the incorrect answer, since they employ complex visuals and the use of symbolism. Please note that every detail counts and plays an important role in the cartoon's meaning. Cartoons express an opinion, usually the opinion of the author.

1. Begin by identifying all written text within the cartoon, i.e. title, labels, caption etc.
2. Identify symbols and metaphors. A symbol is any image that represents another thing, like Uncle Sam representing the United States in a political cartoon. Symbols are exaggerated. A metaphor is similar to a symbol, but it is a literal translation using visuals to express the meaning, i.e., a dragon for China.
3. Find details that contribute to the irony or humor of the cartoon. An irony is a form of humor in which something is conveyed in a way that mocks or teases the intended meaning.
4. Use the background knowledge and details from the cartoon to form a conclusion and answer the question.