

INTRODUCTION

PREFACE

Welcome to the SSEU Local 371 Civil Service Examination Preparation Course, The course will provide classroom activities that will include lectures, review of examination questions with analysis of their answers, sharing Of policies / procedures and distribution of updated handouts

This accompanying manual contains previously administered and related examinations, summaries of agency programs and services, procedures, executive orders, informationals and articles on current topics

Both the manual and the course are given with just one objective: to provide you, our SSEU Local 371 member, with an organized method Of preparation that will yield maximum results

Best of luck on your upcoming Civil Service Exam

**THE TRUSTEES
SSEU LOCAL 371 FUNDS**

TEST -TAKING TECHNIQUES

PREPARING FOR EXAMS

GENERAL INFORMATION ON PREPARING FOR AN EXAM: THE NIGHT BEFORE

It is assumed that you have mastered the subject matter to be covered on the exam so we will deal here with the mechanics of pre-exam preparation.

It is important to have a good dinner the night before, but not a heavy one or an especially spicy one that might make you extremely thirsty the day of the exam. It is equally important to get a good night's sleep so you will be well-rested and alert the next day. Do not drink alcoholic beverages the night before the exam. Alcohol will interfere with your thought processes.

It is usually not a good idea to do any last-minute cramming the night before the exam. You might, however, want to spend an hour or so reviewing your notes. It will also be helpful to review the pointers on essay writing in the pages that follow.

PREPARING FOR THE EXAM: THE DAY IT IS GIVEN

Eat a nourishing breakfast - the brain needs food in order to think clearly.

Allow more than enough time to reach your destination about 15 minutes before the exam is scheduled to begin. That will give you time to "settle in." It might help to make a "dry run" a few days before the exam date to familiarize yourself with the route and the area.

Bring the following things with you to the exam:

- 1. Your admissions card**
- 2. Your Social Security card if you have trouble remembering the number**
- 3. A watch that works - if you don't have one, borrow one!**
- 4. Several well-sharpened pencils**
- 5. A small pencil-sharpener**
- 6. Two pens (make sure beforehand that they do not leak)**
- 7. An eraser**

ADDITIONAL HINTS

- 1. Get to the test site early.**
- 2. Know travel directions in advance.**
- 3. Bring a watch.**
- 4. Bring a candy bar.**
- 5. Be confident, but not overly confident.**
- 6. Plan your day. Plan for control, not panic. Plan for success, not failure.**
- 7. Feel free to take a break during the test, if necessary, to refresh yourself and revive your energy.**

WRITTEN TEST-TAKING TECHNIQUES

DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS

The basic purpose of examinations is to measure knowledge that the test-maker thinks we should possess. It is obvious that a good performance on these exams requires possession of the necessary knowledge and information; however, knowledge is not enough to guarantee success. To be successful as test-takers, we must acquire the common sense and tools to demonstrate our knowledge. A successful test-taker must become familiar with efficient test-taking techniques.

In order to develop your "personal exam strategy," you should become totally familiar with the test-taking techniques, considerations, and strategies in this section.

The section is divided into four parts. "Attitude" is about acquiring a positive test-taking attitude. The "Basics" are the general techniques. Read through them and make certain you understand them. Then go on to the "Essentials." Experiment with the essentials, integrate them with your knowledge and with the skills you will learn in the other sections of the manual. Finally, read over the "Checklist of Test-Taking Techniques" and make sure your strategy contains all these necessary elements.

Remember, the best test-taking technique is the one that works for you.

ATTITUDE: THE KEY TO SUCCESS

Peak performance on an exam requires knowledge and information; however, successful performance does not always result from mere possession of knowledge. We have all experienced situations where we knew the correct response, but were unable to give the desired answer.

How often have we said to ourselves:

- I'm a bad test-taker.
- I got nervous and forgot what I knew.
- I froze during the test.
- I can't learn math (or English grammar).
- Those questions were written so I'd fail.
- I know I'm going to do poorly.

These thoughts are all negative. They defeat us before we begin.

To become successful test-takers you must begin with your knowledge, your skills, and your attitude. Attitude is an important factor influencing our performance. You have no control over the questions asked, the time of the test, the weather on the test day, and so on; you have complete control over your response to these factors and over your beliefs about yourself. In short, the most powerful tool you can use from now through the test day is your own attitude.

A winning attitude enables you to use common sense and practical tools to demonstrate your knowledge and skills to your best advantage on the test day. It provides you with the desire and ability to employ successful study techniques prior to the examination. Using those techniques sets you on a structured path to develop and practice skills and abilities crucial to scoring high on the test.

THE BASICS: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TECHNIQUES FOR SUCCESSFUL TEST-TAKING

1. Arrive early for the test so that you don't feel hurried and panicky. Go into the test alert and calm instead of tense and anxious. Remember, control your attitude and you control your performance.
2. Make certain that you fully understand the test directions before attempting to solve or answer any questions.
3. Regard a lapse in memory as perfectly normal and do not let it block out those things you remember immediately. If you should have a mental block on one question, leave it for a while and return to it later.
4. Use your test time wisely. Quickly read the front page of instructions and gauge your time for the number of questions. Be committed to successfully manage the time you set for answering each question. Give yourself sufficient time to answer all questions and to review the answers you have chosen.
5. Read each test question carefully and completely before marking your answer. Reread if you are confused by the wording of any question.
6. Try to understand what is being said and asked in the question so that you can select the best answer.
7. Do not be disturbed about other people finishing before you do. Take your time and you will do much better on the test. Focus on your performance, not that of others.
8. Check and reread your answers. Use all the time available to eliminate careless errors.
9. View the test as an opportunity to demonstrate your ability to attain peak performance.

THE ESSENTIALS: SPECIFIC STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES FOR SUCCESSFUL TEST-TAKING

Understanding and Applying Exam Analysis

Analysis has three important stages: 1) interpretation, 2) methodology, and 3) follow-through.

1. Interpretation is the fundamental step of analysis. It is the stage in which we translate and interpret statements and questions into terms that have meaning for us. Interpretation is the process in which we ask, "What are they telling me? What are they asking me to do?"

Questions and instructions give us vital information and knowledge. The interpretation stage of analysis is when you decipher, determine, and comprehend exactly what is being stated and asked.

2. Methodology is the planning stage of analysis. It is during methodology that we decide on the best course of action. It is also where we map out our strategy and attack.

Combining stages 1 and 2 of analysis, we see that, during interpretation we determine exactly what is being stated and asked; in methodology, we utilize our knowledge to determine the best and most efficient way to give the test-makers what they want.

3. Follow-through is the "action" stage of analysis. Stage 3 is where we use our knowledge to do what must be done. It is where we answer the question, choosing the best answer.

In other words, it is only after interpretation (the "what" stage) and methodology (the "how" stage) that we come to follow-through (the "do" stage).

Analysis is a three-stage process which aids in successful test-taking. It enables us to comprehend what the question is telling and asking, to utilize that knowledge to determine how best to deal with the question, and finally, to answer the question efficiently and correctly.

This manual contains numerous applications of exam analysis for each content area.

Let us now look at a math problem from a previous Civil Service exam. See if you can solve it using exam analysis and your knowledge of mathematics.

First, read the question.

The daily compensation to be paid to each consultant hired by a certain agency is computed by dividing his professional earnings in the previous year by 250. The maximum daily compensation they can receive is \$100 each. Four consultants who

were hired to work on a special project had the following professional earnings in the previous year: \$18,750; \$22,000; \$23,250; and \$30,550. What will be the total daily cost to the agency for these four consultants?

- (A) \$466 (B) \$412 (C) \$378 (D) \$356

Stage 1 - Interpretation - What is the question telling us?

1) First, it is a math question. (Don't panic. Let's continue.)

2) Specifics:

a) Consultants are paid (daily) based on their earnings divided by 250 - but not to exceed \$ 100.

b) The earnings are: \$18,750
 22,000
 23,250
 30,550

What is the question asking us? The total daily cost of the four consultants.

Stage 2 - Methodology

1) Divide each consultant's professional earnings by 250.

2) Add the 4 answers together to get the total. (Remember, the most a consultant can make per day is \$100.)

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 & \underline{75} & \\
 250 \overline{)18,750} & = & 75 \\
 & \underline{88} & \\
 250 \overline{)22,000} & = & 88 \\
 & \underline{93} & \\
 250 \overline{)23,250} & = & 93 \\
 & \underline{122^*} & \\
 250 \overline{)30,550} & = & 100 \\
 & \hline
 \text{Total} & & 356
 \end{array}$$

*Note: \$30,550 divided by 250 is more than \$100 - but only \$100 counts

Stage 3 - Follow-through

After dividing and then adding the totals, select choice (D) \$356.

Understanding and Following Examination Instructions

There are two types of instructions on Civil Service examinations:

1. General instructions
2. Specific instructions for questions or groups of questions

The general instructions that appear on the first page of the test booklet deal with procedures and test protocol. Included in these general instructions are three very important pieces of information: 1) the number of pages, 2) the number of questions, and 3) the amount of time.

You will not be able to turn the page and begin the test until the second signal (bell). What you can and should do before the second signal (bell) is to plan an approximate time schedule. This can be done by dividing the number of minutes of the test by the number of test questions. By doing this, you will get an idea of how much time to spend on each test question.

When making this schedule, remember to allot your time so that you leave enough time for review and for time consumers, like reading comprehension passages and difficult math.

When you do get the second signal (bell) to begin the exam, make certain your booklet contains all the pages and questions and that the pages are legible and correctly numbered. Also, remember when you begin the exam not to waste time on any one question.

Specific Instructions - Make sure you read and analyze all instructions before going on to answer the questions. If the instructions say you should base your answers only on the information in a passage, then do that.

Understanding and Using the Answer Sheet

You will record your answers on a separate answer sheet rather than in the examination booklet. The reason for this is that the separate answer sheet is marked electronically, which expedites scoring.

We are providing you with some important suggestions on how to use the answer sheet. If you understand the suggestions and become familiar with them, you should have no problems with the answer sheet on the day of the examination.

1. Be precise and follow the given directions when you enter the required identifying information in the upper portions of your answer sheet. Do not put your name on the answer sheet.
2. Answers are recorded with a #2 lead pencil in the specified space. Make sure your marks are distinct enough to be read by a scoring machine, but do not waste time marking the space repeatedly.
3. Extraneous marks on the answer sheet can be considered wrong by the machine. You can avoid making these marks by using the exam booklet, not the answer sheet, to work out problems and questions. Make it a final step to examine the answer sheet and to erase all extraneous marks.

4. To save time and redundant thought, the exam booklet and answer sheet should be placed close to each other, with the booklet visible when you are recording answers on the answer sheet. This tends to help you maintain your train of thought.
5. Be sure that any change of answer is accompanied by a careful and thorough erasing of the previous answer.
6. Very important. Check periodically to be sure that the answer sheet number corresponds to the question number in the test booklet. This is especially important if you skip a difficult question. In that situation, be sure to skip that answer space on the answer sheet so that you can mark it in when you return to the question later.

Understanding and Dealing with Multiple Choice Questions

Most Civil Service exams are multiple choice. This type of exam consists of a direct question or an incomplete statement followed by four answer choices (A, B, C, or D). You must select the best answer. Although there might be three or even four good answers, there is one and only one best answer.

When working on the multiple choice examination, remember to use the three steps of analysis to choose your answer. Also, remember your time schedule and don't waste time on any one question.

In addition, several specific suggestions are listed to help with interpretation, methodology, and follow-through for multiple choice questions.

1. Read and analyze the basic question carefully and try to answer it without referring to the choices. Afterward, read the choices to see if you can find your tentative answer among them. (Be aware that the wording in the answer choice will probably be different from the answer you considered when you finished reading the question.)
2. Read all the answers (A, B, C, and D), even if (A) seems to be the correct choice at first sight. On this type of exam, there are degrees of correctness, and a more precise and correct answer may be found later. Also, it is possible that an "all of the above" answer, which means all responses are correct, might be the best response.

Hint: Remember that on a multiple choice examination, a correct answer does not have to be written out. The correct answer is offered - it just has to be selected through analysis.

We have been mentioning "best answer." The best answer is the one that is appropriate, complete and precise; if it lacks any of these criteria, it is not the best answer and is therefore not correct.

3. If the correct answer does not immediately occur to you, try the process of elimination. Remember, it is not only that the best answer is right, but that the other answers are wrong. Therefore, cross out the obviously wrong answers and narrow your choices down to two or three. Try treating each choice as a true-false statement. Finally, just take an educated or even blind guess.

4. Be especially careful in reading and analyzing a problem if several questions are based on the same problem or passage. This is especially true for reading comprehension questions.
5. Make sure to use exam clues to your advantage. Exam clues are those specific determiners which allow you to select the correct answer, even if you do not know the material. The successful test-taker will always recognize and use these clues to his advantage.

The following are a few suggestions you should pay attention to:

- a) Grammatical structure clues are very dependable. Be aware of question/answer agreement with words such as "a" or "an," and "were" and "was."

Here is an example of grammatical structure clues:

Another name for one of the choices presented as possible answers in a multiple choice question is an _____.

1) stem *2) alternative 3) mistake 4) absolute

Answers 1 and 3 are inconsistent with the "an" in the question. This narrows down the choice to either 2 or 4.

Choice 2) alternative is the best answer.

- b) Use word absolutes and qualifications to your advantage.

Absolutes such as always, ever, necessarily, absolutely, only, merely, most, place restrictions and are difficult to satisfy. They are good indicators of incorrect answers. On the other hand, qualifying words such as may, often, perhaps sometimes, in general, generally, could indicate right answers.

- c) Be aware of the length of answers. An extended answer, with qualifiers, is often a right answer since it is thorough; overly concise answers may be too limited and possibly incorrect.
- d) Use clues that other exam questions might provide.
- e) Use information and clues given in the instructions.
- f) Use logic.
- g) Be extremely conscious of negatives and qualifiers.

Examples: "which is"
"all of the following except"

Make Your Guesses Count

The score you receive on a Civil Service exam reflects the number of questions answered correctly. If any question is not answered, it is automatically wrong. Therefore, make sure you answer all questions; guess if you have to.

There are two kinds of guesses we can make - educated and blind. An educated guess is made when your knowledge for answering a question is too limited to select the best answer, but complete enough to eliminate at least one of the wrong answers. Remember to analyze and look for exam clues to eliminate obviously wrong choices.

If you have no idea what the question is about, or if you can't read a question because of insufficient time, make a blind guess. Keep in mind that you should use the same letter (A, B, C, or D) for all blind guesses that you make. This will definitely increase your odds for choosing a correct answer.

In other words, don't leave any blank spaces on your answer sheet. Analyze, make educated guesses, make blind guesses, but do answer all the questions.

CHECKLIST OF TEST-TAKING TECHNIQUES

1. Examine the question booklet for proper sequence of pages and questions.
2. Read all instructions carefully.
3. Skip any question which seems too difficult; return to it after all other questions have been answered.
4. Use your time wisely; do not spend too much time on any single question or group of questions.
5. Note and underline key words - **all**, most, fewest, least, best, worst, same, opposite.
6. Pay particular attention to negatives and qualifiers - not, except.
7. Note unusual answer options, e.g. those that are unduly long, short, complex, different or similar in content to the body of the question.
8. Observe the use of "hedging" words - probably, may, most likely.
9. If in doubt, change a negative question to a positive one for ease of-handling.
10. Answer only on the basis of information supplied - do not make unwarranted assumptions.
11. Mark carefully unanswered questions and questions of which you are unsure. Be sure to return to them later. Devise your own identification method, such as one check mark for an answer that you are not too sure about, two check marks for an answer that you are very doubtful of, and three check marks for a question which has been left blank.

Answer the questions with three check marks first, then the ones with two check marks, then the ones with one check mark.

12. An answer that is only half right is considered wrong.
13. Be wary of any answer which "passes the buck" to your supervisor, unless the question clearly indicates this is correct.
14. When answering a question which specifies that you must take a certain action in a particular situation, pick the answer which specifies this action, even if you would not take such action in real life.
15. Answer questions on the basis of "text book" principles, rather than of your own experience. Remember that the examiners can read text books, but they are not aware of particular experiences you may have encountered.
16. Be wary of using the actual practices in your agency to select an answer. If there is a conflict between actual practices in your agency and management and/or supervisory principles, select the answer encompassing the principles.
17. Do not become personally involved in the questions. Remain objective and remember that the situations contrived in the questions are not real and are merely intended to judge your response.
18. Do not ignore any part of a question. Be careful of parts of a question which are "telescoped" or lumped together. Consider each of the parts separately.
19. Keep in mind the larger meaning of a question. Do not pick an answer that refers to only a narrow portion of the question.
20. It may be useful to read the question and devise what you believe the answer will be before you study the actual answers. In this way, you may be less likely to be confused than after reading a number of answers skillfully designed to be confusing.
21. Make sure that your answer is put next to the same number as the question.
22. Do not second guess unless you have good reason to believe that the second answer is definitely more correct.
23. Answer all questions; guess unless instructed otherwise.
24. Leave time for review.

FOLLOW DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY

It's as obvious rule. but more people fail for breaching it than for any other cause. By actual count there are over a hundred types of directions given on tests. You'll familiarize yourself with all of them in the course of this book. And you'll also learn not to

let your guard down in reading them. listening to them. and following them. Right now, before you plunge in. we want to be sure that you have nothing to fear from the answer sheet and the way in which you must mark it: from the most important question forms and the ways in which they are to be answered.

HERE'S HOW TO MARK YOUR ANSWERS ON MACHINE-SCORED ANSWER SHEETS:

EXAMPLES

a	b	c	d
: :	::	: :	::
: :	::	: :	::

Make only **ONE** mark for each answer. Additional and stray marks may be counted as mistakes. In making corrections, erase errors **COMPLETELY**. Make glossy black marks.

(b) Each mark must be in the space between the pair of dotted lines and entirely fill this space.

(c) All stray pencil marks on the paper. clearly not intended as answers. must be completely erased.

(d) Each question must have only one answer indicated. If multiple answers occur, all extraneous marks should be thoroughly erased. Otherwise, the machine will give you no credit for your correct answer.

(a) Each pencil mark must be heavy and black. Light marks should be retraced with the special pencil.

MULTIPLE CHOICE METHODS

Multiple choice questions are very popular these days with examiners. The chances are good that you'll get this, kind on your test. So we've arranged that you practice with them in the following pages. But first we want to give you a little help by explaining the best methods for handling this question form.

You know. of course. that these questions offer you four or five possible answers, that your job is to select only the best answer. and that even the in- correct answers are frequently partly correct. These partly-true choices are inserted to force you to think ... and prove that you *know* the right answer.

u,

USE THESE METHODS To ANSWER MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS CORRECTLY:

1. Read the item closely to see what the examiner

is after. Reread it if necessary.

2. Mentally reject answer: that are clearly wrong.

3. Suspect as being wrong arty of the choices which contain broad *statements hinging on* "cue" words like

absolute
absolutely
all
Always
axiomatic
categorical
completely
doubtless
entirely
extravagantly
forever
immeasurably
inalienable
incontestable
incontrovertible

indefinitely
indisputable
Indubitable

Inevitable
inexorable
Infalible
infinite
inflexible

inordinately
Irrefutable
inviolable
never
only
peculiarly
positive
quite
self-evident
sole
totally
unchallenged
unchangeable
undeniable
undoubtedly

unequivocal
unexceptionable
unimpeachable

unqualified
unquestionable
wholly
without exception

- If you're unsure of the meanings of any of these words, look them up in your dictionary.
4. A well-constructed multiple choice item will avoid obviously incorrect choices- The good examiner will try to write a duster of answers, all of which are plausible. Use the clue words to help yourself pick the most correct answer.
 5. In the case of items where you are doubtful of the answer, you might be able to bring to bear the information you have gained from previous study. This knowledge might be sufficient to indicate that some of the answers are not so plausible. Eliminate such answers from further consideration.
 6. Then concentrate on the remaining suggested answers. The more you eliminate in this way, the better your chances of getting the item right.
 7. If the item is in the form of an incomplete statement, it sometimes helps to try to complete the statement before you look at the answers. Then see whether the way you have completed the statement corresponds with any of the answers provided. If one is found, it is likely to be the correct one.
 8. Use your head! Make shrewd inferences. Sometimes with a little thought, and the information that you have, you can reason out the answer. We're suggesting a method of intelligent guessing in which you can become quite expert with a little practice. It's a useful method that may help you with some debatable answers.

NOW, LET'S TRY THESE METHODS OUT ON A SAMPLE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTION.

I. Leather is considered the best material for shoes chiefly because

- (A) it is waterproof
- (B) it is quite durable
- (C) it is easily procurable
- (D) it is flexible and durable
- (E) it can be easily manufactured in various styles

Here we see that every one of the answer statements is plausible: leather is waterproof if treated properly; it is relatively durable; it is relatively easily procurable; it is made and is shaped easily, and is, again, durable: it constantly appears in various styles of shoes and boots

However, we must examine the question with an eye toward identifying the key phrase which is: *best for shoes chiefly*.

Now we can see that (A) is incorrect because leather is probably not the best material for shoes, simply because it is waterproof. There are far bet

ter waterproof materials available, such as plastics and rubber. In fact, leather must be treated to make it waterproof. So by analyzing the key phrase of the question we can eliminate (A).

(B) seems plausible. Leather is durable, and durability is a good quality in shoes. But the word *chiefly* makes it a broad statement. And we become suspicious. The original meaning of *chiefly* is completely wholly, entirely. Since such is the case we must reject this choice because leather is not completely durable. It does wear out.

(C) Leather is comparatively easy to procure; but would that make it best for shoes? And would that be the chief reason why it is used for making shoes? Although the statement in itself is quite true, it does not fit the key phrase of the question and we must, reluctantly, eliminate it.

(D) is a double-barreled statement. One part, the debility, has been suggested in (B) above. Leather is also quite flexible, so both parts of the statement would seem to fit the question.

(E) It is true that leather can be manufactured in various styles, but so can many other materials. Again, going back to the key phrase, this could be considered one, but not the *chief* reason why it is best for shoes.

So, by carefully analyzing the key phrase of the question we have narrowed our choices down to (D). Although we rejected (B) we did recognize that durability is a good quality in shoes, but only one of several. Since flexibility is also a good quality, we have no hesitation in choosing (D) as the correct answer.

The same question, by slightly altering the answer choices, can also call for a *negative* response. Here, even more so, the identification of the key phrase becomes vital in finding the correct answer. Suppose the question and its responses were worded thus:

2. Leather is considered the best material for shoes, chiefly because
 - (A) it is waterproof
 - (B) it is easily colored
 - (C) it is easily procurable
 - (D) it can easily be manufactured in various styles
 - (E) none of these.

We can see that the prior partially correct answer (B) has now been changed, and the doubly-correct answer eliminated. Instead we have a new response possibility (E), "none of these."

We have analyzed three of the choices previously and have seen the reason why none of them is *chief* reason why leather is considered the *best* material for shoes. The two new elements are (B) "easily colored," and (E) "none of these."

If you think about it, leather can be easily colored and often is, but this would not be the chief reason why it is considered best. Many other materials are, just as easily dyed. So we must come to the conclusion that now of the choices i% completely correct-none fit the key phrase. Therefore, the question calls for a negative response (E).

We have now seen how important it is to identify the key phrase. Equally, or perhaps even more important, is the identifying and analyzing of the key word-the qualifying word-in a question. This is usually, though not always, an adjective or adverb. Saar of the key words to watch for are: most, best, least, highest, lowest, always *never*, sometimes most likely, greatest, smallest, tallest, average easiest, most nearly, maximum, *minimum chiefly mainly, only, but* and or. Identifying these key words is usually half the battle in understanding and, consequently, answering all types of exam questions.

Rephrasing the Question

It is obvious, then, that by carefully analyzing a question, by identifying the key phrase and its key words, you can find the correct answer by logical deduction and, often, by elimination. One other way of examining or "dissecting" a question is to restate or rephrase it with each of the suggested answer choices integrated into the question.

For example, we can take the same question and rephrase it.

(A) The chief reason why leather is considered the best material for shoes is that it is waterproof

or

(A) Because it is waterproof, leather is considered the best material for shoes.

or

(A) Chiefly because it is waterproof, leather is considered the best material for shoes.

It will be seen from the above three new versions of the original statement and answer that the question has become less obscure because it has been, so to speak, illuminated from different angles. It becomes quite obvious also in this rephrasing that the statement (A) is incorrect, although the original phrasing of the question left some doubt.

The rules for understanding and analyzing the key phrase and key words in a question, and the way to identify the use correct answer by means of intelligent analysis of the important question-answer elements, are basic to the solution of all the problems you will face on your test.

In fact, perhaps the main reason for failing an examination is failure to understand the question. In many cases, examinees do know the answer to a particular problem, but they cannot answer correctly because they do not understand it.

METHODS FOR MATCHING QUESTIONS

In this question form you are actually faced with multiple questions that require multiple answers. It's a difficult form in which a are asked to pair up one set of facts with another. It can be used with any type of material ... vocabulary, spatial relations, numbers, facts, etc.

A typical matching question might appear in this form:

Directions Below is a set of *words* containing ten words numbered 1 to 10, and twenty other words *divided* into five groups labeled Group A to Group E. For each of the numbered *words* select the word in one of the five groups which is most nearly the same in meaning. The letter of that group is the answer for that numbered item.

Although this arrangement is a relatively simple one for a "matching" question, the general principle is the same for all levels of difficulty. Basically, this type of question consists of two columns. The elements of one of the columns must be matched with some or all of the elements of the second column.

1. fiscal

2. deletion

3. equivocal

4. corroboration

5. tortuous

6. predilection

7. fallow

8. virtuosity

9-scion

10. tenuous

Group A

indication ambiguous
excruciating thin

Group B

confirmation financial
phobia erasure

Group C

fiduciary similar
yellowish skill

Group D

theft winding
receive procrastination

Group E

hardy preference
franchise heir

Correct Answer

1. B	4. B	6. E	8. C
2. B	5. D	7. C	9. E
3. A			10. A

Then are numerous ways in which these questions may be composed, from the simple one shown above to the most difficult type of arrangement. In many uses the arrangement of the question may be so complicated that more time may be spent upon the comprehension of the instructions than on the actual question. This again, points up the importance of fully and quickly understanding the instructions before attempting to solve any problem or answer any question.

Several general principles apply, however. When solving a matching question. Work with one column at a time and match each item of that column against all the items in the second column, skipping around that second column looking for a proper match. Put a thin pencil line through items that are matched so they won't interfere with your

later selections. (This is particularly important in a test that tells you to choose any item only once. The test gets real tricky, however, when you are asked to choose an item more than once.)

Match each item very carefully-don't mark it unless you are certain-because if you have to change any one, it may mean changing three or four or more, and that may get you hopelessly confused. After you have marked all your certain choices, go over the unmarked items again and make a good guess at the remaining items, if you have time.

USE CONTROLLED ASSOCIATION when you come to an item which you are not able to match. Attempt to recall any and all facts you might have concerning this item. Through the process of association, a fact recalled might provide a clue to the answer.

TRUE-FALSE TACTICS

True-false questions may appear on your test.

Because they are easier to answer they are used less frequently than multiple-choice questions. However, because examiners find that they are easier to prepare. Here are some suggestions to help you answer them correctly.

- I. Suspect the truth of broad statements hinging on those "all or nothing" "cue" words we listed for you in discussing multiple-choice questions.

- II. Watch out for "spoilers" such as the word or phrase which negates an otherwise true statement.

Vegetation is sparse *ore* the Sahara desert where the climate is hot and *humid* T F

III. Statements containing such modifiers as generally, usually, most, and similar words are usually true.

IV. If the storing formula is "Rights minus Wrongs", don't guess. If you know it's true, mark it T. If you don't know it's true, ask yourself "What have I learned that would make it false?" If you can think of nothing on either side, omit the answer. Of course, if the R-W formula is not being used it is advisable to guess if you're not sure of an answer.

V. Your first hunch is usually best. Unless you have very good reason to do so, don't change your first answer to true-false questions about which you are doubtful.

Single-Statement Question

The basic form of true-false question is the "single-statement" question: i.e., a sentence that contains a single thought, such as:

1. The Statue of Liberty is in New York

T F -

The same statement becomes slightly more difficult by including a negative element

2. The Statue of Liberty is not in New York

or, more subtly:

3. The Statue of Liberty is not in Chicago

T F

or, by adding other modifiers:

4. The Statue of Liberty is sometimes in New York

T F

5. The Statue of Liberty is always in New York

T F

Even from these very simple and basic examples of a "single-statement true-false question" it can be seen that a complete understanding of the subject area as well as of the phrasing of the question is essential before you attempt to answer it. Careless or hasty reading of the statement will often make you miss the key word, especially if the question appears to be a very simple one.

An important point to remember when answering this type of question is that the statement must be entirely true to be answered as "true"; if even just a part of it is false, the answer must be marked "false."

Composite-Statement Question

Sometimes a true-false question *will* be in the form of a "composite statement," a statement that contains more than one thought, such as:

11. The Statue of Liberty is in New York, and Chicago is in Illinois T F

Some basic variations of this type of composite-statement question are the

12. The Statue of Liberty is in New York, and Chicago is in Michigan T F

13. The Statue of Liberty is not in New York and Chicago is in Illinois T F

14. The Statue of Liberty is not in New York and Chicago is in Michigan T F

Of the four questions above, only question 11 is true. Each of the other statements (12, 13, 14), is false because each contains at least one element that is false.

It can be seen from the above that in a composite statement *both* elements, or "substatements," must be true in order for the answer to be "true." Otherwise, the answer must be "false."

This principle goes for all composite statements that are, or can be, connected by the word "and," even if the various "thoughts" of the statement seem to be entirely unrelated.

We have seen how to handle a composite statement that consists of unrelated substatements. Finally, we will examine a composite true-false statement which consists of related elements:

15. The Golden Gate Bridge is in San Francisco, which is not the capital of California. T F

16. The Golden Gate Bridge is in San Francisco, the capital of California. T F

17. The Golden Gate Bridge is not in San Francisco, the capital of California. T F

18. The Golden Gate Bridge is not in San Francisco, which is not the capital of California. T F

Again, only the first composite statement (15) is true. All the rest are false because they contain at least one false substatement.

NOTE: It is suggested that you make additional blank copies of worksheet to use with each practice exam.

DIAGNOSTIC WORKSHEET

This is designed to give you more insight into why you answered a problem incorrectly. Analyze each question you missed in terms of the checklist below. Put the number of the question missed next to each trait that you feel contributed to the error. This will make it obvious which areas you need to work on. By working to improve your abilities in these areas, your scores should improve.

Question Number(s)	Trait Exhibited
_____	1. I jumped to an incorrect conclusion
_____	2. I misinterpreted what the question was asking'
_____	3. I had little confidence I could solve the problem
_____	4. I didn't break the reading passage down into more easily understood parts
_____	5. I knew I couldn't solve the problem, so I gave up and guessed
_____	6. I made a careless error
_____	7. I "followed a hunch" without checking it through
_____	8. I didn't step back and evaluate the reasonableness of my solution'
_____	9. I worked mechanically because I knew it was hopeless
_____	10. I didn't check my work
_____	11. I became bored or frustrated, and took a guess
_____	12. I was inconsistent in my interpretation of parts of the reading passage
_____	13. I didn't try to visualize the problem
_____	14. I misinterpreted part of the reading passage
_____	15. I tried to answer the question without realizing that my understanding of a section of the reading passage was vague

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