Test of Test–Wiseness

Freshmen who are preppies have a great advantage . . . They . . . arrive at college well–versed in the techniques of the essay question, and could pad their paragraph with such useful phrases as “from a theoretical point of view,” or “on first inspection we may seem to discern a certain attitude which may well survive even closer scrutiny,” and so forth. This sort of wind can sail you halfway through an hour test before you have to lay a single fact on paper.

— Reprinted from The Class by Erich Segal, Bantam Publishers

The great advantage that Segal describes is part of what preppies learn at college–preparatory schools. They learn the art of taking tests — a skill you, too, can learn. This is especially important when you realize that tests measure more than your knowledge of a subject. They also measure your knowledge of how to take test, your test–wiseness.

Test of Test–Wiseness

The test below measures your test–wiseness. Content knowledge is not necessary. The answers to all questions can be determined through test–taking skill. After finishing the exam, score it using the key which begins on page 4 of Handout L. Specific test–taking strategies are explained there. Follow specific directions given for each section.

Multiple–Choice Questions
Credit: 2 points each
Underline the correct answer for each multiple–choice question.

1. SQ3R is
   a. a study plan.
   b. a kind of test.
   c. a course number.
   d. none of the above.

2. The first thing you should do when taking a test is
   a. has a sharpened pencil.
   b. looks over all the questions.
   c. read the directions.
   d. asks the teacher for clarification of directions.

3. Which of the following is true of standardized reading exams?
a. Standardized reading tests require no special test–taking skills.
b. A score on a standardized reading test may equal the number of right answers minus a percentage of the number of wrong answers.
c. Always guess on standardized tests.
d. Standardized tests are never timed tests.

4. If you do not understand a question during a test you should
   a. ask a friend to explain it to you.
   b. skip that question.
   c. look it up in your textbook.
   d. ask the instructor for clarification.

5. Response choices are found on
   a. an objective test.
   b. a multiple–choice test.
   c. an essay test.
   d. all of the above.
   e. A and B only.

6. All of the following are parts of a study plan except:
   a. reviewing information frequently.
   b. copying another person’s notes.
   c. surveying a chapter.
   d. reading assignments.

7. Which of the following should not be done before taking a final exam?
   a. Review study notes.
   b. Find out when and where the test will be given.
   c. Determine if the test will be comprehensive or noncomprehensive.
   d. Become anxious.

8. An illusion is
   a. something that is not really there.
   b. an allusion.
   c. the same as elusive.
   d. another word for illustration.

9. The capital of Canada is
   a. New York City.
   c. Ottawa.
   d. Dallas.

10. The SQ3R study plan was developed in the 1940s by
    a. Francis Robinson.
c. Michael Jackson.
d. Christopher Columbus.

**True–False Questions**
Credit: 5 points each
*Respond to each question by writing the word True or False in the blank.*

1. ________ You should always answer every question on every test.
2. ________ All exams are comprehensive.
3. ________ Never study with a partner.
4. ________ Some tests are too lengthy to complete in the allotted time.
5. ________ A test may not be without poorly worded questions.
6. ________ Following directions is not unimportant.

**Matching Questions**
Credit: 4 points each
*Write the letter of the correct answer in the blanks. Answers may be used more than once.*

1. _____ George Washington
2. _____ SQ3R
3. _____ example of an objective test
4. _____ example of a subjective test
5. _____ a written theme
   a. a study plan
   b. multiple–choice
c. essay
d. president

**Math Questions**
Credit: 10 points each
*Write your answers in the blanks.*

1. ________ A container holds 20 gallons. It is 3/5 full. How many gallons do you need to fill the container?
2. ________ 20,819 + 74,864 =
   a. 10,993
   b. 95,683
c. 95,666
d. 85,333

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5 College Learning and Study Skills by Longman and Attison (pp. 206–211). Reproduced with permission from West Publishing Company.
Test of Test–Wiseness Key and Test–Wise Strategies

The Test of Test–Wiseness looks at your test–taking skills. When taking any test, it is important you preview the test and carefully follow directions. If you previewed this test, you probably realized the test contained more multiple–choice questions than any other type. However, multiple–choice questions received the least amount of credit. If you spent too much time on these questions, you might have failed to complete questions with higher point values.

Directions had to be followed exactly. If you failed to underline answers to the multiple–choice section, count them as incorrect. If you responded to the true–false questions with letters instead of the entire word, count them as incorrect. All other answers should have been written in the blanks to the left of the questions for credit.

Responses on any test are often designed to be similar and confusing. Whenever possible, after you read the question, you should answer it in your own words without looking at the responses given. Then, you search for a response that matches your answer.

The following test–wise principles are no substitute for study and preparation. They can, however, help you eliminate choices and make educated guesses. The principle to remember is underlined.

Multiple–Choice Questions

Question #1. If you don’t know an answer, skip it and go on. Don’t waste time mulling over an answer. Go on to the questions you know. Often a clue to the answer is found somewhere within the test. In this case, the clue is in question #10. The answer is A.

Question #2. Eliminate grammatically incorrect responses. Sometimes, a question will be poorly worded. The only grammatically correct choice in this question is answer C. Misuse of a/an is also a common grammatical error found in test questions.

Question #3. Often the longest choice is correct. A response may be lengthy in order to make the correct answer absolutely clear. The correct answer is B.

Questions #4 and #5. Be sure the right choice is the best choice. At first glance, answer B seems correct for #4; however, further examination of choices reveals that answer D is a better choice. Watch for “all of the above,” “none of the above,” and paired choices. Answer D is the correct answer for question #5.

Questions #6 and #7. Read questions carefully. Not and except are small words, but they completely change the meaning for the question. The careless reader would interpret question #6 as asking for a part of a study plan. Such a reader would also interpret question #7 as asking for a procedure to be done before taking a final exam. The correct response for question #6 is B. The correct response for question #7 is D.
Question #8. Responses which look like the word to be defined are usually incorrect. Allusion, elusive, and illustration all resemble the word illusion. These are called attractive distractors because they look so appealing. They are almost always poor choices. The answer, therefore, is A.

Questions #9 and #10. If you do not know what the answer is, determine what the answer is not. Eliminate silly choices and use common sense. You may not know the capital of Canada. However, you should realize that New York City and Dallas are in the United States and Paris is in France. Only answer C remains. For question 10, answer C is silly. Answers B and D are ruled out because neither Christopher Columbus nor George Washington was alive in the 1940s. Answer A is correct.

True–False Questions

Questions #1, #2, #3, and #4. Look for words which determine limits. Words like always, never, none, every, and all place no limitations on meaning. Words like some, few, often, many, and frequently limit meaning and are better choices. If you can think of one example which contradicts an unlimited meaning, then it is false. For example, the answer to question #1 is false. This is because you wouldn’t answer every question if a percentage of wrong responses were to be subtracted from the total of correct choices. The answers to questions #2 and #3 are also false. The answer to #4 is true.

Questions #5 and #6. Watch for double negatives. Just as multiplying two negative numbers equals a positive number, two negative words in a sentence indicate a positive relationship in standard English usage. In #4 not and without cancel each other. The idea of the sentence is that a test may have poorly worded questions. The answer to #5, then, is true. In #6 the word not and the prefix un cancel each other. The meaning of the sentence is that following directions is important. The answer to #5 is true.

Matching Questions

Matching sections are somewhat like multiple–choice tests. Thus, the same principles apply. However, there are some strategies for use with matching sections. Often the two items being matched rely on an implied rather than a stated association. You are looking for items related in some way. These relationships include a word and its definition, a person and a noted accomplishment, a step in a process and the process from which it comes, etc. As with other questions, complete items you know first. Use the side with the longer responses as your question side. This keeps you from repeatedly reading through numerous lengthy responses. When responses are used only once, do not blindly fill in the last question with the only remaining choice. Check to make sure it fits. If not, recheck all answers.

The answers to the matching section are as follows: #1 – D; #2 – A; #3 – B; #4 – C; #5 – C.

Math Questions
Many good math students have difficulty with word problems. Panic prevents them from translating a word problem into a numerical one. Thus, the first step in solving math problems is to remain calm and avoid negative thinking. Second, picture the problem in your mind. This allows you to determine what the question is asking. Next, identify your facts and the processes required. If possible, estimate the response. Work the problem and check it against your estimate. Recheck if necessary.

**Problem #1.** Picturing the problem reveals an everyday situation. You have a container which is partially filled, and you want to know how much is needed to fill the container. You have the following facts: a 20–gallon container which is 3/5 filled. You will need to multiply 3/5 and 20 to find out how much is in the container. Then you subtract that amount from 20 to find out how much more can be put in the container. You know that the container is more than half full but less than 3/4 full. 1/2 of 20 is 10 and 3/4 of 20 is 15. The container holds between 10 and 15 gallons now. Subtracting those amounts from the total results in an estimate of 5 to 10 gallons. The problem is worked in the following manner:

\[
\frac{3}{5} \times 20 = 12 \\
20 - 12 = 8 
\]

The answer is 8. 8 is within the estimated range.

**Problem #2.** Standardized math tests provide a choice of answers. You can save time by estimating answers and eliminating responses. In this problem, adding the final digits (9 + 4 = 13) indicates that the response must end in 3. This eliminates answer C. Rounding off the two figures results in 21,000 and 75,000. The sum of the rounded figures is 96,000. The answer which is closest to the estimate is answer B.