

# *Multiple-Choice Test Preparation Manual*

*Department of Human Resources  
City and County of San Francisco*



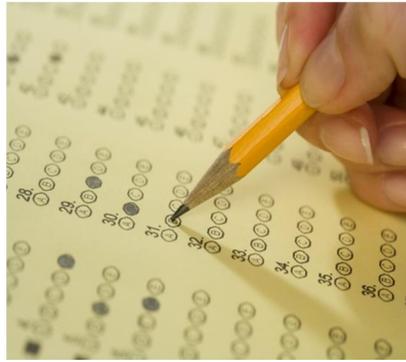
*The City and County of San Francisco's Department of Human Resources is pleased to present this Multiple-Choice Test Preparation Manual. It is designed to provide tips and guidance on how to prepare and take multiple-choice examinations. If you are interested in clerical examinations, you may also want to review our Clerical Exam Handbook. It is available at <http://www.sfdhr.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=18409>*

## **Why Do Job Applicants Have To Take Tests?**

The City and County of San Francisco wants the best people in government jobs to serve its citizens. It also wants all job applicants to have an equal opportunity to compete for those jobs. Tests are tools that help do both. They identify candidates that qualify to be considered for jobs, and they allow everyone to compete in a fair and equal manner. Because many job applicants often compete for the same job opportunity, test scores are used to separate people on the basis of their qualifications. If a test is good, those who score high are likely to be more successful on the job than those who score low.

## **Multiple-Choice Examinations**

A wide variety of tests exist. However, this guide will focus only on one type, the multiple-choice test. A multiple-choice test item is usually developed and/or reviewed by an expert in the subject that it covers. It presents an introductory statement, either a direct question or an incomplete sentence. This is followed by four or five response choices, of which only one is correct. The candidate must select the ONE BEST answer from among these choices.



Sometimes a multiple-choice item will refer to other material in the test. This could be a reading passage, chart, graph, table, report, situation, etc. The candidate must refer to this material in order to answer such questions.

Candidates use a pencil to enter their answers on a standardized answer sheet. This is done by completely filling in a circle or box on the answer sheet form that designates the letter that corresponds to their answer choice. Credit is not given for answers improperly marked on the answer sheet.

## **How Are Tests Developed?**

A job analysis is the process of studying a job. To create a good test, a job analysis must be done. This involves getting job information from employees who perform the job or their supervisors. The job analysis identifies important job tasks and what is needed (i.e., in the way

of knowledge, skills and/or abilities) to perform these tasks at job entry. A test is then designed to measure these important job elements. If a knowledge, skill or ability can be learned after job entry, it is not measured in the test. This is often why certain job areas may not be reflected in an examination.

### **Will The Test Be Difficult?**

Tests are not designed to have “trick” questions. Rather, they try to find out who truly knows a certain topic or who truly has a particular ability. To do this, test items may present several answer choices that appear to be good answers. The best candidates, however, should still be able to pick the best answer from amongst these choices. This is why a test where everyone answers all of the questions correctly is not a good test. Such a test does not show who the better candidates are from the rest. If most people can’t answer most of the test questions, the test is too hard. That isn’t good either. When even the best candidates find the test hard, it is difficult to identify them from the rest of the candidates.

Therefore, don’t get upset if you do not know some of the answers in the test. A good test is designed to have a certain number of questions that are not easy to answer. This is because such tests do spread out candidates in terms of their ability. Also, remember that if a test is hard for you, it is likely to be hard for others as well.

### **How to Prepare For a Test**



#### **Dealing with Test Anxiety**

For some people, a good part of test preparation includes dealing with test anxiety. Most people experience some degree of uneasiness or anxiety when taking tests. This is only natural. Tests tend to put us in unfamiliar situations, and we tend to worry about the unknown or unexpected. We may also be very sensitive to the possibility of failure. Perhaps we have failed tests before. It may also be distressing if we believe that test scores jeopardize our prestige or affect how others perceive us.

For some individuals a little nervousness can be a good thing as it may serve to motivate us. On the other hand, severe test anxiety can interfere with our concentration and ability to focus. This in turn can affect our ability to analyze and make good decisions. Severe anxiety can actually make some individuals physically ill (e.g., tension, headaches, nausea).

There are ways that candidates can reduce test anxiety and keep stress from getting the better of them.

**Don’t let negative thoughts affect your motivation to achieve.** Saying to yourself things like “I always do lousy on tests” or “I probably won’t know the answers to most of the questions” is admitting defeat before you even get started. If you recognize yourself to be someone who has

such negative thoughts, at least that is a start in dealing with them. When you find yourself having such thoughts, don't try to resist them. Rather, try to redirect your mind to something positive about yourself. Visualize a time when you were proud of yourself. Perhaps it was a time you were resourceful, demonstrated courage, or achieved something through sheer perseverance. Maybe you were even surprised at your own accomplishment! Create a visual image of that scene or moment from your memory. Visualize where you were at the time and when it happened. This mental imagery can empower you and serve as a reminder of your "can-do" side. If you practice this simple mental exercise whenever you have thoughts of self-doubt, you will gradually condition your mind to approach new challenges, like taking a test, with a more positive attitude. Believe in yourself and see the test as a challenge, not an ordeal.



Remember, you can always bounce back regardless of how well you do. This may help reduce your overall stress level and allow you to better focus on the task at hand.

**Familiarize yourself with what to expect on the day of the test.** Remember that anxiety is fed by a fear of the unknown. The more you do to prepare prior to the exam, the better chance you will have at performing at your highest level.

Read the job announcement carefully, and any information provided related to the test. Get familiar with what the test situation will be like. Go over in your mind when and how you will get to the test center, what you might need to bring to the test, what type of test it will be, what you can possibly do to prepare, etc. Thinking about these things in advance is part of the process of preparing and becoming organized, all of which can help to avoid surprises and stress later.

**Prepare for the test.** This is a step beyond simply getting familiar. This is about studying material that might be covered on the test and, if possible, practicing your test-taking skills. Clearly, the better prepared you are, the less anxious you should be.

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The following outline presents suggestions regarding how to become familiar with and how to prepare for your examination.

### **Weeks before the Test**

In the actual job posting there is a section entitled Selection Procedures. It identifies the type of examination(s) that will be used for that recruitment. If it is a multiple-choice test, the Selection Procedures section of the announcement may identify what the exam will measure. In many cases, though, no formal guidance or sample test questions are provided. In these cases, a candidate's next best course of action is to identify knowledge, skills, or abilities (KSAs) that are important to perform the job. Examples of some of these usually can be found in a document

known as the “job specification.” A job specification describes the job and its requirements. It also describes examples of tasks performed and the KSAs required to perform these tasks. Each job title or class has its own job specification. These can be found on the following DHR web site <http://www.sfdhr.org/index.aspx?page=32>. To find the job specification of interest, you will need to enter the 4 digit classification code of the job title in the space indicated on the above web page. This code, in turn, can be found next to the job title on the job announcement.

Remember, the KSAs listed in the job specification are only samples of job KSAs. Your test may measure all or some of them, or it may measure other critical KSAs identified in the job analysis. So, for example, if the job specification lists a KSA that reads, “*proficiently read and review a variety of documents and forms for completeness and accuracy*”, a portion of the multiple-choice examination might include reading comprehension questions (*proficiently read*), as well as questions that require you to review forms *for completeness and accuracy*. Similarly, if the job specification says that employees in this title should be able to *make complex computations in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division*, math items will likely be on the test. If you have good reading comprehension skills but are weak in mathematics, then your study preparation efforts should focus more heavily on mathematics. This is the type of self-analysis that you could perform. You can then explore possible sources of material to study. For example, you might want to visit your local library to find books that include math questions and answers. You could then use these to practice your math skills.



After you have identified possible areas and source material to study, you may want to use the basic study strategies described below:

- Eliminate distractions when you study. Distractions compete for your attention and interfere with your ability to remember material studied. This is because people tend to switch back and forth between the distraction and their study material. Some people claim that they study better when a TV or radio is on. However, it may be that they simply can tolerate better the act of studying when there is something available to distract them. Loss of concentration due to radio, TV or other background noise can result in gaps in one’s memory about the material being studied.



- Study when you are fresh and alert, not when you are tired. This is because fatigue can reduce how much study material you can remember. If possible, it is generally better to get a good night's sleep and study in the morning, rather than staying up a few hours extra and sleeping late.
- Assess the scope of your study efforts. Have a plan. Do a quick review of the materials you want to study and size them up. Skim over the pages and scan the major headings, summaries, etc. This can help you to decide how much time it will take for you to cover

the material. Don't overwhelm yourself. Tackle the material in chunks and carve out blocks of time for your study sessions. Consider your lifestyle and obligations when mapping out a realistic study schedule.

- If you study a body of knowledge by reading about a particular subject, some terms or vocabulary words may be unfamiliar to you. A good study habit is to look up the definitions to such terms or vocabulary words whenever you stumble on them. Also, write down the definitions, if possible, to reinforce your ability to remember them.
- Another way to reinforce ideas and concepts that you want to remember while studying material is to highlight key words and sentences. It is better to do this after you have read the entire section. If you highlight as you read along, you may highlight too much. This might make it difficult later when you want to review the material again. Therefore, try to highlight only the most important material. You only will know what is most important after you have read all the material in the section first.
- You may also want to take notes. To determine if something that you are reading is important enough to highlight and/or take notes about, ask yourself questions such as:

*“Is this material or information significant to the body of knowledge that I’m studying? Does it refer to key ideas, terms, concepts, principles, policies, procedures, practices, theories, etc. associated with the body of knowledge?”*

*“Is this material likely to be included in a test? Would someone expect me to know it? If one knows this idea or concept, is it indicative of one’s familiarity with the larger subject or body of knowledge?”*

*“Is this something from which a test writer could easily develop multiple-choice test questions?”*

*“Do I need to do more to memorize this material or, now having read it, am I likely to remember it well enough to answer test questions about it?”*

- Another good habit is to find someone who is willing to ask you questions or quiz you about the material that you have read. It is best to do this soon after you study the material.



- If possible, review practice test questions weeks immediately before the test.

### **Days before the Test**

During the days leading up to the exam, you should focus on reviewing the material you have already studied. If you have highlighted material or taken notes, this is the time to review them. If you are the type of person who likes to learn from listening rather than reading, you may want to read aloud your notes or highlighted material whenever possible.

If you are unfamiliar with the test location, map out your route of travel. Assess how long it will take you to travel so that you arrive on time. It is a good idea to add a little more time in the event you have unexpected delays getting to the test.



### **The Night before the Test**

This is a time to relax and let your mind rest. Better yet, participate in a mild recreation activity to focus your mind elsewhere.

To help reduce your anxiety on the day of the exam, make an effort to get a good night's sleep. Go to bed early if you can. Celebrate the night after, not the night before the test!

### **The Day of the Test**

Plan to arrive early to the test center, so that you are not rushing into the test center with only minutes to spare before the exam. Wear clothing that is comfortable.

Remember to bring to the test center any required forms or information. Typically, this will include a copy of your test notification which you may have received by mail or email. To prove you are who you say you are, a valid picture identification card such as a driver's license or passport should be brought to the test center.

Bring a watch or timing device unless you are specifically told not to do so. Similarly, if calculators are allowed, bring one. Personal electronic devices (i.e., communication and photographic/video devices) such as cell phones, BlackBerrys, cameras, etc. are prohibited at test centers. This is for two reasons. They can disrupt the examination process, and they can be used to cheat. If candidates are seen with any such device during the examination, they may be disqualified, even if the device is turned off. Leave all such devices at home or in your car!



## Taking the Test

### Start of the Test

The person in charge of the test is called the test proctor or test monitor. Carefully listen to what this person has to say. In addition to hearing test instructions from the proctor, you may also need to read additional test instructions that are given to you or that are included in your test booklet.

Don't be afraid to ask questions about the test's instructions if anything is unclear to you.



Bear in mind that test proctors may not be allowed to answer some types of questions. For example, a test proctor may not be able to explain the meaning of a particular question or the meaning of a word in a particular test question. This is often because doing so could be unfair to other candidates who did not receive the same help.

If you have any special problems, needs or concerns, bring them to the attention of the test proctor as soon as possible. It is important to do this early because sometimes a remedy to a problem or issue is not possible once you have taken the test.

For most tests, candidates are responsible to keep track of their own time and how much time they have left to finish the test. Pay attention to the test's start time, end time, and the time remaining in the exam. If there is a clock in the testing room, note where it is located. If the test has multiple parts, estimate how much time you need to devote to each part. This can help determine whether you are moving through the test at a pace that will allow you to finish on time.

Unless you are told otherwise, you may write in your test booklet. This can be helpful to make notes or calculations.

You will be scored based on your number of correct answers. You will not lose points for wrong answers or if you guess the answer. This means that it is always to your benefit to answer every test question whether you know the answer or not. Therefore, try to mark an answer for every question. This way you at least have a chance at getting extra points if you happen to correctly guess some answers.

Candidates record their answers on a "scannable" answer sheet. This sheet is where candidates mark their answer selections by blackening "bubbles" with a pencil (see below).

```
1 A B C D E
  ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
2 A B C D E
  ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
```

“Scannable” answer sheets are read by an optical mark reader (OMR) to determine the total number of correct answers. It is important to carefully blacken selected answers neatly and completely. See the full set of instructions below, which are very typical for most multiple-choice examinations.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR MULTIPLE-CHOICE EXAM

You may write in your test booklet, but you must mark your answer on the separate ANSWER SHEET provided in order to be scored. This is because the test is scored by machine. Accurate scoring depends on how well you follow instructions. Read the following instructions carefully and use the sample below as a guide.

1. On this Multiple-Choice Test each question or item is followed by a series of possible answers or choices.
2. Read each question and decide which answer or choice is best. [Make sure you read thoroughly any special instructions that may apply to a given portion of the test.]
3. On the ANSWER SHEET locate the ROW of circles opposite the NUMBER of the question you are answering.
4. Find the CIRCLE or “bubble” that corresponds to the letter of the answer you have chosen as being the best among the choices provided.
5. Blacken in this CIRCLE with your PENCIL.
6. Press firmly on the pencil and completely fill in the CIRCLE by going over the mark two or three times. Darken the circle completely.
7. ERASE completely any answers you wish to change. Do not cross out.
8. Do not make unnecessary marks on the ANSWER SHEET. Stray marks on or near the circles may change your score.
9. Mark only ONE answer for EACH question. Double answers are scored as wrong answers.
10. Keep your ANSWER SHEET on a hard surface while marking your answers. Do not fold or crease your answer sheet.
11. Try to answer every question. Your test score will be based on the number of questions you answer correctly. There is no penalty for guessing.
12. Note: When you finish this examination, time permitting, you may recheck your work. When you are ready to turn in your examination, raise your hand. Do not leave your seat until the Proctor tells you to do so.

Review the example below to see the right and wrong ways to fill in the circles. This is a SAMPLE question. Do not answer this question on YOUR answer sheet. Choice “c” is the correct answer.

QUESTION #1: Two times five equals

- a. 6
- b. 9
- c. 10
- d. 15

1 A B C D E  
      
RIGHT WAY !

### WRONG WAYS

1 A B C D E  
      
 1 A B C D E  
      
 1 A B C D E

In addition, prior to starting the test, you may be required to review certain information about the test and examination process. You also may be required to sign that you have read and understand that information. Please find below a sample test booklet cover.

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**[DO NOT OPEN THIS BOOKLET UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.]**

Widget Trainee Examination

Date of Examination: 11/20/1X Test Code 055891

**THIS BOOKLET CONTAINS 20 NUMBERED PAGES & 60 TEST QUESTIONS**

**The test is designed to measure:  
Math (Questions #1 through #30);  
Reading (Questions #31 through #60)**

**MAXIMUM TEST TIME = 1 ½ Hours**

**(There will be no review of the questions and answers following administration of this test.)**

**Note:** Sharing information concerning test questions and answers with other candidates competing in the same examination process constitutes cheating as it gives them an unfair advantage. Civil Service Rules state that any person cheating, attempting to cheat, or assisting other persons in cheating in any phase of the examination process shall be prosecuted to the full extent of the Charter and other laws. Therefore, candidates who discuss or provide written transcriptions or recorded information regarding test content to anyone will be disqualified from this exam, possibly rejected from future exams and subject to possible punishment as provided by law. Similarly, you are prohibited from making notes of test questions or answers, copying answers, and referring to notes or aids of any kind during the examination. You must sign the Candidate Signature line below to indicate that you understand this notice and to affirm that you have no knowledge of the specific content of this examination. Further, since it is possible that some candidates may take this same examination at a later date, you must agree not to provide any exam content information to anyone following the administration of this test.

- ✓ I have checked and agree that my examination booklet contains the number of pages indicated above.
- ✓ I have no knowledge of the specific content of this examination and agree not to provide any exam content information to anyone during or following the administration of this examination.
- ✓ I understand that a No. 2 pencil must be used on this examination and that answers must be properly blackened on the Answer Sheet provided in order to receive credit for the answer.
- ✓ I understand that if I wish to challenge the manner in which this test is administered, I am to file a protest in writing prior to leaving the test center today.

Candidate Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

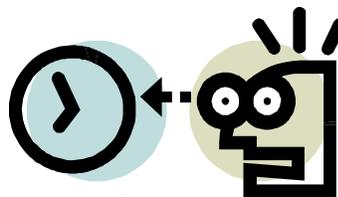
Candidate Identification # \_\_\_\_\_

### **Throughout the Test**

As you proceed through the test, work quickly but don't rush. You may wish to circle key words or concepts that may be important in answering test questions.

Periodically check your watch or clock to see how much time you have left to finish the test. It is a good idea to do this early in the exam in order to judge how quickly you are moving through the test material within your allotted time. This will help you to pace yourself.

If you only check your time toward the later part of the exam, you may realize that you haven't been working fast enough and this may cause stress and make you rush through the rest of the test questions.



Review each question carefully. This sounds simple enough but mistakes are often made because this is not done. If you read too quickly, you may miss a key word or an important idea. If a sentence is long to read, break the sentence down into smaller parts and read them slowly to capture the various ideas in the long sentence (e.g. *If the sentence is long.....break the sentence down into smaller parts.....and read them slowly.....to capture the various ideas presented in the sentence*). Read the entire test question, not just a few words because you think you know enough to pick an answer.

If you have trouble understanding a question, it also may be helpful to move to and read the answer choices. Then, return to the question one or more times to re-read it. This may help you better understand what is being asked.

After reading the entire question, you may have a general idea of what the answer might be before you begin reading the various answer choices. In fact, you might want to try to answer the question without looking at any of the answer choices. [This is good because it will make it easier for you to evaluate the answer choices.] Then, read all of the answer choices presented. Don't stop reading when you believe you have stumbled on the right answer [even if it IS the answer you were thinking about before you starting reading the answer options]. For example, a good answer might be the first answer choice that is presented but the BEST answer might be the last answer option that is presented.

You should try to eliminate as many answer choices that you believe are wrong before you select your final answer to a test question. You may want to make marks in your test booklet (if allowed) next to answer choices that you have eliminated or simply use your pencil to scratch through the wrong answer. Or, instead, you may want to check the answer choices that you are unable to eliminate easily. Either way, such marks can help you focus on only the answer choices that you are giving serious attention. After this is done, it is sometimes a good idea to read the question and consider the remaining answer choices one more time before you make your final answer selection.



Educated guessing is better than blind guessing. Therefore, if you need to guess, at least try to eliminate one or more answer choices. Although you may not be certain of the correct answer, you may be sure that some answer choices are incorrect. The more answer choices you can eliminate, the greater your chances of answering the question correctly. For example, if you can narrow down your answer selection to two answer choices, you have a 50% chance of answering the question correctly through sheer guessing.

*Note: Never attempt to look at someone else's test paper for an answer. Cheating is unethical and can lead to disqualification. Not only can candidates be disqualified from the test that they are taking, they also can be disqualified from future exams administered by the City and County of San Francisco.*

Sometimes you may believe that you can figure out the answer to a question but it will take you quite a bit of time to do so. In such cases, you may want to skip that particular test item (or if you have ventured to guess an answer you may want to revisit the item again). Later, after you have finished answering the rest of the test questions, you can return to that particular test item(s). Answering questions that you feel are easier first will help avoid the problem of not finishing the test because you spent too much time on the more difficult questions. Of course, when you do not finish the test, you lose opportunities to answer test items for which you know the correct answer. Therefore, even though you might find a particular question challenging and you don't want to leave it because you are determined to figure it out, it may not pay to linger. Sometimes it is better to skip the question and return to it later. This approach can often increase your probability of attaining a higher test score.

Sometimes a set of test items may relate to a long reading passage or other material such as charts. If these items as a group appear to be difficult and time-consuming to complete, you may want to skip them as an entire group and return to them later. This might be a better strategy than tackling some items in the group and but skipping some that are very difficult. This is because, if you were to return later to the skipped items, you might need to review a second time the reading passage or background information. This would use up precious test taking time.

On the other hand, when you skip test questions in a multiple-choice examination, you run the risk of accidentally filling in the wrong bubble on your scannable answer sheet. Let's say you skip Question #14 but you forget to skip Question #14 on your answer sheet. For the rest of the test, your answer selections may be out of alignment with the test question numbers. Unfortunately, this is a frequent mistake. It can cost candidates a large number of points and even cause them to fail the exam. It is not a mistake that you want to discover when only minutes remain in the test. Consequently, a good test taking tip is to frequently check to make sure that you are marking the right space on your answer sheet. That is, check to see that the answer you mark on your answer sheet aligns with the test item number that is in your test booklet.

When reading every word in the entire test item, it is important that you focus on certain key words that may be present. These include: MOST, BEST, LEAST, FIRST, LAST, USUALLY, ONLY, NOT, ALL, NONE, NEVER, ALWAYS, GREATEST, EXCEPT, etc. For example, two or more answer choices may be very good answers to a test question. However, what distinguishes one answer option from the rest, making it the BEST or CORRECT answer, is often a key word such as MOST, FIRST, GREATEST, etc.

Note that words such as ALWAYS and NEVER are used to describe situations that are “absolute” in nature, where no exceptions exist. However, it is often easier to find exceptions to situations than to find situations where there are no exceptions (i.e., at least those that aren’t obvious to test takers). Therefore, beware of answer choices that describe “absolutes” and use words such as ALL, ALWAYS, NEVER etc. These may be incorrect answer choices.

When answering questions, you may want to choose an answer based on your own personal knowledge or experience. This may be a good thing as it can be useful to help answer a test question. On the other hand, it also can interfere with one’s ability to focus on the details and specifics of a test question. A candidate should not overlook these details and information or substitute his or her experience for such details.



Similarly, don’t make the item more difficult than it is by reading too much into the question or by making unwarranted assumptions. Always refer to the facts, details and specific words that describe test questions and answer only the question being asked. That is, stick to the facts and don’t try to shape the question differently from the facts presented. In addition:

- Some answer choices may be true as stand-alone statements, but they may not be the best answer because they don’t specifically answer the question being asked.
- Be careful of answer choices that may be partially true. Part of the answer or perhaps just one word, may make the answer incorrect. Generally, these are wrong answers.

If you finish the test with time remaining, check your answer sheet to be sure that you have answered all of the questions based on the instructions provided. You may also wish to revisit questions that require more attention than you could originally provide, even though you may have selected or designated answers to those items.

If you are done with the test but still have time and decide to return to a question for which you were unsure of the answer, read the question again carefully. Perhaps you missed something the first time or misunderstood what the question was asking. If this happens, you may realize your original answer selection was wrong. If you have a good reason for changing your answer, do so. Be sure to completely erase your original answer if you change it. If you don’t, you might be recorded as having two answers for that question, in which case you would receive no points.

If you return to the question, read it again and find that you are still not sure of the answer, it is often better to stick with your original answer choice. Don't fall into the trap of "reading too much into the question" by "second guessing" your original answer.

If one or more test questions relate to a reading comprehension passage that precedes them, it may be useful to skim over the test questions before you actually read the passage, especially if the test questions are short. This can help you better focus on those parts of the passage to which the correct answer choice(s) will be directed. In general, test questions involving reading comprehension passages often have to do with:

- The subject of the passage or what the passage is about. For example, you might be asked about the theme or main subject of the passage.
- Facts or ideas that support a point that the author is trying to make in the passage.
- Conclusions to be made or what the author wants you to believe based on the passage.

If there are math questions, always check your calculations. Sometimes it pays to solve the problem a different way (backwards even) as a way to check.



Sometimes you can reason out the correct answer to a question. Here's a simple example:

Question: *If you have a question in the testing room regarding how to take the test, the best time to ask is when....*

- A. *candidates have just started the test and the room has quieted down.*
- B. *the test proctor first enters the room and stands before the candidates.*
- C. *the test proctor starts to hand out the test booklets and answer sheets.*
- D. *the test proctor asks the candidates, "Are there any questions?"*

Answer: D

Discussion: You want to know exactly what you are supposed to do before the test starts. Therefore, you can eliminate A as an answer choice. Chances are, you have not even heard the directions yet if the proctor just entered the room. Also, you have not had a chance to read any directions that may be in the test booklet, if you haven't received your test booklet. Consequently, you can eliminate answer choices B and C.

D makes the most sense as the best answer because that is the moment when the proctor believes it is best to pause and await questions. This is generally after the proctor has delivered directions, at which time candidates can raise their hands if they are unclear how to proceed.

Was that too easy? Here's another example where a little reasoning and looking for clues can help you eliminate answer choices.

*A good cement mortar is*

- A. *three parts sand to one part cement.*
- B. *two parts sand to one part cement.*
- C. *four parts sand to six parts cement.*
- D. *four parts sand to two parts cement.*

Answer : A

Discussion: Option D is the same as Option B because “4 to 2” is the same ratio as “2 to 1” [i.e., if you divide “4 to 2” by 2, you get “2 to 1”]. Since the question can’t have two correct answers, you can automatically eliminate Options B and D as correct answers.

This leaves you with Options A and C from which to choose. You may notice that Option A is close to Options B and D numerically. Also, Option C is unlike the other answers in the sense that it lists more cement parts than sand. Chances are that the test writer would not want the correct answer to stand out so differently from the other answer choices. Therefore, if you had to take a guess, it would make sense to pick Option A as your answer choice.

*Hopefully, this preparation guide has provided you with some useful tips on preparing for your next multiple-choice examination. Good luck!*