

## Taking Objective Examinations

1. Get off to a good start. If there is no penalty for guessing, you should plan to answer every question. Do not linger too long on any one question.
2. If there is a guessing penalty for multiple-choice exams, it is usually good practice to guess if you can eliminate at least one choice.
3. For more difficult questions, write your first choice lightly in the margin and go on with the test. You can return to that question later and if you cannot come up with a sure answer, stay with the first choice.
4. If you cannot answer a question at all, make a light mark in the margin to alert you to reconsider the question later. Meanwhile look for clues in subsequent questions which may help you find an answer.
5. Be cautious about changing your answer without good reason. Your first guess is most likely to be the best. Avoid second guessing yourself.
6. Watch for questions containing double negatives within a sentence, since two negatives turn into a positive. (For example, "He is not unkind" means he is kind.)
7. Be alert for qualifying words like:
  - a. all, most, some, none
  - b. always, usually, sometimes, never
  - c. smallest, largest
  - d. best, worst
  - e. more less

When you see one of these qualifiers, you can test the statement by substituting another of the series. If the substitution makes a better statement, the question is false.

8. Check the consistency between the question stem and the answer choices on multiple-choice exams. If a choice introduces a grammatical error, it is normally incorrect.
9. Watch for multiple ideas or concepts within a true-false statement. The statement is true only if all the parts are true.
10. Consider a multiple-choice question as a group of true-false questions, where each choice is considered, then eliminated or correct.
11. On matching exercises where each choice is used only once, work with only one column at a time. Match each item with an item in the opposite column, and cross out the items as you match them.

Please give us feedback about whether these suggestions are useful and give us additional ideas! Call the Academic Support Center (x3288) or email ([asc@stolaf.edu](mailto:asc@stolaf.edu)) or stop in (Old Main Annex, Room 1 or the Den Level 1 in Rolvaag library).