LEARNING TECHNIQUES

LESSON 7-6 ▲ MANAGING MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

**LEARNING GOALS/OUTCOMES**

* Outline effective techniques for answering multiple choice test questions.
* Write a multiple choice question for an imaginary high school readiness test.

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

* **Student Handouts:**
* Golden Rules of Multiple Choice Test-Taking
* Helpful Hints for Writing Multiple Choice Questions
* Journal Page

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

1. **Students guess facts and fiction statements about multiple choice tests.** Tell students they are going to take a ‘pop quiz’ on multiple choice questions. Ask them to get out a piece of paper and answer the following six questions. Read the following statements and ask students to guess whether they are FACT or FICTION.
   * Multiple choice questions can test higher level thinking. (FACT)
   * Grammar doesn’t matter in a multiple choice question. (FICTION)
   * “All of the above” is ALWAYS the right answer to a multiple choice question. (FICTION).
   * Your first choice is usually the right answer. (FACT)
   * After completing a multiple choice test, you should go back and review your answers. (FACT)
   * When in doubt, choose B. (FICTION)

Read out the answers and have student self-score their ‘test’. Tell students that this class will teach them how to become more effective at answering multiple choice questions.

1. **Students use their creativity to teach test-taking rules.**  Create nine teams of two to four students and give each team a number. Distribute *Golden Rules of Multiple Choice Test-Taking* to each student. There are nine “golden” rules. Tell students to look at the rule relating to their number. Each team must learn their rule and determine a way to present their rule, without just reading it off of the paper to the rest of the class. Each assigned pair of students will need to: 1) visually represent the rule they have been assigned, and 2) develop a creative way to verbally share their assigned rule. This may be in the form of a rhyme, rap, etc. The teacher should facilitate opportunity for each student team to present their rule to the entire class.
2. **Students learn how to write multiple choice questions**. Ask students to return to their desks. Distribute the *Helpful Hints for Writing Multiple Choice Questions* Handout. Review the seven hints with the class, answering the questions as a whole group. (KEY: [Answers to Questions] 1-B, 2-A, 3-D, 4-B. 5-C, 6-B, 7-D.

Put students into pairs. Ask each team to create two multiple choice questions, using the hints they just received as guidance. Tell students these questions will ‘tested’ by another team. Encourage students to create a question about any school-related topic – one for which they know the correct answer. Ask each student to ‘take the lead’ on one of the questions.

1. **Students use their questions to ‘test’ another student pair.** Once teams have completed writing their questions, assign two pairs to work together to share the questions they each developed. Each team should answer the other team’s two questions and provide critique on how well the question worked.
2. **Students define personal abilities in taking multiple choice tests.** Ask students to write the following on their Journal Page. Have them describe two ‘Stars’ – two test-taking rules that they excel in when taking multiple choice tests. Ask them to explain how they developed their know-how in those rules. Ask students to also identify one ‘Wish’ - one improvement they need to make in preparation for the next time they have to take a multiple choice test.

**STUDENT PRODUCTS**

* **Completed *Helpful Hints for Writing Multiple Choice Questions***
* **Completed *Journal Page***

LEARNING TECHNIQUES

LESSON 7-6 STUDENT HANDOUT

GOLDEN RULES OF MULTIPLE CHOICE TEST-TAKING

**Golden Rule #1**

Breathe. Begin every test with a deep breath. Remind yourself that worrying will not make you know more answers. A relaxed mind will help. Use your intelligence – you’d be surprised what a calm person can do on a multiple choice test!

**Golden Rule #2**

Plan your test attack. Listen carefully to your teacher when directions are given. Be sure you understand exactly what you have to do for each part of the test. Allocate time based on the value of each question.

**Golden Rule #3**

Think first. Read the multiple choice question and try to answer it before looking at the various answers. You will move much more quickly through a multiple choice test by looking for a specific answer in the options available.

**Golden Rule #4**

Answer the questions you know first. It builds a sense of confidence and helps you when you return to do the questions where you were unsure. Sometimes one test question will give you a clue about a correct or incorrect option somewhere else.

**Golden Rule #5**

Pace yourself. Don’t spend too much time on any one question. Do your best and then move on. Be sure to place a mark by questions you skip and remember to go back!

**Golden Rule #6**

Improve your odds. When working on questions where you are unsure or don’t know, eliminate options you know are incorrect. A 1/3 chance is better than a 1/5 one!

**Golden Rule #7**

Never leave a question blank. Always make an educated guess. Once you make your choice, move on. There’s no use spending too much time on a question you don’t know.

**Golden Rule #8**

Review your answers. Check to make sure you answered all the questions. Never stop working a test until you have re-checked every question (or the teacher tells you time is up).

**Golden Rule #9**

Don’t change, unless you are sure. As you go back through all the completed questions, DO NOT change your answers unless you are certain your answer was wrong. Your FIRST guess is usually RIGHT.

Ignore answer sequences – just because the last two answers were B does not mean the next one isn’t.

LEARNING TECHNIQUES

LESSON 7-6 STUDENT HANDOUT

HELPFUL HINTS FOR WRITING MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

Read the following helpful hints for writing multiple choice questions and answer the samples below.

**Use three or four distracters, or wrong response answers.**

The Capital of Washington is:

1. Seattle
2. Spokane
3. Olympia
4. Everett

**Use a question format.**

What is the state tree of Washington?

1. Evergreen Tree
2. Cherry Tree
3. Maple Tree
4. Apple Tree

**Emphasize higher-level thinking.**

Sally’s breakfast this morning included one glass of orange juice (from concentrate), one slice of toast, a small bowl of bran cereal and a grapefruit. What “whole food” did Sally eat for breakfast?

1. Orange juice
2. Toast
3. Bran cereal
4. Grapefruit

**Keep option lengths similar.**

Why is adequate lighting necessary in a balanced aquarium?

1. Fish need light to see their food.
2. Fish take in oxygen in the dark.
3. Plants expel carbon dioxide in the dark.
4. Plants grow too rapidly in the dark.

**Balance the placement of the correct answer.**

The main character or hero of a story is called the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1. Antagonist
2. Tagonist
3. Protagonist
4. Protozoa

**Avoid negative questions.**

Which one of the following is NOT a science discipline?

1. Biology
2. Algebra
3. Chemistry
4. Physics

**Use only one correct answer and avoid “All of the above” responses or “None of the above” responses.**

4 + 3 – 2 + 10 = ?

1. 5
2. 12
3. 15
4. -3

**Writing Multiple Choice Questions**

Using what you have learned about multiple choice questions, write two questions below.

**2.**

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LESSON 7-6 STUDENT HANDOUT

JOURNAL PAGE

**DATE:**

**Lesson 7-6 | *MANAGING MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS***

***Q1:*** Identify two test-taking ‘stars’ – things you excel at when taking multiple choice tests.

***Q2:*** Identify one test-taking ‘wish’ = some test-taking ability you would like to improve.

***Q3:*** Most people get nervous before tests. How nervous do you get and what do you do to calm yourself?

***Answers:***