

Effective Test-taking Strategies for Nursing Students

- 1. Read the question slowly and carefully paying attention to:
 - Subject of the question (patient, medication, plan, procedure, etc.)
 - Key words (age, sex, acute, chronic, pre/post op, etc.)
 - Polarity: positive (asking for what is true) or negative (asking for what is false or the exclusion)
- 2. Visualize what the question is asking
 - Then image the correct response before looking at the answers
- 3. Notice word choices in the answers:
 - Closed-ended words are often incorrect as they are extreme (all, always, every, must, none, never, only, and just)
 - Open-ended words are usually favored over closed-ended words: (may, usually, normally, commonly, and generally)
- 4. Favor global answers over specific choices when the global answer includes the specific choices that are also correct:
 - Example: What constitutes a healthy diet?
 A) apples B) avocados C) fish D) Mediterranean diet
- 5. For prioritizing questions, use filters to run the question through:
 - ABC's does the question have anything to do with airway, breathing or circulation?
 - Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs consider in order of hierarchy physiological, then safety and security, then love and belonging, then self-esteem, and finally selfactualization
 - Where in the nursing process does this question take place?
- Once you select an answer, reread the question with the answer to make sure it makes sense. If you start self-doubting and begin to ask "What if..." leave it alone. If you guessed, trust your hunch.
- 7. Never leave answers blank. If you run out of time to go back, they will always be 100% wrong. At least give it an educated guess.
- 8. Select-All-That-Apply (SATA) questions are just true or false. Answer each option independent of the others. Then select all the options that are correct.

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