
7 Common Test Mistakes

1. Leaving an answer blank.

There is nothing wrong with skipping over a tough question to give yourself time to think about it as long as you remember to go back to it later. The danger with this is forgetting to go back to every question you've skipped. A blank answer is always a wrong answer! *Solution: Each time you skip a question, put a checkmark beside it.*

2. Answering a question twice.

You'd be surprised how many times students choose two answers in [multiple choice](#). This makes both answers wrong! *Solution: Review your work and make sure each true/false and multiple choice question only has one answer circled!*

3. Circling the wrong [multiple choice](#) answer.

This is a costly mistake, but one that is very easy to make. You look over all the [multiple choice](#) answers and pick the one that is correct, but you circle the letter next to the correct answer—the one that doesn't match your answer! *Solution: Make sure the letter/answer you indicate is the one you really mean to select.*

4. Ignoring the clock.

One of the most common errors students commit when taking a test is failing to manage time. This is how you end up in a panic with 5 minutes to go and 5 unanswered questions staring back at you. *Solution: Always take the first few moments of an exam to assess the situation when it comes to essay questions and answers. Give yourself a time schedule and stick to it. Give yourself a set amount of time to outline and answer each essay question and stick to your plan!*

5. Not following directions.

If the teacher says "compare" and you "define," you are going to lose points on your answer. There are certain directional words that you should understand and follow when you take a test. *Solution: Know the following directional words:*

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- Define: Provide a definition.
 - Explain: Provide an answer that gives a complete overview or clear description of the problem and solution for a particular question.
 - Analyze: Take apart a concept or a process, and explain it step by step.
 - Contrast: Show differences.
 - Compare: Show likenesses and differences.
 - Diagram: Explain and draw a chart or other visual to illustrate your points.
 - Outline: Provide an explanation with headings and subheadings.

6. Thinking too much.

It's easy to over-think a question and begin to doubt yourself. If you tend to second-guess yourself, you will inevitably change a right answer to a wrong answer. *Solution: If you are a thinker who tends to over-think, and you get a strong hunch when you first read an answer, go with it. Limit your thinking time if you know you tend to doubt your first instincts.*

7. Not putting name on test. *Solution: always write your name on a test before you begin!*