

Written Test of Knowledge Study Tips

Many of us admit to experiencing some level of test anxiety and one sure-fire way to reduce the stress inherent in exams is preparation. The AVLIC Evaluations Committee has assembled some study tips from a variety of sources, including successful Written Test of Knowledge (WTK) test-takers, to assist you in your preparation.



TIPS FROM RECENT TEST TAKERS

- Plan to give yourself an adequate amount of study time as this comprehensive reading list is extensive. While focused, active reading is time consuming; the time you invest will be worth it in the long run.
- Set up a study group with other equally motivated test takers. Divvy up materials and have group members “teach” articles to each other. Contact the CES manager at ces@avlic.ca if you would like to be matched up with others across the country who are studying for the exam.
- Read all materials thoroughly for understanding and then again, to make notes and highlight key concepts. Spend an adequate amount of time preparing even those materials you are already familiar with.
- Focus your reading as some of the readings are scholarly and quite dense.
- Read the articles, keeping these tips in mind:
 1. Determine the purpose for your reading: you are studying for a multiple-choice test; you will need to understand and recall detail.
 2. Pre-read: look over the document prior to reading and determine what you already know about the topic, and how the document is structured (e.g. is there a summary, diagrams etc.)
 3. Section: divide the document into manageable sections and then:
 - a) read actively (e.g. determine the main purpose of the document, the author’s key question, the most important information, the main conclusion etc.)
 - b) produce study materials (e.g. highlight text, take notes, use graphic organizers etc.)
 - c) study the materials



TIPS FOR MULTIPLE-CHOICE EXAMS

The WTK is a series of 75 multiple-choice questions. Here are some tips for doing your best at this type of exam:

- Anticipate test questions. Ask yourself, “if I were creating this test, what questions would I ask?”
- Make good use of the practice questions and other tips available to you.
- Eliminate the response that appears to be least related to the question being asked, especially if two responses appear to be equally correct. Remember, you are looking for the best answer, not only a correct one. Some responses may be correct but are not directly related to the question.
- Plan your test taking time well. Answer the questions that you are confident about first. Mark the questions that are causing you problems and come back to them later. Using this technique will allow you to read all of the test questions and will give you a chance to spot material that might help to narrow the options, or to jog your memory.
- Read the questions carefully. Exam time limits can sometimes make you feel that speed is important, causing you to skip over simple words that may be crucial to figuring out exactly what is being asked. Spending too much time on the questions reduces the time it takes to choose an answer.
- Identify key words. Use a scrap piece of paper to write down key words – this helps to narrow down the question’s meaning. The correct answer will match every part of the stem (the phrase that forms the question). Pay particular attention to negatives (e.g. not), superlatives (e.g. best) and qualifiers (e.g. usually). Similarly, multiple-choice questions containing absolutes (e.g. always) are often wrong, as they need to be an indisputable fact.
- Pick before peeking. Before you look at the choices provided, form an answer to the question in your head and then see if it is in the list of alternatives. You will be surprised by how often you already know the answer.
- Use strategic weeding. If the answer you thought is not listed and none of the alternatives jump out at you as being the correct one, then eliminate the most obviously wrong choices. Try to narrow your selection down to partner choices—two answers that are either opposites or are nearly identical with the exception of a few words. One of these alternatives is often the right one.
- Trust your instincts, even if you have to change your answer. Although you’ve probably been told to stick with your first instinct no matter what, it is okay to change your answer if you have a strong feeling that another response is the most correct one. It is a myth to trust your first response only; however, try not to second guess yourself too much. Base any changes on concrete reasoning, not just a feeling.
- Stay away from the numbers game. When it comes to multiple-choice, playing the odds rarely pays off. When all else fails, the answer isn’t always “C.” Similarly, just because the last three answers were “D” doesn’t mean the next one won’t be as well. If you have to guess, do your best to narrow your answer down to as few alternatives as possible and then pick the one you feel most confident about.



OTHER TIPS

It is common sense to ensure that you are prepared intellectually for an exam. It is equally as important to ensure that you are prepared emotionally and physically as well. Exercising, eating well and getting a good night's sleep are just as critical as studying when preparing for an exam.

Anxiety is contagious, keep this in mind as you engage in discussions with colleagues and remind yourself that each individual has their own unique experience. Be kind to yourself. Dress comfortably, arrive early and most importantly, do not expect to know everything!

We hope you have found these tips useful. Best of luck on the Written Test of Knowledge!

*Adapted from Ten Tips for Writing Multiple Choice Exams from Grant McEwan University;
Tips for Success: Mastering Multiple-Choice Tests from University of Toronto;
Steps for Textbook Reading from Douglas College;
How to Read a Scholarly Article in Education from Cambridge College.*