



## Mastering Your PMP Exam

To be successful in passing your PMP Exam, knowing the material may not be enough. You must also develop some practical test-taking skills.

In this discussion, we present important fundamentals in test-taking, then present a proven test-taking strategy to help you achieve peak performance on Exam day.

### Know How to Read Multiple Choice (MCQ) Questions

- ⇒ Approach each MCQ as a mutually exclusive independent event. Read the MCQ carefully, looking to determine precisely what the question is really asking for:
  - Identify the correct answer?
  - Identify the best answer?
  - Identify the first best action?
  - Identify the least best action?
  - Identify the exception?
  - Identify the incorrect alternative?
- ⇒ Many MCQs will be straightforward, but many will include irrelevant information and other distractors. Be thankful for the straightforward questions, but expect distractors.
- ⇒ Be on the lookout for distinguishing terms. Directly in the wording of many MCQs, you will find some distinguishing term or phrase. For example, *fast tracking* may appear in a question. You should recognize *fast tracking* as a key project management term. It may be the distinguishing term in this particular MCQ. If you focus some attention on the distinguishing term, you may be able to identify the correct answer even before reviewing the answer options.
- ⇒ If the MCQ is presented as a double-negative (i.e. *All of the following are false, except.*), then you may consider converting it to a positive before reviewing the answer options. In the example, *All of the following statements are false, except.*, logic tells us that all of the answer options are false except one. The correct answer is the one *true* statement. So, instead of identifying the false statements and eliminating them, look to identify the one true statement and selecting it.
- ⇒ Before looking at the answer options, try to answer the question based on your recall and understanding. Many times, this will help you quickly identify the correct answer.

### Know How to Answer Multiple Choice (MCQ) Questions

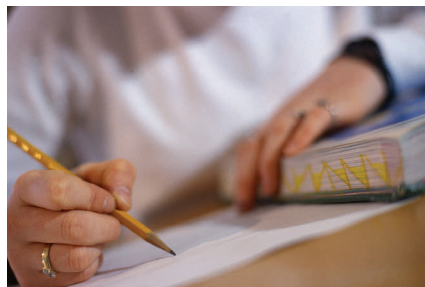
- ⇒ Once you feel confident that you understand what the MCQ is asking you to identify (correct, best, least, most, exception), review the answer options.
- ⇒ Read *all* answer options carefully.
- ⇒ If the answer doesn't come quickly, look for more clues in the question. For example; if the question indicates the answer is plural, then it may be possible to eliminate answers that are singular. Some MCQs purposely contain awkward grammar, but most are straightforward.
- ⇒ If the answer is still elusive, begin eliminating options. Use scratch paper to cross-off options that you know are wrong.
- ⇒ If you are still unsure, mark the question for later review. Do not attempt an answer at this time. The general rule of thumb is to labor no more than two-minutes over a difficult question. Mark it and save it for later.
- ⇒ When your first pass through the questions is complete, revisit unanswered questions, as well as any low-confidence questions. It is possible to encounter clues to some correct answers in other questions.
- ⇒ Changing answers on an MCQ exam is neither good nor bad. If you have a sensible reason to change one or more of your answers, go ahead and make the change.
- ⇒ Do not leave blanks on your completed Exam. Provide an answer for *all* of the questions. There is no added penalty for answering questions incorrectly on your PMP Exam. Correctly answered questions are tallied as one. Incorrect and unanswered questions are tallied as zero. On impossible questions, a wild guess is better than no answer at all. If you can't eliminate even one of the options, a wild guess will still give you a theoretical 25% probability of being correct.





## Pre Exam Day Strategy

1. Prometric allows you to use scratch paper, pencil and a four-function calculator during the PMP exam. They provide these items for you. It is very useful to do a *memory-dump* before you initiate the Exam. Your memory-dump is done by jotting down key equations and reminders on scratch paper as soon as you sit down to your computer station. This is perfectly legal, acceptable, even encouraged.
2. As you study and prepare, practice your memory-dump immediately prior to tackling a set of practice exam questions. On Exam day, it will be a quick & easy process.
3. A week or so before your PMP Exam, drive to your Prometric testing center to learn the route and traffic patterns. Ask a facility representative to familiarize you with testing protocols.
4. The day before your Exam, take a break. Don't study. Relax. Get a good night's sleep.



## Exam Day Strategy

1. Pack a snack, a drink and a sweater.
2. Eat a light, nourishing meal an hour beforehand.
3. Leave in time to arrive thirty minutes early.
4. Once processed-in and seated at your testing station, perform your memory-dump.
5. Take the optional computer tutorial, primarily to acclimate and relax.
6. Before initiating the Exam, take a minute to get centered. Close your eyes, breathe slowly & deeply, relax all of your muscles head-to-toe, stretch a bit.
7. Begin.
8. Treat each question as an independent event. For each question, follow your two-step protocol [a) reading the question correctly b) answering the question correctly].
9. Every fifteen minutes during the Exam take a one-minute break at your seat. Sit back, close your eyes, breathe deeply & slowly, relax your muscles, stretch a bit, then return to the Exam.
10. At the end of each hour, take a five-minute break outside the testing room. Eat a snack, have a drink, visit the washroom. Add or remove a piece or clothing for added comfort. You are allowed to take breaks outside of the testing room, but cannot leave the building, access notes or talk with anyone.
11. Maintain focus and concentration. Don't think about anything other than executing your Exam strategy. Pay attention to your strategy, your passing score will take care of itself.
12. Take all the time allotted.
13. When you feel confident you have answered all questions to the best of your ability, the computer will prompt you to send. Your pass/fail score report is presented in seconds. A printout of your score report will be waiting for you as you exit the testing room.
14. The PMP Exam is a taxing ordeal, mentally and physically. Give yourself the rest of the day off, to celebrate and to recover.

