Strategies for Answering Matching Questions

Matching questions are based on paired information or items that were linked together when you learned them. For example, "George Washington" would match with "the first president of the United States". Some examples of paired information are:

- Words and definitions
- Dates and events
- Terms and pictures
- Theories and theorists
- Authors and book titles
- Problems and solutions

Strategies for success

Read Directions

Only one match is allowed per item unless the directions state otherwise. If it is not clearly stated in the directions, ask if you can use items more than once.

Count Items

Count the number of items in each list or diagram. If one list is longer, items will be left unused.

Preview Questions

Focus your attention by looking over the items to determine what types of information you are matching.

Choose a List

Use one list as a starting place to make all matches. If one list has more words, start with that list first to spend less time re-reading.

Think of an Answer

When you read an item, try to think of the answer before reading the choices.

Make Sure Matches

First, make all of the matches you are SURE of and then cross out the items in both lists once you have made the match.

Make Harder Matches

Now tackle the more difficult matches. First, see if there is a clear match. If not, come back to it at the end of the test since you may find clues to the answer. Finally, make an educated guess.

Turn over this sheet to see some examples.
Example One

Match each of the capital cities with the correct Western state by writing the name of the capital in the blank provided.

Boise Salt Lake City
Carson City Sante Fe
Cheyenne Olympia
Denver Phoenix
Helena Sacramento
Honolulu Salem
Juneau

Strategies for matching the above items

1. Underline important items in the directions.
2. Count the blank spaces and terms. (There are 13 of each so all of the terms will be used.)
3. Preview to determine what you are matching: Capital cities with states.
4. In your mind, try to fill in the answers before reading the choices.
5. Make all of the matches you are sure of first. Cross out the city name on the list once it is used.
6. Make an educated guess to match the remaining cities.

Example Two

Directions: Match each word on the left with its definition on the right.

1. flagrant
2. fluctuate
3. turmoil
4. venture

a. to take the risk of; dare
b. shockingly obvious
c. to vary irregularly
d. including all or much
e. customary
f. complete confusion; uproar

Strategies for matching the above items

1. Underline important items in the directions.
2. Count items in each list. (some definitions will not be used)
3. Preview to determine what you are matching: words with definitions.
4. Remember, if one list is particularly long, start with that list first to spend less time re-reading.
5. Think of a word that would fit the definition before reading the choices.
6. Make all of the matches you are sure of first. Cross out a definition once it is used.
7. Make an educated guess to match the remaining words with definitions.