

Writing Tests and Exams: Question Types

Establishing strategies for writing different question types can help us do our best on tests and exams. Here are some helpful tips for approaching the different question types you may see on an exam!

Multiple Choice

How should I approach multiple choice questions?

- Consider your answer before reading the options
- Read all answers first
- ~~Eliminate answers you know are wrong~~
- Select the best answer, not necessarily the perfect answer
- Be suspicious of absolutes
- Be suspicious of answers that are unfamiliar

Example

Who was the first Prime Minister of Canada?

- ~~George Bush~~
- ~~Steve Jobs~~
- Canada never had prime ministers, they've always had presidents
- John A. Macdonald

seems suspicious

Short Answer

- Read questions carefully. Read multiple times; What is being asked?
- Highlight key terms
- Plan your answer
- Support your answer with examples



Example

List the three types of business ownership and include two important characteristics of each. (6pts)

- A Sole Proprietorship** is where there is only 1 owner of the business. The owner has unlimited personal liability
- A Partnership** has 2 or more owners, with unlimited personal liability
- A Corporation** is a separate legal entity, with limited liability for shareholders to the amount invested in the company. Example: Apple

Complete sentences



To learn more, book a one-on-one coaching appointment or attend a Learning Skills Workshop!
Visit www.smu.ca/studentsuccess
StudentSuccess@smu.ca



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Essay

Essay questions not only test your knowledge of a concept but also your **connection of ideas** to an underlying theme, your **ability to formulate & communicate** an argument, and your **writing skills** in essay format.



Tips

Avoid Knowledge Dumping: Be **selective & intentional** with the information you provide.

Don't skip the introduction or conclusion: It's important to **give context and develop a flow** to your essay.

Don't guess details: If you don't know specific details, it's better to be accurate than incorrect!

For writing support, visit the Writing Centre (writing@smu.ca or Burke 215)!

Best Practices

Plan Ahead before you begin writing: Jot down ideas and draft a quick outline.

Your **Introduction** should:

- Include a **thesis statement**.
- Include terms/phrasing that are in the question.

Your **Body Paragraphs** should:

- Stick to one claim per paragraph
- Include **evidence & examples** that support your argument
- Use **transitions** between paragraphs

Your **Conclusion Paragraph** should:

- Restate your thesis & supporting arguments.
- Not introduce any new ideas.



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