



Multiple choice questions: video tutorial

<http://www.screencast.com/t/rvOq5aup5a4>

Transcript

Introduction: Welcome to this tutorial on answering Multiple Choice Questions from the University of Reading Study Advice team. The tutorial is designed for you to go through at your own pace and you can pause it at any time.

Slide 1: Multiple Choice Questions (or MCQs) are designed to test your understanding of a broad range of key concepts that make up the fundamental knowledge in your subject. So when choosing what to revise for MCQ exams you need to get a good coverage of the important definitions, factors, and concepts.

Slide 2: Looking at things that summarise this key information like: module outlines, the places in your lectures that your tutors emphasise as really crucial, and the important lists and definitions on your lecture handouts are often good places to start. Unlike essay-style exams where you need to select topics and go into depth, for MCQs you need to cover all the basics.

Slide 3: So this means you will probably have a lot of basic, but detailed, knowledge to revise and retain. The best strategies for revising detailed factual knowledge like this are ones that link it through making associations. For example, when trying to remember the order of biological classification, you could create a phrase out of the first letter of each item and associate this with a silly picture. Then instead of 7 discrete things to remember, you only have to remember one striking phrase or picture.

Slide 4: Test yourself at regular intervals – as we retain factual information that we use and repeat. Creating cue-cards and getting together with friends to test each other can help. Dead-time when you are waiting for a bus can be used to test yourself on a few items. Something to be aware of is that there don't tend to be as many past papers for MCQ exams because the banks of questions gets reused each year, so another good revision strategy is to create your own likely questions – and again you can swap with friends and test each other.

Slide 5: In the exam room take a deep breath and read the questions carefully. Do the ones that you can do easily first, and mark the trickier ones to come back to later. If you find it hard to focus or get confused when reading questions, using a ruler can help. If you tend to second guess yourself or find that very similar answers distract you, try thinking of your own answer first before looking at the options. For those questions that you don't know - try eliminating any obvious wrong options from the list first, and then it is always worth a guess - as long as you are not marked down for any wrong answers - and do check this before the exam. Remember, MCQs are designed to test broad coverage so you can get high marks by having good basic knowledge, not dwelling on any one question for too long, and making a few sensible guesses.

Good luck in your multiple choice exams.