Multiple Choice Tips and Tricks

1. Passages are self-contained. You don't need to have outside knowledge of a text or author to answer the questions. Don't let the subject matter of a passage psych you out.
2. Pacing is important. Answer about one question per minute. The questions do not become more difficult as the test progresses.
3. Don’t get bogged down with questions with multiple parts. All the questions are worth the same amount of points.
4. Don’t panic if a question is “beyond you.” It’s probably beyond a lot of other people taking the test, too.
5. Write in the exam booklet. Underline, circle, bracket or highlight.
6. Pay attention to punctuation and rhythm.
7. Read with emphasis. Hear it in your head.
8. Use your finger as a pointer.
9. Use ALL information – title, author, date of publication, footnotes.
10. Be aware of foreshadowing.
11. Be aware of thematic lines; be sensitive to details you might see in questions.
12. POETRY: pay attention to enjambment and end stopped lines.
13. POETRY: paraphrase difficult stanzas.
14. Skip “roman numeral” questions if they cause you problems or you are short on time.
15. Work in order, but focus on your strengths.
16. Don’t be misled by the appearance/length of a selection. There is no correlation between the length of a passage and the difficulty of the questions.
17. Work within the given context. You might know other information about the subject of a text or question. It’s irrelevant.
18. Consider ALL the answer choices.
19. Remember that ALL parts of an answer must be correct.
20. Try to answer all the questions.

* Don’t waste time reading the questions before reading the passage.
* This isn’t a game; there’s no trick to “beating the test.”

Strategies for Answering Multiple Choice Questions

1. Process of Elimination
2. Substitution/Fill In the Blank
3. Using Context
4. Anticipation
5. Educated Guess