



IMPROVE YOUR TEST TAKING STRATEGY

Analysis Errors

The only nursing school exam and NCLEX questions you should miss are questions that you don't know the question content.

The three most common test taking strategy errors are

1. Reading errors
2. Analysis errors
3. Focus errors

When you misunderstand what is being asked in a question, you can make an analysis error.

Analysis Errors

When you complete a test analysis and identify missed questions due to analysis errors, go back a second time and look at what led to your error in analysis. It is common to attribute a missed question to an analysis error when in fact, you were not familiar enough with the topic to get to the correct answer.

Errors in question analysis fall into one of several categories:

Misreading what the question was asking

Reading the answers before thoroughly reviewing the question

Reading into the question

Not understanding the question content

Misreading what the question was asking

The first strategy for analysis is making certain you read the question carefully, following the steps outlined in the **Improve Your Test Taking Strategy; Reading Errors** Tip Sheet.

When you read the question thoroughly, before looking at any of the answer responses, focus on deciphering exactly what the question is asking. When I work with students who make analysis errors, they often reread the question and then say “oh, I thought it was asking” which led to the analysis error.

Reading the answers before thoroughly reviewing the question

This also goes back to following the steps outlined in the **Improve Your Test Taking Strategy; Reading Errors** Tip Sheet.

It is imperative that you read the question first. When you read through the answers before reading the question, you can be distracted from what the question is asking, leading you to select the wrong answer.

Reading into the question

Your nursing school exams SHOULD be written so that everything you need to correctly answer the question is clearly included in the question. If your instructors are writing their own questions, it is possible that you may come across a question that is not well written and may lead you to read into the question.

However, NCLEX questions, and questions in your NCLEX prep product, are well written questions and will tell you everything you need to know in the question.

Listen to your self-talk. As you consider the answers, did you say “well, if...”, or “but when”. In circumstances where you are adding qualifiers like this to create a rationale for an answer, you are probably making an error in

analysis of what the question is asking. Go back and read the question to redirect your focus to just what the question is asking.

Then read each answer response without adding a qualifier. Now, select the correct answer.

Not understanding the question content

When I work with clients who tell me “I get down to two answers” they often record this as an analysis error, when in fact it is often a knowledge gap.

Good questions are written to discriminate between knowing the content, and having a general understanding of the content. Those two answers that you are struggling with are the answer that is clearly associated with the content, and the one that is loosely related to the content but will tempt you if you don't fully understand the content.

When you review analysis errors, be honest with yourself. Did you have difficulty analyzing because you did not have a thorough understanding of the content?

If this is the case, you'll want to hone in on your study and active learning strategies. You can find more about these in my book: [Overcoming NCLEX Failure: A Guide to Retest Success](#).

If you are struggling to decipher what your test taking strategy errors are, or need help fixing them, consider [scheduling a coaching session](#) to get you on the right track for success.