

Test Taking Strategies

The most important test-taking strategy is to prepare ahead of time.

PREPARING FOR THE TEST

- ❖ Study regularly and review your notes periodically so that you are familiar with the material. Long term retention is more reliable than short term retention.
- ❖ If the instructor reviews for the test, ask questions so you are better able to judge what might be on the test and how the questions may appear.
- ❖ Use reviewing and questioning strategies (flash cards and other learning aids are helpful).
- ❖ Use self-test strategies.
- ❖ **Don't cram!!**
- ❖ Get some rest. Don't use caffeine to keep you awake for the test. The high will fade just when you need it most. The same goes for sugar.
- ❖ Don't eat a heavy meal just before testing. It will make you drowsy.
- ❖ Dress comfortably, but confidently!!

BEFORE THE TEST

- ❖ Arrive a little early. Take time to relax, get comfortable and perhaps do a last quick review so your mind is on the subject matter.
- ❖ Be confident!! Have a positive attitude!!
- ❖ If you are very nervous, do physical exercises to relax (scrunches, deep breaths, etc.).
- ❖ Be prepared with the necessary tools (pens, pencils, calculators, paper, etc.).

DURING THE TEST

- ❖ Read the directions and follow them!!
- ❖ If there are key facts or formulas you think you may forget as the test progresses, write them down in the margin.
- ❖ Begin with the easy questions. Return to complete the more difficult ones. Be sure to mark those you have not answered so you remember to go back to them.
- ❖ Budget your time. Don't spend too much time on one question so you don't have time to complete the remainder.
- ❖ Read the questions carefully so you know what is being asked, but do not read too much into the questions.
- ❖ Guess if necessary 😊!!
- ❖ Go with your initial hunches. Don't change an answer unless you are absolutely positively certain your first choice was wrong.

- ❖ Do not feel rushed. Use all the time allowed for the test if you need it. Just because others finish before you doesn't mean you have to hurry to finish.
- ❖ Check your answers before turning in your test.

HINTS FOR SPECIFIC TYPES OF TESTS

MATH AND SCIENCE TESTS

- ❖ Write numbers legibly.
- ❖ Number your steps in any computation so the instructor can easily follow.
- ❖ Use the correct mathematical and scientific symbols.
- ❖ Line up columns evenly.

MATCHING AND FILL IN THE BLANK

- ❖ Read the answers first so you know what is available.
- ❖ Cross off the answers you have used so you do not reuse them. This also reduces the number of choices for those questions you are unsure of.
- ❖ Eliminate any words you know won't fit as an answer to a particular question.
- ❖ Look for verb tenses, terminology and vocabulary clues.

TRUE AND FALSE

- ❖ Look for qualifying words such as **all**, **every**, **never**, etc. Questions with these words are many times false.
- ❖ Note the length of the question. To be true, **all** parts of the statement have to be true. The longer the statement, the less likely this is to happen.
- ❖ Watch out for false logic, such as two true statements linked with a word that would make the statement false.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

- ❖ Watch out for qualifying words such as **never**, **all**, **always**, etc. These words are too exclusive and rarely are the correct choice.
- ❖ Read all of the choices carefully.
- ❖ Eliminate obviously incorrect answers.
- ❖ Look for clues to answers you are unsure of in other questions in the test.
- ❖ If you find even **one** choice that doesn't comply, you can immediately eliminate any "**all of the above**" or "**none of the above**" choices.
- ❖ Exclude any ridiculous answers.
- ❖ Watch for clues that may be provided in the questions – especially when it comes to vocabulary.

- ❖ If you have to guess, the longest answer is often the most correct as it may be the most specific.

ESSAY AND SHORT ANSWER

- ❖ Before you begin, jot down notes of facts you want to be sure to include in your essay.
- ❖ Prepare a rough outline so you remember to cover everything in an organized manner.
- ❖ Plan so you have ample time for all the questions you need to answer.
- ❖ Write as if your reader has **NO** knowledge of the topic. Be thorough and clear.
- ❖ If you believe you don't know anything about the topic, just start writing. Sometimes you find you know more than you thought. Then take what you **DO** know and write your essay as clearly and organized as possible.
- ❖ Write as neatly as possible so your answers are legible.
- ❖ Use proper grammar and full sentences.
- ❖ Proofread for errors. Determine if the presentation is logical, fully supported and your ideas flow smoothly.

AFTER THE TEST

- ❖ When the test is returned, analyze how you did.
- ❖ What was covered? Did the instructor use material from lectures? From the text book? From class exercises?
- ❖ What type of questions were used? True/False? Essay? Multiple Choice?
- ❖ What were your weak areas?
- ❖ Use this test for review material for future exams.