

Test-Taking Strategies

Test Preparation

- 1. Attend class regularly**
 - read assignments and complete homework
- 2. Avoid cramming**
 - Research shows people remember material better when they *review* and *rehears* rather than cram for exams
- 3. Organize study area**
- 4. Summarize notes**
 - Spend study time writing exam questions (file cards, summary sheets, checklists) based on textbook, class notes and reading assignments
 - Take practice tests
- 5. Ask about the test format**
 - What kinds of questions?
 - How much time?
 - Proportion based on lecture, readings, textbook?
- 6. Study old tests as permitted**
- 7. Join a study group**
 - Teach others
 - Over learn

How to Take Tests

- 1. Read instructions carefully**
 - Look over the entire exam before starting
- 2. Answer easy questions first**
 - This builds confidence
- 3. Read each question carefully to grasp what is being asked**
- 4. If a question is difficult, move to an easier one and come back later**
 - Don't get stuck on one question and have time run out

PREPARATION FOR A SUCCESSFUL EXAM DAY

1. Gathering knowledge of the truth is the best preparation for tests.

- Concentrated hours of effective study to force facts into your memory is the best way to prepare for any test.
- However, teachers often try to test your memory of the material by slightly altering it. In this case, practice and some test-taking skills will help.

2. Maintain a healthy lifestyle.

- Arrive well-rested from a good night's sleep.
- Eat well. Watch your caffeine and junk food intake. Small, frequent high protein meals will energize you.

3. Always arrive early and take a moment to relax and reduce your anxiety.

- This brief time period will boost your confidence
- Use this time to focus your mind and think positive thoughts.

4. Listen attentively to last minute instructions given by the instructor.

- Teachers often make last minute changes.
- Missing instruction causes extreme anxiety.
- Ask which test format will be used for this test.

5. Read the test directions very carefully and watch for details.

- You may find that more than one answer may be possible on multiple choice.
- A key detail may require only three out of the five essay questions.

6. Plan how you will use the allotted time.

- Estimate how many minutes you will need to finish each test section.
- Determine a pace which will ensure completing the whole test on time.
- Start with the easiest section to build your confidence.

7. Maintain a positive attitude.

- Don't let more difficult questions raise your anxiety and steal your valuable time. Move on and find success with other questions.
- If you are not penalized for wrong answers, guess and move on.
- Avoid watching for patterns. Noticing that the last four answers are "c" is not a good reason to stop, go back, and break concentration.

8. Analyze test information

- Read the information and break it down into parts.
- Look for ideas that are similar and restated throughout the passage.
- Look for information that is compared or contrasted such as “What is the author saying? Why is it important?”
- Sometimes lots of information is presented, but it’s not important in answering the question.

9. Rely on your first impressions.

- The answer which comes to mind first is often correct.
- Nervously reviewing questions and changing answers can do more harm than good.

10. Plan to finish early and have time for review.

- Return to difficult questions you marked for review.
- Proofread your essays and pay attention to grammar and spelling.
- Make sure you answered all questions. More than one student has failed to notice questions on the back side of the paper.

11. Consider every test a practice session - analyze your performance.

- Test taking is an art which needs refinement. One cannot refine the art without practice and serious evaluation.
- Go through each test thoroughly and see if your plan worked.
- Look at each section to identify your fault patterns. Do you need to work on true/false, multiple choice, or essay?
- Talk to teachers regarding low scores, especially on essays.

Adapted from Test Taking Strategies Quizzes
<http://www.byu.edu/ccs/learning/strategy.php>