TEST TAKING TIPS

DE-STRESS TESTS

- Don’t overwhelm yourself with pressure
- Grades aren’t measures of intelligence, creativity or self-worth
- Getting an “F” only means that you failed one test – not the course
- An “F” is feedback that you didn’t understand the material
- Feedback helps you change to promote future test success

PRE-TEST ACTIVITIES

- MANAGE YOUR REVIEW TIME
  - Daily reviews: Short, several times per day
  - Weekly reviews: An hour per subject, cover reading and lecture notes
  - Major reviews: 2–5 hours at a stretch, week before major exams

- CREATE REVIEW TOOLS
  - Design a study checklist (if not provided by your instructor)
  - Create flash cards
  - Ask instructor what to expect
  - Obtain copies of old exams
  - Get notes organized
  - Plan a study group
  - Complete textbook chapter review questions

- PREDICT TEST QUESTIONS
  - Save all quizzes, papers, lab sheets, and graded material
  - Brainstorm test questions with other students
  - Watch for clues from instructor during class
    - Repeating certain points
    - Writing information down
    - Questions posed to students
    - Extensively covering certain material
    - Heightened interest in a topic
    - Key phrases...."This is important"

- COME TO CLASS PREPARED
  - Get plenty of sleep
  - Eat a light snack
  - Wear a watch and comfortable clothing
  - Assemble all your testing items
  - Arrive early and relax
Let go of Anxiety

- Visualize success and use positive self-talk
- Breathe deeply
- Daydream (just a little!) then refocus
- Consider the “worst” outcome— is it that bad?
- Tense and relax muscles
- Avoid “gloom and doom” talk with peers
- Ignore students who leave early
- Don’t compare yourself to others

During the Test

- **As you begin**
  - Pay attention to verbal/written directions
  - Read the directions slowly, twice
  - Scan the whole test
  - Evaluate the importance of each section
  - In margins, jot down memory aids, formulas, equations, facts
  - Answer easiest and/or shortest questions first
  - Pace yourself
  - Look for answers in other test questions

- **Multiple choice**
  - Check directions to see if more than one answer is appropriate
  - Cover the choices and answer question in your head first, then
  - Read all answer choices before selecting one
  - Your first instinct is usually best
  - “All of the above” is often correct when you know two answers are correct

- **True/False**
  - Read carefully
  - Answer quickly (don’t over analyze)
  - Look for qualifiers
    - ex. All, Most, Always, Sometimes, Never, Rarely, Usually, etc.
    - Absolute qualifiers (ex. Never) often indicate false statements

- **Short answer/fill-in**
  - Usually are definitions or short descriptions
  - Concentrate on key words and facts
  - Be brief yet thorough

- **Matching**
  - Read through each column first
  - Make note of differences between similar words
  - Look for the logical associations
  - Are their more answers provided than questions?
□ **Essay**
- Decide precisely what the question is asking
  - ex. Describe, Compare, Contrast, Prove, Summarize, etc.
- Make a quick outline
- Get to the point, avoid “fluff”
- Put the most solid supporting points first
- Write legibly – usually use a pen
- Use one side of the paper only

□ **Open Book**
- Do not underestimate the difficulty of this test type
- Write formulas you need on a separate sheet
- Place Post-It® notes or paper clips on important pages
- Organize your class notes
- Write a short table of contents with corresponding page numbers
- Prepare thoroughly

**After the Test**

□ **Browse Test**
- Are the points accurate?
- Where did most questions come from – book, lectures, outside reading?
- What types of questions – T/F, multiple choice, essay, short answer?
- What topic(s) did you miss? Do you now know the right answers?
- What did you learn to help you for the next test?
- Save test!

**Final Testing Tidbits**

□ Answer every question – guess if you aren’t sure of an answer
□ Check back through your test before turning it in to your instructor
□ If questions are based on a reading passage, read the questions first so you know what to look for as you read
□ Do something enjoyable after your test!

**For more information on college success strategies,**

**Visit the Connect to Success Office**
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