

Test Taking Tips

De - Stress Tests

* Don’t overwhelm yourself with pressure
* Grades aren’t measures of intelligence, creativity or self-worth
* An “F” is *feedback* that you didn’t grasp and/or demonstrate mastering 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: Several hours at a stretch, week before major exams
	+ Mimic the testing environment when closing in on the exam (No music, tv, food, etc.)
* **Create review tools**
	+ Design a study guide (if you don’t receive one)
	+ Create flash cards
	+ Ask instructor what to expect
	+ Obtain copies of old exams if possible
	+ 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 (use the chapter headings/subheadings as a guide – turn them into questions)
	+ 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 and drink water
* Wear a watch and comfortable clothing
* Assemble all your testing items the evening prior
* Arrive early and mark your “territory” – preferably a seat with minimal distractions…then, go relax for a few minutes

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 then relax muscles major muscle groups
* Avoid “gloom and doom” talk with peers
* Ignore students who leave early and avoid comparison to others

During the Test

* **As you begin**
	+ Pay attention to verbal/written directions
	+ Read the directions slowly, twice
	+ Scan the whole test and evaluate the importance of each section
	+ Do a “memory dump” - jot down key formulas, equations, facts, etc.
	+ Answer easiest and/or shortest questions first
	+ Pace yourself
	+ Look for answers in other test questions
	+ If possible, write on your test by circling words, making notes in the margins, crossing out irrelevant information, drawing pictures, etc.
	+ Use grammar rules to assist in choosing and/or eliminating answers
* **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
* Utilize multiple choice strategies (see the multiple choice testing handout)
* **True/False**
* Read carefully
* Answer quickly (don’t over analyze)
* Look for qualifiers
	+ - ex. Most, Always, Sometimes, Rarely, Usually, etc.
		- Absolute qualifiers (ex. Never, Always, Everyone, All, None) 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 (notice if the columns are equal in number)
* Look for the logical associations
* **Essay**
* Decide precisely what the question is asking
	+ - ex. Describe, Compare, Contrast, Prove, Summarize, etc.
* Make a quick outline
* Include introductory and closing paragraphs
* Get to the point, avoid “fluff”
* Put the most solid supporting points first
* Write legibly
* Bring/use “white-out” if necessary
* **Open book**
* Do not underestimate the difficulty of this test type
* Write formulas you need on a separate sheet
* Place mini Post-It® note tabs or paper clips on important pages
* Organize your class notes
* Write a short table of contents with corresponding page numbers
* Prepare thoroughly

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 the test, regardless of how well you think you did

After the Test is Returned

* **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?
	+ Beef up your notes in the areas that you missed the most questions!
	+ Save test, if possible!
	+ Chat with your instructor, especially if you didn’t do as well as anticipated!

****

**Dana Kobold | dana.kobold@rrcc.edu | 303.914.6176 | rrcc.edu/first-year-experience**

Handout info researched and created by Dana Kobold, FYE Coordinator (Revised SP 19)

Content adapted from *Becoming a Master Student Athlete* by Dave Ellis