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 or access tutoring
  + Complete textbook chapter review questions
* **Predict test questions**
* Review all quizzes, papers, lab sheets, and graded material
* Brainstorm test questions with others (use the chapter headings/subheadings as a guide – turn them into questions)
  + Watch for clues from instructor
    - Repeating certain points
    - Writing information down
    - Questions posed to students
    - Extensively covering certain material
    - Heightened interest in a topic
    - Key phrases… “This is important”…
* **Prepare to rock It**
* 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
* If on campus, arrive early and mark your “territory” – preferably a seat with minimal distractions…then relax until test time

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 finish 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.
* **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
* Use grammar rules to assist in choosing and/or eliminating answers
* **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 before you begin
* Notice if the column choices 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
* Read aloud (or sub-vocalize) and notice the flow
* Write legibly if hand-written (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 notes, handouts, powerpoints
* Make a photo copy of the book’s table of contents (or write one out)
* Prepare thoroughly

Final Testing Tidbits

* Answer every question – guess if you aren’t sure of an answer
* Check back through your test before submitting it
* 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!



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