



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 there 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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