

Adapted from <http://www.testtakingtips.com>

Test taking can cause a great amount of anxiety. While nothing replaces regular review of notes, you can use these suggestions to help you best prepare for different types of exams, enabling you to focus your studying and reduce your stress.

General Test Taking Tips

- ✓ Relax! Breathe deeply and take your time.
- ✓ Read everything carefully including the instructions. It's better to read a question two or three times than to rush.
- ✓ If you are completely stuck on a question, move on to the next one and return later. There may be helpful clues coming up, and thinking about something else might help you remember.
- ✓ Put a star next to questions that you are not completely sure about after you've answered them. This way, you can quickly find them later if you have extra time.
- ✓ Time permitting, review ALL of the test questions before you turn in your test! Finishing early can be very tempting but it's not worth making silly mistakes that you would have found upon review.

Multiple Choice Test Tips

- ✓ Read the question before you look at the answers.
- ✓ Come up with the answer in your head before looking at the possible answers, this way the choices given on the test won't throw you off or trick you.
- ✓ Cross out answers that you know aren't right.
- ✓ Read all the choices before choosing your answer.
- ✓ If there is no guessing penalty, always take an educated guess by selecting the answer that makes the most sense.
- ✓ Don't keep changing your answer; usually your first choice is the right one unless you misread the question.
- ✓ In "All of the above" and "None of the above" choices, if you are certain one of the statements is true don't choose "None of the above," or if you are certain one of the statements is false don't choose, "All of the above."
- ✓ A positive choice is more likely to be true than a negative one.
- ✓ If there is an "All of the above" option and you know that at least two of the choices are correct select the "All of the above" choice.
- ✓ Usually the correct answer is the choice with the most information.

TRUE/FALSE TEST TIPS

- ✓ Usually there are more true answers than false on tests.
- ✓ If there is no guessing penalty, guess. You have a 50% chance of getting the right answer.
- ✓ Qualifiers like "never," "only," "always," and "every" mean that the statement must be true all of the time. Usually these type of qualifiers lead to a false answer.
- ✓ Qualifiers like "usually, sometimes, and generally" mean the statement can be considered true or false depending on the circumstances. Usually these type of qualifiers lead to an answer of true.
- ✓ If any part of the question is false, then the entire statement is false, but just because part of a statement is true doesn't necessarily make the entire statement true.

SHORT ANSWER TEST TIPS

- ✓ Try to anticipate questions that will be asked on the test and prepare for them. Usually what your instructor emphasizes in class will be on the test.
- ✓ Use flashcards, writing the key terms, dates and concepts on the front and the definition, event, and explanations on the back.
- ✓ Try not to leave an answer blank, show your work/write down your thoughts, even if you don't get the exact answer, partial credit is often awarded.
- ✓ If you don't know the answer, come back to it after you finish the rest of the test and make an educated guess. Other parts of the test may give you clues to what the answer may be.
- ✓ If you can think of more than one answer for a question, ask the instructor what to do.
- ✓ Read the question carefully and make sure that you answer everything that it asks for; some short answer questions have multiple parts.

ESSAY TEST TIPS

- ✓ Read the directions carefully; pay close attention to whether you are supposed to answer all the essays or only a specified amount (i.e. Answer 2 out of the 3 questions).
- ✓ Make sure that you understand what the question is asking you; if not, ask your instructor.
- ✓ Make sure that you write down everything that is asked of you and more. The more details and facts that you write down, the higher your grade is going to be. However, be sure that you are confident in your details.
- ✓ Budget your time—don't spend the entire test time on one essay.
- ✓ If the question is asking for facts, don't give your personal opinion on the topic.
- ✓ When writing your essay, be as neat as possible; neater papers usually receive higher marks.
- ✓ Making an outline before writing your essay can help focus and organize your paper. If you happen to run out of time, most instructors will give you partial credit for the ideas that you have outlined.
- ✓ Don't write long introductions and conclusions; the bulk of your time should be spent on answering the question(s) asked.
- ✓ Focus on one main idea per paragraph.
- ✓ If you have time left at the end, proofread your work and correct any errors.
- ✓ Budget your time, if you have an hour to write 3 essays, spend no more than 20 minutes on each essay, then if you have time left over at the end go back and finish any incomplete essays.