

Test-Taking Strategies and Tips

Test-Taking Preparation Strategies

In order to achieve success on course examinations, there are essential strategies to consider before going into the classroom to take tests. Below are ideas for advance preparation for the test.

Review class materials and the course syllabus

Make sure that you know exactly what is going to be covered on the test.

Gather information

Find out what topics to study, talk to students who have taken the class, and look at past tests.

Make notes of what you want to review on the day before the test

Create &/or review lists and categories, comparison charts, flash cards, chapter outlines, visual mappings, and hierarchies to keep information fresh in your mind.

Predict practice test questions

This can help you to anticipate what might be on the test and to help alleviate test anxieties. Practice answering these questions, too.

Participate in review sessions and study groups

These can allow you to predict and write practice test questions, explain concepts in your own words, and get immediate feedback from others.

Performing Well on Test Day

There are many skills that you can implement to help create success on test day. Below are five important strategies that can help you do your very best.

Write down important information as soon as you receive the test

Any formulas, lists, equations, facts, or mnemonics you want to remember and refer back to during the test you should write down as soon as you get your test. Write the information in a margin, on the back, or a blank piece of paper (if allowed) quickly when you receive your test.

Survey the test

Take a glance over the test (front and back of pages) to see how it is arranged, look at the different question types, notice different point values, and discover the overall length of the test.

Read ALL directions carefully

This is a crucial step for success in test taking. If you are confused with directions, ask for further explanation.

Budget and use time wisely

If you have leftover time after completing the test, go back and check your responses. You should NOT change your answers if you are panicking or rushing at the end; you SHOULD change your answers if you can completely justify the change due to further clarification you later received about the question.

Do not leave questions blank if running out of time

You know that you will lose points for not answering, so if you are running out of time you should pick up the pace, read faster, and make quicker answer selections. You might have to resort to educated guesses if you are *really* running out of time.

Adapted from: Wong, L. (2006). *Essential study skills* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

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