



Test Taking

General Strategies for Test Taking

Bring needed materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bring pencil, paper, blue books, and/or calculator.
Arrive on time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verify exam dates, times and locations.• Do not talk about the test with other students. The concerns of others tend to increase any worries you have or confuse you.• If you arrive late, take a minute to relax and get organized. Ask your instructor for help if you feel confused.
Do a brain dump	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write down formulas, processes or outlines as soon as possible.• This clears your mind for thinking rather than simply storing information. It also eases the stress of worrying about forgetting.
Preview the test	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note the total number of items. Identify point values. Judge the amount of time you should spend on each item. Spend the most time on questions that receive the most credit.
Read directions carefully	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is a mistake to ignore test directions. Directions provide information you need to get full credit and to mark answers correctly.• Underline key terms and number the steps in the directions.
Answer the easiest questions first	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This builds your confidence.• It also triggers your memory for other information.• If you run out of time you will have answered the questions you knew.
Expect memory blocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mark questions you don't know and go on. Return to these questions when time permits, even if only to guess.• Use positive self-talk to get through periods of anxiety
Attempt every question	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For tests where problems are worked you may get partial credit.• For many objective tests there is no penalty for guessing.• If you don't know the entire answer for an essay write an outline.
Make your responses legible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not use abbreviation or slang.• Write neatly.
Mark through, don't erase, incorrect information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not do this if you are using a scantron!• This saves valuable test time.
Review the questions and your answers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be sure you understood each question.• Also check that you marked the correct response.• It is not always better to stay with your first answer. Find out what's best for you by looking at one of your old tests.

Adapted from: *Study Methods and Reading Techniques*, Rhonda Atkinson and Debbie Longman (1993), West Publishing.