

TEST-TAKING: PREPARATION AND STRATEGIES

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Sources: *Dynamic Learning Systems*
 Learning Success, Wahlstrom & Williams
 Organizing Thinking, Parks and Black
 Orientation to College Learning, Van Blerkom
 The Owner's Manual for the Brain, Howard

TESTS: SELF-ASSESSMENT

Place a checkmark by each statement that is ***usually true*** for you.

- ☐ I complete my reading and assignments well before the exam so I have time for review and study.
- ☐ I use my previous exams to help me prepare for finals.
- ☐ I make sure I know what topics will be covered on the exam.
- ☐ I create self-tests as a way of studying for exams.
- ☐ I space my test study time over a period of several days (or weeks for mid-terms/finals).
- ☐ I plan my exam review/study time.
- ☐ I create study cards.
- ☐ I make up possible objective and essay questions before an exam.
- ☐ I write out essays before the test if the teacher gives possible questions.
- ☐ I review by reciting out loud.
- ☐ I use memory techniques to help me remember the material.
- ☐ I get plenty of sleep the night before an exam.
- ☐ I reduce the number of hours I work or other responsibilities before final exams.
- ☐ I carefully read all of the directions before I begin to answer the questions on an exam.
- ☐ I eliminate wrong answers on multiple-choice exams.
- ☐ I remind myself to breathe and use stress-reducing strategies during exams.
- ☐ I don't leave questions blank unless I am penalized for wrong answers.
- ☐ I use strategies to help figure out the correct answer when I am unsure of it.
- ☐ I stay until the end of the exam time.
- ☐ I organize my response to an essay question answer before I begin to write.
- ☐ I go back over the entire exam before I turn it in to make sure I followed the directions, that my handwriting is easy to read and to review my answers.
- ☐ I don't make careless errors on my exams.
- ☐ I review my exams after they are graded to find out what I did correctly and where I need to improve.
- ☐ I find the correct answers to questions I missed on the exam.

USE *ACTIVE* STUDY STRATEGIES

STRATEGY	PREPARATION	REVIEW
Highlight	Re-mark text and lecture notes, star unknowns	Recite main points out loud
Study cards	Create word cards, question cards, formula cards, problem cards	Recite out loud, shuffle and re-test, test missed items
Study groups	Select and prepare information to share with the group	Explain your materials to other group members – take notes on others' explanations
Text notes	Go through text and write down main points and supporting details	Recite information, identifying connections among ideas from headings
Summaries	Go through text and lecture notes to identify the 'big picture'	Recite out loud
Concept maps (Mind maps)	Create from text or notes	Draw from memory
Study sheets	Select, condense and organize material from text and lecture notes	Recite out loud
End of chapter questions	Write out answers	Practice reciting answers
Self-tests	Select information and create test	Take test in writing and/or out loud, then re-test
Anticipate essays	Predict specific essay questions, plan and prepare answers	Practice reciting main points and writing out answers.
List of 20	Create a list of 20 things you think will be on the exam, include the actual information (not just the topic)	Write and/or recite your 'top 20' and the supporting information.
Charts, maps, diagrams	Practice re-creating charts to memorize the facts	Re-create from memory

CREATE YOUR OWN TEST QUESTIONS

1. Use the reporters questions: Who? - What? - Where? - Why? - When?

2. Use academic terms for higher learning:

Analyze	Explain the major parts or process of something.
Apply	Show function in a specific context.
Compare	Show similarities.
Contrast	Show differences.
Criticize (Critique, Evaluate, Examine)	Present your view (positive or negative), giving supporting evidence.
Define	Give the meaning, giving an example often helps.
Demonstrate	Show function.
Describe	Present major characteristics.
Differentiate	Distinguish between two or more things.
Discuss	Give a general presentation of the question – give examples or details to support the main points.
Explain	Show how and why; clarify.
Identify	Label or explain.
Illustrate	Present examples.
Interpret	Explain the meaning of one thing in context of another.
Justify	Give reasons why, <u>argue in support</u> of a position.
List, Enumerate	Give several ideas, aspects, events, things, qualities, reasons, etc.
Outline	Present main points and essential details.
Restate	Express the original meaning of something in your own words.
Summarize	Briefly present core ideas.
Trace	Show the order of events.

TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES – MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TIME

1. Write your name on the test.
Use a dark pencil, unless required to use ink, so it is easier for the grader to read.
2. Before you read the test, turn it over and write down any key words, concepts or ideas in your mind (**not** on a crib sheet!) **2 – 3 minutes**.
 - things you think might be on the test
 - things you recently studied and need to get down on paper before you forget them
3. Skip the T/F and Multiple-choice questions - go directly to the questions that require long answers or lists (usually essay questions) and PREVIEW the questions. **2 – 3 minutes**
 - quickly write key words in the margins next to each question
 - don't begin answering them yet (unless the exam is only essay questions)
4. Answer the objective (T/F, Multiple-choice, Matching, Fill-in the blank) questions. These questions may help you when you write the essay questions. (By reviewing the essay questions first, you will recognize terms or concepts when they show up in these questions.)
 - Circle or underline the *key words* – to clarify the question.
 - Answer as quickly as you can.
 - Don't spend too much time on questions you're not sure of – circle or star them and return to them later.
5. Essay questions are usually worth more points – if it isn't listed on the test, ask the teacher how much each one is worth (***you have a right to know***).
 - a) READ THE DIRECTIONS
 - b) ***FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS***
 - c) If the directions are not clear to you – ask your instructor!
 - d) Answer the **easier** question(s) first - **OR** – Answer the question(s) worth the **most points** first.
 - e) Be sure: Your answer is relevant – sticks to the question.
You answered the question completely.
 - 1) State your position
 - 2) Provide supporting details
 - 3) Write a conclusion - briefly restate main points, bring to a logical ending
6. Go back and answer the questions you circled or starred – you have probably had another question about the same topics that may help you answer these.
 - Unless the instructor or the test says there is a penalty for guessing – Guess!
 - Even if there is a penalty for guessing – there is also a penalty for *not* answering a question.
7. If you have time left - Use it!
 - Correct any spelling errors
 - Make sure you fully understood the questions
 - Review questions you were not sure about – however don't constantly second-guess yourself

LONG TERM PROJECTS: Break them down into smaller tasks

Name of Course _____

Name of Project _____

Project Due Date _____

Task	Time Needed	Complete by
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____

Choose a class you have an exam in - give the:

- Name of the class _____
- Date of the exam _____
- Type of exam: ___ T/F, ___ multiple-choice, ___ short answer,
 ___ matching, ___ essay
- Topics/material on the exam _____
- Percentage of your final grade _____

Make a review schedule, including:

- Dates: you will review (write the date in the small square)
- Time: length of time you will review on those dates
- Specific Material: (which text pages, lecture notes, etc.) you will review on those dates
- Study Strategies: (self-test, study cards, study group, previous tests, etc.)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
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