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# Test Taking Strategies

## Write down right away what you don't want to forget

When you first receive your exam, turn it over and jot down everything you want to make sure you remember.

## Screen the entire exam

Circle key words and strike through answers you want to eliminate.

## Start with what you know

Don't waste time early on struggling with the more difficult questions.

## Plan your time accordingly

Allocate your time wisely; don't wrestle with one question for several minutes.

## Read the instructions carefully

Misreading or skipping the directions altogether can be a lethal mistake. Slow down and make sure you understand what you're being asked to do.

## Read the questions thoroughly and carefully

Sometimes skipping over a word in the sentence will cause you to jump to a false conclusion. several minutes.

## Change your answers if you know you're wrong

In one study, less than 10% of student made changes that decreased their scores, while 74% made changes that increased their scores.

## Ask for clarification

If the exam appears to have an error, or if you have a technical question or a question about the test-taking process, don't be afraid to ask!

## Plan for time to review

When you're finished, go back over all your answers. Look at your work critically, as if you were the instructor. Careless errors can be costly.

## Don't give in to peer pressure

Take as much of the allotted time as you need. Everyone works at a different rate.



# Test Taking Strategies

## Tips based on **Exam Type**

### Fill-in-the Blank Questions

- Answer the questions you know first.
- Watch for clues. Make sure that your choice fits in grammatically and logically.
- If more than one answer comes to mind, write both in the margin. Come back later and choose the one you want.
- Answer all of the questions.

### True/False Questions

- Pay attention to extreme modifiers such as always, all, never and every, which tend to make the statement false.
- Look for any other factors that will make the statement wrong. For the statement/question to be true, the entire question must be true.
- Unless there is a penalty for wrong answers, answer every question.
- Trust your instincts. Don't change an answer unless you are certain it is wrong.

### Essay Exams

- Read directions and all questions carefully.
- Jot notes or create an outline alongside each question.
- Decide how much time to devote to each question.
- Start with the easiest question.
- Include factual details (examples) to support your answer.
- Use all of the available time.

### Matching Questions

- Read the entire list before selecting a match.
- Look for clues to determine the types of items and their relationships.
- Eliminate and cross out items on the second list when you are certain you have a match.

### Multiple Choice Questions

- Try to answer the question/statement without looking at the choices first. Then find your answer among the choices given.
- Do not stop at the first possible answer. Read all answers before making a selection, so you can be sure it is the best option.
- If you cannot answer a question within a minute or less, skip it and plan to come back to it later.
- Eliminate or cross out choices that you know are wrong. This will help you narrow down your choices.
- When answering an "all of the above" question, if more than one of your choices is true, then it's a strong possibility that "all of the above" is the correct answer.
- Look for grammatical clues to help you answer the question. For example, if the question ends with an indefinite article "an," then the correct response probably begins with a vowel.
- Take the time to check your answer sheet (or Scantron) before you hand it in.

### Open-Book Exams

- Prepare. Prepare. Prepare.
- Put markers or flags in your book to indicate important areas. The key to success is to be able to find information quickly.
- If allowed, write formulas, definitions, key words, sample questions, and main points on the margin of your book.
- Stay organized with your notes.