

Test-Taking Tips

Before the Test

- * **Know what the exam will cover. Prepare a Study Checklist.**
- * Allow enough time -- at least one week -- to review all material and create study tools for better understanding. Aim for application and synthesis, asking yourself "how" and "why" questions.
- * **Get a good night's rest. Don't pull an all-nighter.**
- * Research shows that you'll achieve a higher grade if you prepare for the exam as if you were anticipating an essay exam. You tend to gain a deeper understanding of the material if learning is approached in this manner.
- * **Eat lightly prior to your exam. Be sure to include proteins, but avoid excessive amounts of sugar and caffeine.**
- * Practice relaxation techniques (i.e., deep breathing, guided imagery) to control your anxiety level.
- * **Be confident in your ability to do well. Use positive self-talk.**

During the Test

- * **Ignore/avoid other test-takers. Their anxiety isn't good for you (and can be contagious).**
- * Sit in your usual seat, if possible.
- * **Bring all necessary materials, i.e., pencils, pens, a watch, scratch paper, blue book, etc.**
- * Know exactly how long you have to complete the exam.
- * **Listen carefully to any verbal instructions.**
- * When given the test, read the directions.
- * **Look over the entire test before answering any questions.**
- * Set up a schedule--budget your time according to the number of points possible.
- * **Allow 5 minutes to go over the test before handing it in.**
- * Answer the easiest questions first.
- * **Change your answer only if you're absolutely sure that your second choice is correct.**

After the Test

- * **Analyze your performance in terms of the test-taking strategies you used. Did your time schedule work? Did you lose points on test items which should have been your strength?**
- * Identify/separate errors from mistakes.
- * **Give yourself credit for what you did right.**
- * Decide how you'll approach your next exam.

Tips compiled by:
University Learning Center
The University of Arizona