**Test Taking Strategies**

The most important test-taking strategy is to prepare ahead of time.

**PREPARING FOR THE TEST**

- Study regularly and review your notes periodically so that you are familiar with the material. Long term retention is more reliable than short term retention.
- If the instructor reviews for the test, ask questions so you are better able to judge what might be on the test and how the questions may appear.
- Use reviewing and questioning strategies (flash cards and other learning aids are helpful).
- Use self-test strategies.
- **Don’t cram!!**
- Get some rest. Don’t use caffeine to keep you awake for the test. The high will fade just when you need it most. The same goes for sugar.
- Don’t eat a heavy meal just before testing. It will make you drowsy.
- Dress comfortably, but confidently!!

**BEFORE THE TEST**

- Arrive a little early. Take time to relax, get comfortable and perhaps do a last quick review so your mind is on the subject matter.
- Be confident!! Have a positive attitude!!
- If you are very nervous, do physical exercises to relax (scrunches, deep breaths, etc.).
- Be prepared with the necessary tools (pens, pencils, calculators, paper, etc.).

**DURING THE TEST**

- Read the directions and follow them!!
- If there are key facts or formulas you think you may forget as the test progresses, write them down in the margin.
- Begin with the easy questions. Return to complete the more difficult ones. Be sure to mark those you have not answered so you remember to go back to them.
- Budget your time. Don’t spend too much time on one question so you don’t have time to complete the remainder.
- Read the questions carefully so you know what is being asked, but do not read too much into the questions.
- Guess if necessary 😊!!
- Go with your initial hunches. Don’t change an answer unless you are absolutely positively certain your first choice was wrong.
Do not feel rushed. Use all the time allowed for the test if you need it. Just because others finish before you doesn’t mean you have to hurry to finish.

Check your answers before turning in your test.

HINTS FOR SPECIFIC TYPES OF TESTS

MATH AND SCIENCE TESTS

- Write numbers legibly.
- Number your steps in any computation so the instructor can easily follow.
- Use the correct mathematical and scientific symbols.
- Line up columns evenly.

MATCHING AND FILL IN THE BLANK

- Read the answers first so you know what is available.
- Cross off the answers you have used so you do not reuse them. This also reduces the number of choices for those questions you are unsure of.
- Eliminate any words you know won’t fit as an answer to a particular question.
- Look for verb tenses, terminology and vocabulary clues.

TRUE AND FALSE

- Look for qualifying words such as all, every, never, etc. Questions with these words are many times false.
- Note the length of the question. To be true, all parts of the statement have to be true. The longer the statement, the less likely this is to happen.
- Watch out for false logic, such as two true statements linked with a word that would make the statement false.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

- Watch out for qualifying words such as never, all, always, etc. These words are too exclusive and rarely are the correct choice.
- Read all of the choices carefully.
- Eliminate obviously incorrect answers.
- Look for clues to answers you are unsure of in other questions in the test.
- If you find even one choice that doesn’t comply, you can immediately eliminate any “all of the above” or “none of the above” choices.
- Exclude any ridiculous answers.
- Watch for clues that may be provided in the questions – especially when it comes to vocabulary.
If you have to guess, the longest answer is often the most correct as it may be the most specific.

ESSAY AND SHORT ANSWER

- Before you begin, jot down notes of facts you want to be sure to include in your essay.
- Prepare a rough outline so you remember to cover everything in an organized manner.
- Plan so you have ample time for all the questions you need to answer.
- Write as if your reader has NO knowledge of the topic. Be thorough and clear.
- If you believe you don’t know anything about the topic, just start writing. Sometimes you find you know more than you thought. Then take what you DO know and write your essay as clearly and organized as possible.
- Write as neatly as possible so your answers are legible.
- Use proper grammar and full sentences.
- Proofread for errors. Determine if the presentation is logical, fully supported and your ideas flow smoothly.

AFTER THE TEST

- When the test is returned, analyze how you did.
- What was covered? Did the instructor use material from lectures? From the text book? From class exercises?
- What type of questions were used? True/False? Essay? Multiple Choice?
- What were your weak areas?
- Use this test for review material for future exams.