

BE TEST-WISE!
(Helpful Hints on How to Take Tests With Confidence)

Prior to an Exam

- o Get lots of sleep & eat well before an exam.
- o Aerobic exercise can help you get rid of excess or nervous energy.
- o Stretching & relaxation techniques are a good way to unwind.
- o Arrive early.
- o Listen to the instructor's instructions.
- o Scan the entire test after the instructor has stopped giving instructions.
- o Read all directions carefully before you begin answering questions.

Multiple Choice Exams

- o Answer all questions in order.
 - o Don't linger too long on any one question. Skip the ones you don't know & return to them later.
 - o Read all the choices before answering a multiple-choice question.
 - o Cross out each answer you can definitely eliminate.
 - o Reread all questions that contain negative wording such as "not" or "least" for clarification.
 - o Watch for qualifiers or limiting phrases.
 - o Be alert for grammatical agreement or inconsistencies.
 - o When opposite answers appear in the same question, one of them is often correct.
 - o Guess! (If there is no penalty for it.)
 - eliminate the choices you know are wrong.
 - Look for clues in the remaining choices (agreement between question and answer in logic, number, gender, etc.)
 - Choosing the longest answer is a good guess.
 - o Be very careful about changing your answer. Often first hunches are correct.
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True/False Exams

- o Answer questions in order.
- o Skip questions you don't know and return to them later.
- o Watch for qualifiers or limiting phrases in the possible answers.
 - Words like frequently, probably, & generally are qualifiers and are often true.
 - Words like all, always, never, & everyone are limiting and are usually false.
- o Be alert for multiple ideas or concepts in the same true/false statement.
- o Guess!

Matching Exams

- o Work with only one column at a time.
- o Mark off answers as you use them.

Essay and Short Answer Exams

- o Read all the questions first.
- o Start with the easiest questions first; do the more difficult ones last.
- o Underline key words in the questions like "discuss," "identify," "explain," and "compare."
- o Begin your answer by restating the question in a way that will clearly explain what your answer will be.
- o Answer each question, even if you have only a partial answer.
- o Be realistic. Answers don't have to be literary masterpieces. Focus on main ideas. Use short, simple sentences to make your points.
- o If you're having trouble staying focused, think of an outline like this one:
 - statement of your position
 - rationale
 - example(s)
 - summary
- o Budget your time. Plan to spend more time on answers that are worth more points.
- o Use your time wisely. Never leave early; review your answers; check grammar & punctuation.

Problem-Solving Exams

- o Write down hard-to-remember formulas, equations, and rules on your test paper.
- o If you can't solve a problem, go on to the next one.
- o Show all the steps in your work & turn in all your computations, even if you can't come up with a final answer or you know your final answer is wrong.
- o Recheck your answers if you have time.

Standardized Exams

- o Get a study guide. Most standardized exams have books or study aids available. Check book stores and libraries.
- o Be realistic. There will be some questions you can't answer. Circle them and return to them if you have time.
- o Guess! Use the methods discussed for guessing, especially if you are not penalized for wrong answers.

General Test-wise Tips to Remember

- o Arrive early.
- o Bring materials you need with you (pencils, paper, calculator, etc.)
- o Listen to instructor's instructions.
- o Read all directions carefully.
- o Immediately write down formulas or information you might forget.
- o Ask instructor for help if a question is unclear.
- o Work at your own pace. Don't try to be the first to finish; don't worry that others are finishing before you.
- o If you have time, review your work.
- o Don't panic! Breathe deep and focus.

Words that Explain the Intent of an Essay Question

ANALYZE: Look at separate parts and discuss each part.

COMPARE: Look for similarities and differences among two or more things.

CONTRAST: Emphasize the differences.

CRITICIZE: Analyze and evaluate material; make judgments.

DEFINE: Give a definition specific to course material; you may want to include an example.

DESCRIBE: give a detailed account; list characteristics and qualities.

DISCUSS: Consider and debate the pros and cons of an issue.

EVALUATE: Give your opinion or an expert's opinion; include supportive evidence.

EXPLAIN: Make an idea clear; show logical development.

ILLUSTRATE: Clearly explain by use of concrete examples.