

# Ten Tips for Test Taking

## 1. Come prepared; arrive early for tests

- Bring all the materials you need, such as, pencils and pens, a calculator, a dictionary, and a watch.

## 2. Stay relaxed and confident

- Remind yourself that you are well prepared and are going to do well.
- Don't let yourself become anxious; if you feel anxious before or during a test, take several slow, deep breaths to relax.
- Don't talk to other students before a test; anxiety is contagious.

## 3. Be comfortable, but alert

- Choose a good spot to take the test.
- Make sure you have enough room to work.
- Maintain an upright posture in your seat.

## 4. Preview the test (if it is not timed)

- Spend 10% of your test time reading through the test carefully, marking key terms and deciding how to budget your time.
- Plan to do the easy questions first and the most difficult questions last.
- As you read the questions, jot down brief notes indicating ideas you can use later in your answers.

## 5. Answer the test questions in a strategic order

- Begin by answering the easy questions you know, then those with the highest point value.
- The last questions you answer should:
  - Be the most difficult,
  - Take the greatest amount of writing, or
  - Have the least point value

## 6. When taking a multiple choice test, know when to guess

- First eliminate answers you know are wrong.
- Always guess when there is no penalty for guessing or you can eliminate options.
- Don't guess if you have no basis for your choice and if you are penalized for guessing.
- Since your first choice is usually correct, don't change your answers unless you are sure of the correction.

## 7. When taking essay tests, think before you write

- Create a brief outline for your essay by jotting down a few words to indicate ideas you want to discuss. Then, number the items in your list to indicate the order in which you will discuss them.

**8. When taking an essay test, get right to the point**

- State your main point in the first sentence.
- Use your first paragraph to provide an overview of your essay.
- Use the rest of your essay to discuss these points in more detail.
- Back up your points with specific information, examples, or quotations from your readings and notes.

**9. Reserve 10% of your test time for review**

- Review your test; resist the urge to leave as soon as you have completed all the items.
- Make sure you have answered all the questions.
- Proofread your writing for spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- Check your math answers for careless mistakes (e.g., misplaced decimals). Match your actual answers for math problems against quick estimates.

**10. Analyze your test results**

- Each test can further prepare you for the next test.
- Decide which strategies worked best for you.
- Identify those that didn't work well and replace them.
- Use your tests to review when studying for final exams.