

Test Taking Strategies

Test Prep

Preparation for your first test should begin on the first day of class; this includes attending class, staying engaged during class, taking good notes, completing homework assignments, and reviewing course materials/notes on a regular basis. The best way to reduce any test anxiety is to **be prepared** for the exam. Key to successful test taking: **Preparation!**

- Determine what you need to know for the exam
- Try connecting new information with what you already know
- Daily/weekly review sessions work much better than a cram session the night before an exam
- Test yourself or meet with a study partner/study group/tutor
- Get a good night's sleep prior to test day—do not cram!

Test Day

- ***Be sure to eat—Take a brisk walk—Use positive self-talk***
- ***Have everything you will need for the test***
 - Pencils and/or pens
 - Textbook and/or notes (when allowed)
 - Scratch paper (if allowed)
 - Formula cards or other note cards (when allowed)
 - Calculator or other instruments/equipment needed.
- ***Be on time—not too early, definitely not late!***
 - Arriving early is not always best... talking with others before the exam may cause confusion or increase stress.
 - However, if you arrive late, you may feel rushed/stressed, and may have missed some important directions. You also may not be able to sit for the exam.
- ***Brain Dump***—as soon as you are handed your exam, write down all the formulas, processes, or other important information you may need. This helps to reduce stress and free your mind.
- ***Quickly scan the exam:*** Look at the different sections, number of questions, and/or point values. Estimate the amount of time you will need for each section.
- ***Carefully read all the directions:*** This is one of the most important factors in taking an exam.
- ***Read each question.*** Underline key terms, processes or steps required, absolute words such as *always, everyone, never*.
- ***Answer those questions that are valued with higher points first; OR...***
- ***Answer those you know first or feel are easiest:*** This helps build confidence. Do not go back and second-guess yourself if you were confident you knew the answer.
- ***If you get stuck,*** place a mark by the question and move on. Come back when finished answering all you know. Sometimes other questions in the exam will provide information for the questions that are more challenging.
- ***Attempt all questions:*** If there is not a deduction for wrong answers, and you do not know—guess!
- ***Legible:*** Are your answers clear, organized, and/or legible?
- ***Stay relaxed and breathe***—if you draw a blank or lose focus, move on to another question, or begin writing everything you remember about the topic on a blank paper.
- ***Use the entire time provided:*** Do not worry if others finish and leave. Use the time provided to review the questions and your answers; especially the questions that were challenging.