

Test Taking Strategies

Test Taking Tips For Specific Types of Tests:

Practice these strategies online at: <http://www.byu.edu/cccl/learning/practice.shtml>

A. Multiple Choice:

1. Try to answer the question before looking at the answer.
2. Look for the answer which best completes the stem.
3. Use the process of elimination.
4. When numbers are in each alternative, choose the numbers that are in the middle range, not the extremes.
5. Choose answers that are longer and more descriptive.
6. When two very similar answers appear it is likely that one of them is correct.
7. Choices containing unfamiliar terms are not likely correct.
8. Watch out for negative words in the instructions or in the main question. ie. Which one does NOT...

B. True and False:

1. There is no substitute for the truth. If any part of the question is false, the whole thing is wrong!!!
2. Answer the questions as quickly as possible. Don't probe for hidden meanings, just go with your first instinct.
3. When in doubt guess true. Instructors tend to emphasize the true information.
4. Look for extreme modifiers that tend to make the question false. ie. All, Always, Never, Only etc.
5. Identify qualifiers that tend to make the question true ie. Usually, Few, Frequently, Often, Most, etc.
6. Watch out for negative words that may affect the truth. The prefixes "un", "im", "miss" will alter the meaning of the statement. Double negatives make the statement true. ex. Not uncommon, actually means common.
7. Questions that state a reason tend to be false.
8. Questions with more facts tend to be false.

C. Matching Questions:

- 1. Examine both lists to determine the types of items and their relationships.**
- 2. Use one list as a starting point and go through the second list to find a match.**
- 3. Move through the entire list before selecting a match.**

-If you make a match before going through the entire list you may error because an answer later in the list may be more correct.

- 4. Cross off items on the second list when you are certain that you have a match.**

-It helps you stay organized.

- 5. Do not guess until all absolute matches have been made.**

-If you guess early in the process you may eliminate an answer that could be used correctly for a later choice.

D. Sentence Completion Or Fill-In the Blank Questions:

- 1. Read the question with the intent to give an answer and make the sentence grammatically correct.**
- 2. Concentrate on the number of blanks in the sentence and the length of the space.**
- 3. Provide a descriptive answer when you cannot think of the exact word or words.**

E. Essay Questions:

- 1. Organize your thoughts before you begin to write.**
- 2. Paraphrase the original question to form your introductory statements.**
- 3. Write your answer clearly, so the reader will be able to decode your writing and understand your ideas.**
- 4. Read each essay question carefully with the intent to identify the verbs or words that give you direction.**

-Circle the direction verbs that ask you:

- to review an idea or concept (Summarize, Survey, Discuss, Explain.)
- for a set of items (Trace, Outline, List, Diagram, Solve)
- to speak in favor of a concept or give the reasons why it should be accepted as valid (Defend, Argue, Debate, Contend, Justify)
- for a specific meaning or picture of a concept (Define, Clarify, Describe, Depict, Illustrate)
- to show differences in several ideas or situations (Contrast, Compare, Distinguish, Differentiate)

- 5. Use good principles of English composition when answering all types of essay questions.**

- Form a clear thesis statement.
- Use examples to back up your answers.
- Always include a conclusion!

- 6. Keep to the point.**

- Try for quality, not just quantity.

7. Proofread your completed answer.

General Guidelines for Test Preparation:

-Know the testing format; Multiple Choice, True/False, Fill-in etc.

-Review the material throughout the week

-DON'T CRAM!!! When you have a cram session and then go purge all the information on the test, you're not really learning. It's like a farmer who plants his field in the morning and then tries to harvest it in the evening. It's not going to happen.

-Get enough sleep and have a good meal!

-Don't hold last minute reviews while waiting in line at the testing center. They will more than likely cause you to be more stressed.

-Arrive to the exam area early. Use the restroom and get a drink before you start.

Reducing Test Anxiety:

1. Before the exam-

- Beware of attachments: A fixation with failure is an attachment. Attachments cause you to "drown" on a test.

-Identify test taking attachments:

- "I must get an 'A'"
- "I always fail anyway"
- "This is too hard"

Let go and relax when it comes to tests!
Realize that letting go of your attachments
doesn't mean you're letting go
of the goals you have set for yourself. You're just not
letting those goals drag you down.

2. During the exam-

-Sit in an area where you can concentrate. ie: avoid doors and windows.

-Bring supplies: pencils, calculators, scratch paper, late fees, snacks, water, etc.

-Relax! Take a minute to laugh before the exam. Relieve a little tension.

-Music Room: Upstairs in the testing center. Smaller room. Enlightening music to soothe you.

-Write down test formulas and other memorized facts. Free your mind.

-Review directions

-Timed Test: Allocate time to each section of test according to point value.

-Don't spend too much time on any one question. If you don't know the answer come back later.

-Guess unless there's a penalty.

-Change answers only when certain.

-Learn from your tests. What went well? What can you do better?