

# Test Taking Tips

**T**est taking is a fact of life, and test taking should not feel as if it is a new experience each time. Tests help instructors gauge progress, measure skills, and determine grades.

**W**hen you are confident in your test-taking skills, you will have less test anxiety and be able to focus on showing what you've learned. That's what tests are all about.

## Preparing for the Test

- **Go to Class**
- **Create Mnemonics** (i.e.: Every Good Boy Does Fine helps to remember a music scale)
- **Make a Study Guide**
- **Make Flash Cards**
- **Quiz Yourself; Have Someone Quiz You**
- **Set Time Goals**
- **Remember to Take Breaks**
- **Don't Study Alone**
- **Study During the Week**
- **Schedule Time for Studying**
- **Get Lots of Sleep**

## During the Test

- **After the instructor hands out the test...**
  - Look over the entire test.
  - Listen carefully to verbal directions and read written directions carefully.
  - Write down essential, memorized information immediately—use the test margins for this.
  - Before you begin the test, write or draw mnemonic devices in margins.
  - Try to relax and think positively.
- **Taking the test**
  - Answer easy questions first. This will help you gain confidence.
  - Pace yourself.
  - If you are unsure about an answer, record your first guess.
  - Mark questions you are unsure of so you can go back over them if time permits.
  - Don't leave questions blank.

- Ask the instructor if you don't understand a question.
- Upcoming questions may provide clues to help answer previous questions, so go back if you are sure about changing an answer.
- Ignore the pace of other students; don't worry about being the last person done.
- Recheck answers if you have time.
- **Use the following tips when taking a True/False test**
  - Look for key words such as not, always, never, all, must; they generally indicate a false answer.
  - Thoroughly read questions.
  - Circle key words in the question.
  - Remember, if any part of the answer is false, the whole answer is false.
  - Don't change your answer. No second guessing. Only change an answer if you are sure about an answer.
- **Use the following tips when taking a Multiple Choice test**
  - Rule out obviously wrong answers.
  - Don't assume that there is an answer pattern, such as A, A, B, B, C, C.
  - Read the question carefully before you look at choices. Develop your own answer and see if that answer is a choice.
- **Use the following tips when taking a Matching test**
  - Scan the whole column of possible matches rather than stopping at the first likely answer.
  - Cross out the choices as you use them.
  - Avoid guessing until you are absolutely stumped.

### **Use the following tips when taking an Open Book test**

- Prepare a sheet with important facts or formulas to avoid spending time looking them up.
- Mark important pages with sticky notes or paper clips.
- Practice using the index to look up specific topics.

## **After the Test**

- **Provide yourself with positive affirmations.**
  - Seek a stress-relieving activity.
  - Reward yourself.
  - Find time for rest and relaxation.
  - Focus on learning, not on the grade.
  - Learn from your mistakes.
- **Review material and test results.**
  - Review your textbook and notes for correct exam answers.
  - Review the test, identify your errors, and learn from your mistakes.
  - Make an appointment with the instructor to ask questions, seek clarification, and address concerns.

- **Start planning for future tests and final exams.**
  - In preparation for final exam, record or highlight test topics.
  - Recall the structure of the test, so that you are better prepared for the next one.
  - Analyze the source from which test questions came; i.e., textbook vs. notes.
  - Reassess your study habits and test-taking strategies.
  - Join a discussion group.
  - Seek tutorial services and other study resources.