

Tips on Taking Exams

A. Before the exam:

1. Develop a positive attitude towards exams.
2. Be prepared – study regularly, avoid cramming; a few days before the test, develop and follow a specific study and review plan.
3. Learn to cope with exam anxiety.
4. Review past quizzes; note your mistakes and correct them.
5. If possible, determine the type of exam to be given (essay, true/false, etc.); study accordingly.
6. If possible, study exams given by the professor in the past.
7. If you review with other students, be sure you and they are prepared and confident.
8. Go to the exam with all needed materials (e.g. blue books, #2 pencils, etc.).
9. Get a good night's sleep before the exam.
10. Arrive on time for the exam.
11. Develop a calm, positive attitude as you begin the exam; especially avoid last minute cramming, panicked discussions with classmates, dwelling on insecurities, etc.

B. While taking the exam:

1. Take exams with an overall strategy in mind:
 - a. Skim over the entire exam and set up a schedule that will allow you to finish the entire exam.
 - b. Note the most important questions – allot them adequate time.
 - c. Note essay questions – allot them adequate time, perhaps answering them first.
 - d. Note difficult questions – answer them last; look for clues to their hard items answers in other questions; don't get “stuck” ...skip and come back to them later.
 - e. Be sure all questions are answered, unless there is a penalty for errors.
2. Read instructions and questions CAREFULLY:
 - a. Ask the instructor for any clarification you might need.
 - b. Pay special attention to key terms.

be. c. Interpret questions as they are, not as you think they should

3. On essay exams:

- when
the
do
"padding."
partial
double
you remember
- a. As soon as the exam begins, jot down any dates, statistics, formulae, etc. you've memorized. Refer back to them necessary.
 - b. Before writing, jot down ideas, organize them and formulate topic sentence.
 - c. If you know the material, write as concisely as possible but include details, specific examples; eliminate
 - d. If you don't know it, try to put something down to get credit.
 - e. If you run short of time, use an outline form to finish.
 - f. Watch your handwriting. Leave wide margins and/or space, for legibility and so you can add points later.
 - g. Re-read your essays to catch errors in content and writing.

4. On objective exams (true/false, short answer, matching, multiple choice):

- singular
vowel or consonant (a,
never,
choose
or eliminate
that comes closest.
- a. Answer all questions unless you are penalized for guessing.
 - b. Sentence completion: Note whether sentence requires a or plural answer or one beginning with a an).
 - c. Look for subtleties, qualifiers (always, often, sometimes, completely).
 - d. Multiple choice: cover answers; answer question yourself; alternative which coincides with your response obviously wrong answers; then choose the one
 - e. Identify "best" answer if no "perfect" answer exists.

5. Before you turn in your exam:

- a. Re-read instructions and check that all items are answered.
- b. Proofread essays and recalculate problems.
- c. Use the allotted time to check and review – don't hurry!