

Tips for Better Test-Taking

When you take a test, you are demonstrating your ability to understand course material or perform certain tasks. The fact that tests determine what grade you get, minimizes the real purpose of tests.

The following steps will help you approach tests with confidence and may help you avoid careless errors.

I. Preparation

- (1) Arrive early for tests. Bring all the material you will need such as pencils, pens, a calculator, a dictionary, and a watch. Verify with your professor what is allowed during the test.
- (2) Be comfortable but alert. Choose a good spot and make sure you have enough room to work. Maintain comfortable posture but don't slouch.
- (3) Stay relaxed and confident. Remind yourself that you are well-prepared and are going to do well. If you find yourself anxious, take several slow, deep breaths to relax. Do not talk about the test to other students just before the test; anxiety is contagious.

II. Test-Taking

- (1) Read the directions carefully. This may be obvious, but it will help you avoid careless errors. If there is time, quickly look through the test for an overview, try to pay attention to key terms and jot down brief notes.
- (2) Answer questions in a strategic order. Start with the easy questions to build confidence and score points, then mentally orient yourself to vocabulary terms and concepts.
- (3) Try to resist the urge to leave as soon as you have completed all the items. Review your test to make sure that you have answered all questions. Proofread your writing for spelling, grammar, punctuation and decimal points.
- (4) Do not "second-guess" yourself and change your original answers. Research has indicated that your first hunch is likely to be correct. You should only change answers to questions if you originally misread them or if you have encountered information elsewhere in the test that indicates with certainty that your first choice is incorrect.

Remember, always analyze your test results. Each test can further prepare you for the next test. Use your tests to review when studying for final exams. Decide on and adopt study strategies that worked best for you and identify those that did not work well and replace them.

Good Luck!

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