

Test Taking

Strategies for Any Test

- Arrive on time.
- Write down memory cues in the margin or on the back of your test (e.g., facts, formulas, dates, names, and terms that you might forget).
- Survey the test.
- Read and follow directions—ask for an explanation for anything you don’t understand.
- Plan and use all of your time, even if you don’t need it.
 - ✓ Spend the most time answering questions that are worth the most points.
 - ✓ Save a few minutes to proofread your test and answer any multiple choice questions you may have skipped.
- Answer questions you are sure of first. Put a ? next to those you are *unsure* of and an X next to those you don’t know at all. Answer the ? items second, then the X items.

True-False Questions

- If you don’t know the answer, make an “informed guess”.
- True-false tests often contain more true than false answers. Mark a statement true unless you *know* it’s false.
- If a statement contains absolute qualifiers, assume it’s false.
- If a statement contains relative qualifiers, assume it’s true.
- Assume a statement is false if any part of it is false.
- When a true-false question states a reason, it is more likely to be false.
- When a true-false question contains a double negative, you can cross out both negatives without changing the meaning of the statement they appear in. (Ex: “Most students are **not unwilling** to leave class early” means the same as “Most students are willing to leave class early”.) If a sentence has three negatives, you can cross out two without changing the meaning of the statement.

Multiple Choice Questions

- If you know the material, answer the question in your mind then read all the options, looking for your answer.
- Cross out the incorrect options in order to focus your attention on reasonable responses.
- If you know the material but can’t answer the question in your mind, eliminate the options you know are incorrect and choose the answer from those remaining.
- Treat each option as a true-false question.



- If you don't know the material, or can't figure out the answer, guess.
 - ✓ Options that contain the phrases "all of the above" or "none of the above" are frequently the correct choices.
 - ✓ If two options are similar, one of the options is probably the correct answer.
 - ✓ If one option is more complete or contains more information than the others, it may be the correct one.
 - ✓ An option that contains an absolute word is probably a distracter, an incorrect answer.
 - ✓ An option containing an unfamiliar word may be a distracter—when you are guessing, you are more likely to choose the right answer if you choose an option that is familiar.
 - ✓ If the list of options is a list of numbers, middle numbers tend to be correct answers—the highest and lowest numbers tend to be distracters.

Essay Questions (Short Answer)

- Read the question carefully and make sure you understand what is being asked.
- Watch for instruction words.
- Answer the question briefly and precisely.
- Stay on the topic and avoid stating your opinion, unless the question asks you to do so.
- Restate the question in your answer. This makes it easier to read and follow your explanation.
- If you don't know the answer, move on to another question. Information from another question may jog your memory. Don't leave a question unanswered—try to write something.

Essay Questions (Long Answer)

- Read the question carefully. Watch for instruction words and make sure you understand what you're being asked to do. Ask for clarification if necessary.
- Think about and plan your answer, allowing enough time to write thoughtfully.
- Outline your answer before you begin to write.
- Incorporate the question into your first sentence, and briefly state your answer to the question.
- Develop the points that explain your answer and provide enough details to show your understanding of the material.
- Allow enough time to proofread and correct grammatical or spelling errors.
- If time is running out, outline the remaining answer(s) to demonstrate to your instructor that you do have knowledge of the material.