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Test Taking Strategies

Write down right away what you don't want to forget

When you first receive your exam, turn it over and jot down everything you want to make sure you remember.

Screen the entire exam

Circle key words and strike through answers you want to eliminate.

Start with what you know

Don't waste time early on struggling with the more difficult questions.

Plan your time accordingly

Allocate your time wisely; don't wrestle with one question for several minutes.

Read the instructions carefully

Misreading or skipping the directions altogether can be a lethal mistake. Slow down and make sure you understand what you're being asked to do.

Read the questions thoroughly and carefully

Sometimes skipping over a word in the sentence will cause you to jump to a false conclusion. several minutes.

Change your answers if you know you're wrong

In one study, less than 10% of student made changes that decreased their scores, while 74% made changes that increased their scores.

Ask for clarification

If the exam appears to have an error, or if you have a technical question or a question about the test-taking process, don't be afraid to ask!

Plan for time to review

When you're finished, go back over all your answers. Look at your work critically, as if you were the instructor. Careless errors can be costly.

Don't give in to peer pressure

Take as much of the allotted time as you need. Everyone works at a different rate.



Test Taking Strategies

Tips based on **Exam Type**

Fill-in-the Blank Questions

- Answer the questions you know first.
- Watch for clues. Make sure that your choice fits in grammatically and logically.
- If more than one answer comes to mind, write both in the margin. Come back later and choose the one you want.
- Answer all of the questions.

True/False Questions

- Pay attention to extreme modifiers such as always, all, never and every, which tend to make the statement false.
- Look for any other factors that will make the statement wrong. For the statement/question to be true, the entire question must be true.
- Unless there is a penalty for wrong answers, answer every question.
- Trust your instincts. Don't change an answer unless you are certain it is wrong.

Essay Exams

- Read directions and all questions carefully.
- Jot notes or create an outline alongside each question.
- Decide how much time to devote to each question.
- Start with the easiest question.
- Include factual details (examples) to support your answer.
- Use all of the available time.

Matching Questions

- Read the entire list before selecting a match.
- Look for clues to determine the types of items and their relationships.
- Eliminate and cross out items on the second list when you are certain you have a match.

Multiple Choice Questions

- Try to answer the question/statement without looking at the choices first. Then find your answer among the choices given.
- Do not stop at the first possible answer. Read all answers before making a selection, so you can be sure it is the best option.
- If you cannot answer a question within a minute or less, skip it and plan to come back to it later.
- Eliminate or cross out choices that you know are wrong. This will help you narrow down your choices.
- When answering an "all of the above" question, if more than one of your choices is true, then it's a strong possibility that "all of the above" is the correct answer.
- Look for grammatical clues to help you answer the question. For example, if the question ends with an indefinite article "an," then the correct response probably begins with a vowel.
- Take the time to check your answer sheet (or Scantron) before you hand it in.

Open-Book Exams

- Prepare. Prepare. Prepare.
- Put markers or flags in your book to indicate important areas. The key to success is to be able to find information quickly.
- If allowed, write formulas, definitions, key words, sample questions, and main points on the margin of your book.
- Stay organized with your notes.