



# SUCCESSFUL TEST-TAKING

(adapted from <https://connect.cognella.com/drc/0D59202527F64DD25CC457C3919CCBF6>)

Visit the Learning Success Center

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# TEST-TAKING INSIGHTS

- Test taking is a skill that can be learned
- Preparing for and taking tests in college is an excellent opportunity to gain life experience
- “Tests” in your career and in life include deadlines, situations that require calm and grace under pressure and sometimes actual tests
- Successful test taking requires preparation and practice all semester long
- Knowing you are prepared will give you confidence to relax and do your best during the test
- Start your preparation the first day of the semester

# **SUCCESSFUL TEST-TAKING PREPARATION OCCURS DURING CLASS**

- On the first day of class, read the course syllabus to learn the course requirements and possibly the type of tests the professor will give
- Purchase textbooks at the beginning of the semester and have available all required materials
- Be an active listener
- Take notes and participate in class

# **SUCCESSFUL TEST-TAKING PREPARATION OCCURS OUTSIDE OF CLASS**

- Read text chapters as they are assigned and take notes on the material
- Comprehend the material before class to help keep you engaged and active during class
- Complete all assignments in a timely manner
- Review lecture notes, handouts and slides on a regular basis

# HOW TO STUDY BEFORE THE TEST

- Consider the types of questions (Multiple-Choice, True-False or Essay) you will be asked and strategize your studying accordingly
- Take practice tests in the format of the exam, simulating test conditions to see how well you know the material
- Reread assigned chapters and/or notes taken on the chapters
- Review lecture notes, handouts and slides
- Create study checklists and summary sheets
- Make flash cards or Quizlets to memorize technical terms
- Study in groups
- Note where you made mistakes and study that material
- Avoid last minute cramming

# DEALING WITH TEST ANXIETY

It is normal to feel a little nervous before a test. The following suggestions will help ease your anxiety and improve your focus:

- Wake up early and have ready all materials you'll need
- Get to the test site early
- Choose a seat away from distractions
- Don't cram or discuss the exam immediately beforehand
- Take deep breaths whenever you need to relax and refocus

Knowing that you have studied the material and are well prepared will help decrease your stress.

# TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

- Read directions carefully
- Answer questions you know to build confidence. Skip questions you don't know and go back to them later
- Pace yourself; be alert to how much time remains
- Consider the type of test you are taking and strategize accordingly. Multiple-Choice and True-False tests require you to recall or recognize information. Essay tests may require you to know, summarize and analyze material
- For the midterm and final exam, know if it is cumulative or covers only certain material

# STRATEGIES FOR MULTIPLE-CHOICE TESTS

- Answer familiar questions first
- Eliminate wrong answers
- Read the question and try to anticipate the answer. Look for that answer among the answer choices but consider the other answer choices and provide reasons to eliminate them.
- Skip questions you don't know and return to them later
- Guess, as long as there's no penalty for wrong answers



# STRATEGIES FOR TRUE-FALSE TESTS

- Answer familiar questions first
- Look for modifiers such as *never* and *always*, which often make the statement false
- Before choosing True, make sure every part of the statement is true
- Look out for double negatives
- Skip questions you don't know and return to them later
- Guess, as long as there's no penalty for wrong answers

# STRATEGIES FOR ESSAY TESTS

- Read instructions carefully
- Pace yourself; be alert to how much time remains
- Do easy questions first; return to difficult questions later
- Answer all parts of the question
- Include main points and supporting examples, being as specific as possible.
- Get to the point and stick to the topic
- Be neat and pay attention to spelling and grammar
- Don't leave questions blank. Even if you don't know the entire answer, some knowledge may earn partial credit
- Reread and edit your essay for content and clarity. Did you answer all questions completely and support them with relevant examples?

# POST-TEST EVALUATION

Use this checklist to determine how to best study and review for your next test. Identifying the types of errors and areas of difficulty will help you to better prepare in the future.

- I did not understand the material
- I don't remember learning the material
- I didn't study long enough or start early enough
- I didn't study the right material
- I studied the right material but could not recall it
- I recognized the information but couldn't apply it
- I didn't read or follow directions
- I didn't use my time well
- I was too anxious or frustrated to focus

# If You Would Like to Learn More About Successful Test-Taking

Visit the Wilf Learning Success Center  
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