

Basic Strategies for Any Test

1. Arrive on time. Sit where the light is good and where there are a minimum of distractions from other students during the test and as they are leaving.
2. Relax. Most teachers give fair tests. They usually are not attempting to trick you but rather want to know how thoroughly you have mastered the information. Take a deep breath, hold it and let it out slowly. Repeat this several times to help eliminate tension which can block thinking and memory for information. Remember an exam is testing what you know; it is not an evaluation of you as a human being.
3. Read the directions and follow them. Make sure you understand what is expected of you. Directions may indicate how many questions you are to answer or what form your responses should take.
4. Plan your test taking time. Determine how many minutes you have to answer the questions, the number of questions you must answer and the maximum point value for each answer.
5. Answer the easiest questions first. By doing this, a) you will be more likely to answer correctly all the questions that you can answer correctly; b) you may build up your test-taking confidence and, perhaps, avoid undue test anxiety; c) you may think of answers to some of the difficult questions; d) you may find an answer to a difficult question. An alternate strategy is to begin with the question worth the most points if you are confident of answering it.
6. Usually answer all questions. Answer all questions unless instructed to do otherwise. Also, in problem solving tests it is good strategy to maximize the ratio of correct to attempted items. It may be better strategy to do fewer problems and get all of them right than to attempt all problems and get fewer of them right.
7. Check your answers carefully. Do not rush when you take tests because other students finish before you do. Take time to look for careless errors and to proofread essay answers for grammar, spelling, legibility, etc.
8. Don't let others see your answers. If you are left-handed ask to sit at the back of the room, so no one behind you can easily see your answers. If your answers are visible to others, you may be suspected of cheating.
9. Learn from your incorrect answers. When tests are returned to you, study them carefully to learn why you answered some questions incorrectly. Study the instructor's comments; check with him or her for explanations if necessary.