

Test Taking Strategies

Many students believe they are bad test takers, but there are several small changes that will make a big difference in a testing routine.

Eating Before the Exam:

A nourished mind is a strong mind! Eating a light, nutritious meal will stop a rumbling stomach and help keep distractions like thinking about food to a minimum.

Arrive on Time:

Timing is essential. Ideally, students should arrive at the exam room early enough to place their materials on the desk and then leave the room and find a quiet spot to avoid the distractions of other nervous students.

Skim the Test:

When first handed a test, students should take a quick look at how the test is set-up and the types of questions before beginning. Doing the easier questions first will build confidence. Students should make sure to go back and make sure all questions are answered. Checking for bonus questions that can be answered first could make a big difference in a test score.

Don't Panic:

A high-point or long answer question may be the first thing a student sees, but this is no cause for panic. Skimming through the rest of the test may help jog the memory for harder questions.

Be Confident:

If a certain question requires clarification, students need to know ahead of time if they are allowed to ask the professor or proctor to explain. Multiple choice or true/false questions often confuse nervous students and cause them to overthink or change answers. Read and answer.

Short Essay Questions:

Students should write at least a 2-3 sentence response. Writing concisely and clearly should cover the answer, but it is better to have too much information than not enough.

Fill in all Answers:

Students should never leave blanks on test papers. Answering a part of the question or guessing an answer is better than nothing and may earn partial credit. Allowing a few minutes to check the exam before turning it in will make sure no questions remain unanswered. Don't second guess an answer and only change an answer for a good reason, such as misreading the question or finding the answer in another section of the test. Sometimes simply finishing the test relieves enough pressure for memory to return!