Predicting Test Questions

1. Get organized. If you don’t take clear notes, try the Cornell Note Taking System. This note taking method will help you identify key terms and concepts and help you to develop practice questions.
2. Ask instructors to describe tests—how long will tests be and what kind of questions can be expected. So not just questions about content, but also questions about format.
3. During lectures watch for test questions by observing not only what the instructor says but how he or she says it.
   - Instructors may repeat important points several times, write them on the board, or return to them in subsequent classes.
   - Pay attention to questions instructors pose to students, and note questions other students ask.
   - Mark your notes with a star or some other symbol when the instructor is talking about something that seems to be a key point.
4. Material that is covered extensively in class is likely to be on the test.
5. Try to think like an instructor. What kind of questions would you ask? Make practice test questions.
6. Save quizzes, papers, lab sheets, and graded material. Quiz questions have a way of appearing on exams. However, you should expect them to be in an altered form.
7. Brainstorm questions with other students. Study groups are a good way to share information. Analyze your test questions by examining them in light of the following:
   - Is this term or concept likely to appear on the test?
   - Is there another way to word this question?
   - For objective questions, are all the choices plausible ones?
   - If recall questions have been generated, how could they be transformed into application questions (or vice versa)?
   - Application questions relate material to real-life situations. They are usually not answered with a definite "yes" or "no"; rather, they are more likely to be open-ended questions that begin with "what" "why" or "how."
8. Be on the lookout for these words:
   This material will be on the test...
   This point is important...
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The C H A N C E strategy can help you predict possible test questions.

C = Critical Ideas: Focus on critical ideas - the ones that are most important to understanding the chapter or topic as a whole.

H = Higher-Order Questions: Some questions require answers that are very clear. You can find the answers right in your class notes or textbooks. These are called lower-order questions. For example, "Who was the first World War?" or "When did the Neolithic Revolution occur?."

Other questions require more thinking. You have to pull information from more than one sentence or paragraph, make judgments, or draw conclusions. These are called higher-order questions. For example, "What were the social and economic consequences of the development of the feudal system in Medieval Europe?".

When preparing for a test, try to predict both kinds of questions.

A = Accuracy: Do you understand the material you're studying? If you can tell in your own words what a textbook chapter said, or explain what your teacher meant during a class lecture, then you're interpreting these materials with accuracy. The questions you predict should be more accurate too.

N = Number: Don't predict just one or two questions. Predict as many as you can. Cover all of the material you're studying. The more questions you can practice, the better you should do.

C = Clarity: Confusing questions lead to confusing answers. Are your questions clear? Do they have clarity? You can improve the clarity of your questions by choosing your words carefully. For example, "What are the five major causes of the Civil War?" has more clarity (and leads to better answers) than, "What are the reasons the Civil War started?"

E = Examine: Use your predicted questions to examine yourself. Make up and take a sample test. Check your answers against your textbook notes.

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