

# Test Taking Skills

\* Test Preparation

\* Test Performance

\* Test Anxiety Management



Student Academic Support Services

## Test Performance Skills

## Test Preparation Skills

In college, tests are a tool for assessing your understanding of the information presented in your courses. Tests also indicate how well you have prepared and the effectiveness of your study skills. Here are some suggestions to prepare for tests and exams:

- ◆ Gather information about a test—the more you can find out, the better you can prepare. Read over the syllabi and class assignments so you know specifically which chapters and topics will be included on the test. Listen to the instructor's description of the test and the topics or chapters that the test will cover. Talk to other students who have already taken the course or tutors who are familiar with the course.
- ◆ Review your study tools and materials—review your lecture and text notes. Make this something that you incorporate into your daily study so that you will not be overwhelmed at test time.
- ◆ Create summary notes—these are notes that specifically include information you need to

review further before the test.

- ◆ Predict test questions—an excellent method for preparing for tests is to predict the questions that will be on the test. Understand the types of questions on the test as well as the content needed to answer the questions will reduce test anxiety.
- ◆ Review with others—review sessions with another student or a study group is an effective way to receive immediate feedback about the topics you understand clearly and those that you need to review.
- ◆ Use a five-day study plan—this is a plan of action that helps you organize your materials and time to review for a major test or exam.



Not only is it important to have strategies in preparing for a test or exam, it is also important to have strategies in place to succeed once you enter the classroom

on test day. Remember these seven essential strategies for taking tests:

1. As soon as you receive the test, jot down important information like formulas, mnemonic devices for memorization, lists, or facts.
2. Survey the test to become familiar with the types of questions on the test, the point value of different questions, and the overall length of the test.
3. Budget your time for each section of the test.
4. Decide on a starting point—you do not have to work the pages of the test in order. Begin with the part of the test you feel most comfortable or the part that has the highest point value.
5. Read all the directions carefully!!!
6. Use your test time wisely. If you have time available after you have answered all the questions, check your answers but do not change answers if you are panicking or feel time is running out.
7. Do not leave answer spaces blank if you start to run out of time.

**For more information Contact:**  
**Lisa Crumit-Hancock**  
**Director of Student Academic**  
**Support Services**  
**419-783-2332**

## Test Anxiety Management

Test anxiety is excessive stress that hinders a person's ability to perform well before or during a test. Some suggestions for test preparation to reduce anxiety:

- ◆ Approach the exam with confidence.
- ◆ Be prepared!
- ◆ Choose a comfortable location to take the test.
- ◆ Allow yourself plenty of time
- ◆ Avoid thinking you need to cram just before.
- ◆ Strive for a relaxed state of concentration
- ◆ Get a good night sleep
- ◆ Do not go to the test with an empty stomach...eat something healthy.



Some suggestions for during the test to reduce anxiety:

- ◇ Read the directions carefully
- ◇ Budget your test taking time
- ◇ Change your positions to help you relax
- ◇ If you go blank, skip the question and go on
- ◇ Don't panic when other student's start handing in their tests/exams.

### Additional Tips:



- ⇒ Play classical music in the background while studying. Research has shown that classical music, Mozart especially, activates both the right and left sides of the brain in listeners. Stimulation of both sides is linked with increased recall, and so listening while studying can help increase the likelihood that you will retain relevant information.
- ⇒ Contrary to popular belief that people should construct a study area, in one location and stick to that single place for all studying, new research suggests instead people should alternate the room or location. Evidence from the study demonstrated that by simply changing the location students improved retention. Of course if you change your study area, you would still want this to be a quiet location with limited distractions.
- ⇒ Get plenty of sleep and exercise and eat healthy to maintain both a strong mind and body.
- ⇒ Just as it's harder to recall a list of 20 words than a 20-word sentence, it's harder to recall a list of boring facts than a story – to help retain information, try to connect with whatever it is you're learning. Whether by using memory aids (like mnemonic devices) or making facts personal, bringing test material to life will make it much easier to remember.
- ⇒ Try eating something with mint (like a stick of peppermint gum) before or during the test. This flavor has been found to help test subjects concentrate and do better on tasks that required sustained concentration.