

# TEST TAKING TIPS

## Before Your Test:

- ✓ Be prepared! - Learn your material thoroughly.
- ✓ Practice, practice, practice!
- ✓ Analyze, analyze, analyze.
- ✓ Exercise is said to sharpen the mind.
- ✓ Get a good night's sleep before the exam.
- ✓ Approach the exam with confidence: View the exam as an opportunity to show how much you've studied and to receive a reward for the studying you have done.
- ✓ If you are taking the exam somewhere other than your classroom, go to the room in which you'll be taking the test and familiarize yourself with it. If possible, pick out the best place in the room for your test taking style.
- ✓ Do not go to the exam with an empty stomach: *Fresh fruits and vegetables are often recommended to reduce stress.* Stressful foods can include processed foods, artificial sweeteners, carbonated soft drinks, chocolate, eggs, fried foods, junk foods, pork, red meat, sugar, white flour products, foods containing preservatives or heavy spices, and chips and similar snack foods. Eat foods that will give you long-lasting energy and avoid foods that give you a short energy burst.
- ✓ Wear comfortable clothing and dress in layers.
- ✓ Bring soothing objects to the testing room with you (if permitted).
- ✓ Allow yourself plenty of time to arrive for class and study. Schedule your time so that you will arrive early for your test, but not too early since other people's panic can be contagious.
- ✓ Relax just before the exam.
- ✓ Do not try to do a last minute review.

## During Your Test:

- ✓ Read all the directions carefully & avoid careless errors. If you don't understand the directions, ask!
- ✓ Budget your test taking time.
- ✓ If there is time, quickly look through the test for an overview. Note key terms. Jot down brief notes.
- ✓ Change positions to help you relax.
- ✓ Answer questions in a strategic order. Answer the easy questions first and then the more difficult questions or those with the most point value.
- ✓ If you go blank, skip the question and go on.
- ✓ If you are taking an essay test and you go blank on the whole test, pick a question and start writing, it may trigger the answer in your mind.
- ✓ Do not second-guess yourself and change your original answers. Research has indicated that your first hunch is more likely to be correct. Only change answers to questions if you originally misread them or if you have encountered information elsewhere in the test that indicates with certainty that your first choice is incorrect.
- ✓ Do not panic when students start handing in their papers. There is no reward for being the first done.

## After Your Test

- ✓ Plan a reward for yourself right after you take your test - you deserve it for your hard work, regardless of your grade!!!
- ✓ When you get your test back, take time to analyze your returned test. Use the suggestions on the reverse side of this handout.

## For virtual brochures on test anxiety & many other issues, check out:

- ⇒ <http://www.dr-bob.org/vpc/>
- ⇒ <http://ub-counseling.buffalo.edu/selfhelp.php>
- ⇒ [http://counseling.uchicago.edu/related/virtualpamphlets/study\\_skills.shtml](http://counseling.uchicago.edu/related/virtualpamphlets/study_skills.shtml)

Adapted from: *Tips for better test taking.* <http://www.iss.stthomas.edu/studyguides/tstak1.htm> & *Reducing test anxiety.* <http://www.warner.edu/students/asc/skills/pop/tests.asp>

## **ANALYZING RETURNED TESTS**

### **Why should I analyze what I got wrong?**

Analyzing returned tests can help you understand why you made errors, so that you can adjust your study strategies, review techniques, and test-taking strategies to improve your performance on subsequent tests.

### **It's boring when the professor spends the whole class going over the exam!**

Go to class anyway. This is your opportunity to hear what the instructor was looking for in the answers, which will help you on the **NEXT** exam. Not to mention that reviewing the exam in class will help you reinforce the information one more time in long-term memory.

### **But the professor doesn't give tests back.**

If you do not get your test back, visit your professor. Ask to see your test so that you can determine why you gave incorrect responses. Your professor is an excellent resource for analyzing your returned test. Talk through how you arrived at your answers. Your professor can then point out your knowledge gaps and how you can better prepare for the next exam.

### **Analyze your test with others.**

Review tests with your study partner or study group. Determine changes you can make in your review sessions to learn the material more effectively and develop more effective test-taking strategies.

### **How do I analyze my test?**

Use the checklist at [http://www.usu.edu/arc/idea\\_sheets/analyzing.htm](http://www.usu.edu/arc/idea_sheets/analyzing.htm) to analyze your returned tests.

### **After you have analyzed your test**

Determine what corrective action you need to take to improve your performance on your next test. Remember to use all available CSN resources: your professor; other classmates; your study partner or study group; the retention office; Coyote Coaches. Use free campus tutoring or obtain a private tutor, if necessary.

### **Develop a corrective action plan**

Make sure your corrective action plan addresses the following areas:

- A. Professor's expectations on the test (kinds of questions, source of questions)
- B. Studying amount (spaced vs. crammed)
- C. What you are going to study (book, lecture, syllabus, old tests, repetition)
- D. What study techniques you are going to use (organize, think, memorize)

### **Helpful websites to assist you in learning:**

- ⇒ <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/learning/>
- ⇒ [http://www.usu.edu/arc/idea\\_sheets/](http://www.usu.edu/arc/idea_sheets/)

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