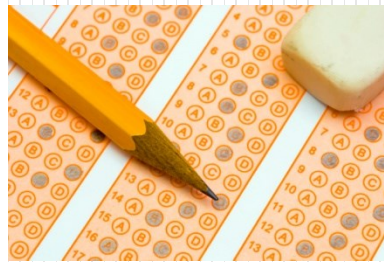


Strategies for Test Taking

Student Success Workshop Series
Sauk Valley Community College



Test Preparation Tips

- Review your notes on a daily basis
- Set priorities to fight procrastination
- Plan out a study schedule – cramming does not work!
- Ask the instructor for information about what to expect
- Attend review sessions
- What to study? Take practice tests, complete sample problems, review the textbook, class notes or any other material suggested by your instructor.

To begin, some test taking tips

- Follow the directions
- Budget your time
- Skip over difficult questions
- If you still do not know the answer, make an educated guess
- Review your test before turning it in

Before You Begin the Test . . .

- Try to show up at least 5 minutes before the test will start.
- Bring all materials to class with you.
- Listen carefully to your instructor's directions and comments.
- Write your name on the test before you begin.
- Do a “mind dump” – Write down key facts or formulas in the margin.
- Preview the test before you begin to calculate how much time you should allow for each section.

While Taking the Test . . .

- Answer easy questions first - If you don't know the answer, make a mark next to that question and try to complete it later.
- Change answers only if you are sure they are wrong.
- Use all of the time allowed.

True/ False Questions

- Usually there are more true answers than false on most tests
- Read each questions carefully and pay attention to keywords
- Qualifiers like **never**, **always**, and **every** mean that the ***statement must be true all of the time***. Usually these type of qualifiers lead to a **FALSE** answer.
- Qualifiers like **usually**, **sometimes**, and **generally** mean that the ***statement can be considered true or false depending on the circumstances***. Usually these type of qualifiers lead to a **TRUE** answer.
- If any part of the question is false, then the entire statement is false
- Just because part of a statement is true doesn't necessarily make the entire statement true.

Multiple Choice Test Taking Tips

- Determine the main idea or the question stem first.
- Think about what the answer might be before reading the answer choices
- Read over the answer choices. If you do not see your answer listed, work backwards - eliminate answers you know aren't right.
- In "**All of the above**" choices, make sure **each of the other answers are correct**.
- In "**None of the above**" choices, make sure **each of the answers are incorrect**
- In a question with an "All of the above" choice, if you see that at least two correct statements, then "All of the above" is probably the answer.
- Don't keep changing your answer, usually your first choice is the right one, unless you misread the question.
- Usually the correct answer is the choice with the most information.

Matching Tips

- First, read the list on the right which contains the answer choices so that you are aware of all the possibilities for answers.
- Always go through the entire list so you know all of the
- Solve questions you are unsure of by process of elimination after you have finished using the answers you are sure are correct.

Short Answer/ Completion (Fill in the blank)

- Reread the question several times.
- Look for context clues. *A* and *an* are context clues. If *an* appears, the word following must begin with a vowel.
- Can't think of the word or phrase? Mark the statements you cannot complete and return to them. If you still can't think of it, describe it in your answer. You may get partial credit.

Essay Tips

3 steps to complete when answering an essay question:

1. Make a plan for how to answer the question –
 - Make an outline before writing your essay to stay on task.
 - Think about key facts you could include in your essay
 - This step should only take a few minutes
2. Write your essay
 - Your goal is to write an essay that clearly answers the question
 - Write your introduction, body and conclusion
 - Focus on one main idea per a paragraph.
3. Review your work
 - Proofread your work and correct any errors.
 - Does your essay say everything you want to include? Did you answer all aspects of the question?

Essay Tips . . . REMINDERS

- Read the directions carefully. Make sure that you write down everything that is asked of you.
- Budget your time, don't spend the entire test time on one essay question.
- If the question is asking for facts, don't give your personal opinion on the topic.
- If you aren't sure about an exact date or number, use approximations i.e. "Approximately 5000" or "In the late 17th century."
- When writing your essay, try to be as neat as possible.

Open Book Tips

- Spend time preparing for an open book test by familiarizing yourself with the book and important information.
- Create a “cheat sheet”. Write down all the important formulas and/or key information on a separate sheet so you don't have to search through your book for it.
- Highlight important points, use post-it notes, bookmarks and make notes in your book, if it is allowed.
- Answer the easy questions that you know off the top of your head first, then go back and answer the questions where you need to reference your book.

After the Test

- Focus on what you did well, do not focus on what you may have missed.
- When you get your test back look it over and make sure that there are no grading mistakes.
- If your instructor reviews the test in class, be sure to take notes on the answers for the questions/problems that were incorrect.
- If you aren't satisfied with your grade, go to your instructor and see if there's a make-up exam or any extra credit you can do.
- Save the test as study material for future cumulative tests.

Additional Information – 5 Day Study Plan

Using a 5 Day Study Plan

- Helps you to organize your materials and time to review for a major test.
- Reduces anxiety and procrastination
- Specifically shows your plan for what you need to study and when

Example of a Study Plan

Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
8 – 9:00 am Chapter 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> class study guide homework questions handouts 	8 – 9:00 am Chapter 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> study guide homework questions video notes 	8 – 9:00 am Chapter 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> class study guide handouts homework questions 	10 – 12:00 pm Chapter 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> study guide homework questions 2 short papers 	2 – 4:00 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review summary notes Self quiz on chapter 1 & 2
3 - 4:00 pm Chapter 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lecture notes textbook notes notes – guest speaker 	3 – 4:00 pm Chapter 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lecture notes textbook notes 	3 – 4:00 pm Chapter 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lecture notes textbook notes 	4 – 6:00 pm Chapter 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lecture notes textbook notes 	7 – 9:00 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review summary notes Self quiz on chapter 3 & 4

Overcome test anxiety

- Be prepared
- Know what to expect about the test
- Complete practice tests
- Think positively
- Feel relaxed - breathe deeply and relax your muscles

Information Retrieved From:

- <http://www.testtakingtips.com/>
- *Improve Your Study Skills* by Marcia J. Coman
- *Be Your Best Tests* Study Skill booklet from Channing Bete