

TEST SUCCESS

Success on an exam is a two-step process:

1. Prepare properly
2. Think carefully while reading and evaluating test questions

BEFORE THE TEST

- ◆ Begin preparing the first day of class.
 - ▶ Become familiar with the syllabus and the material that will be covered in class, which can guide your studying. The syllabus should also give you information about how many tests there will be, how much they are worth, and when they will be given.
 - ▶ Start reviewing a little bit after each class. This helps solidify information in your memory and can reveal any confusing points right away. Be sure to get questions answered as they arise.
- ◆ Practice recall and application of knowledge with flash cards or Cornell notes, or review old exams and study guides (if available). You might also generate your own list of questions, possibly with others in your class, which you would ask if you were writing the exam. Utilize the test-taking tips in your review process to develop and become comfortable with these skills.
- ◆ Ask the professor what kind of exam to expect: what will the exam cover and which testing format will be used (i.e., multiple choice, essay, t/f, etc.).

THE TEST

- ◆ Come to the test well rested. Fatigue hinders your ability to recall information. (This means prepare in advance so there's no need for an all-night cram session!)
- ◆ If you arrive to the test early, don't talk with other students about the test.
- ◆ Look over the entire test; know how much each question is worth and budget your time accordingly.
- ◆ Read and listen to all directions before beginning the test.
- ◆ Underline key words in the question and make sure you understand what the question is asking – ask about any you don't understand.
- ◆ Answer the easiest questions first – this builds your confidence and triggers your memory for other information.
- ◆ Work at your own pace – don't worry if others leave before you.
- ◆ Don't change answers – stick with your first choice unless you're sure it is incorrect.
- ◆ Don't panic – if you have a memory block on a question, mark it and return to it later.

OBJECTIVE TESTS

True-False

- ◆ The **entire** statement must be true to answer true.
- ◆ Answers containing the words *all*, *never*, *always*, and *everyone* (absolute modifiers) are usually false.
- ◆ Qualifiers like *frequently*, *probably*, and *generally* are often true.
- ◆ Be careful of statements with double negatives (i.e., not unbreakable) – cross out the double negative.

Multiple Choice

- ◆ Multiple choice questions are written so the correct answer will be selected by students who know it, and so other students will be distracted and select the incorrect answer. The basic strategy is to eliminate distracters.
 - ▶ Carefully read the question without looking at the choices; identify key words in the question.
 - ▶ Develop your own answer, as though it were a short-answer question.
 - ▶ After considering possible answers, look at each choice carefully and evaluate the correctness of each. Which answer best corresponds to the answer you generated?
 - ▶ Choose the most appropriate choice.
- ◆ Think of choices as a series of true-false statements.
- ◆ If you're stuck, try to figure out what the answer is not.
- ◆ Draw a line through the choices you can eliminate.

- ◆ Four levels of responses:
 1. **Immediate response** – you are able to read a question and immediately respond with the correct answer.
 - Payoff for effective studying
 - Boosts confidence and moves you through the test more quickly
 2. **Delayed response** – you read the question but are not sure of the answer.
 - Skip the question for now, but mark it so you remember to return to it later.
 3. **Assisted response** – you return to the unanswered question(s) and use the rest of the test to help you find a possible answer.
 - The information used in other questions may assist you in finding the correct answer.
 4. **Educated guessing** – you try and determine the most logical answer.
 - Educated guessing strategies are **never** more effective than knowing the answers.

AFTER THE TEST

- ◆ When you receive your test back, review it, especially any questions you answered incorrectly. Try to identify reasons for not answering correctly:
 - ▶ Did you not prepare as thoroughly as the test question(s) required?
 - ▶ Did you experience mental block?
 - ▶ Did you misread the question or accidentally mark a wrong choice?Whatever the reason, try to determine what adjustments you can make for future exams, so that you don't continue to make the same errors.
- ◆ You might also consider the questions that the professor chose for the exam:
 - ▶ Had you anticipated similar questions?
 - ▶ What material did the questions cover?
 - ▶ Did the professor give any indication(s) in class of what material would be covered on the exam?