What to Do: During the Test

Tips for Test-Taking

The Basics

Deal with Anxiety
Manage your Time
Look for Answers in Other Questions
Pace Yourself
Trust your Instincts

Breaking it Down

Multiple Choice
- Read questions and directions carefully.
- Answer questions in your head before looking at the possible answers.
- Read all of the choices before choosing your answer.
- If you don't know, **GUESS**. (Look on the back for tips for successful guessing.)

True/False
- Answer quickly.
- Read carefully. Remember: if it isn't completely true, it's false.
- Don't be fooled. Pay attention to words like all, most, sometimes, never, and rarely.

Short-Answer/Fill-in-the-Blank
- Concentrate on key words and facts.
- You can never know too much. Study, STUDY, STUDY!

Essay
- Find out what the question is asking — precisely. (Look on the back for definitions of commonly used question prompts.)
- Write a quick outline — it will save you time later!
- Get to the point.
- Include parts of the question in your answer.
- Start with your most solid points.
- Write legibly in pen (unless asked to use a pencil) and write on one side of the page only.

Modified from: Becoming a Master Student 8th Edition, Dave Ellis.
**Tips for Successful Guessing**

- If two answers are similar, except for one or two words, choose one of these answers.
- If two answers have similar-sounding or similar-looking words (e.g. intermittent, intermediate), choose one of these answers.
- If the answer calls for a sentence completion, eliminate the answers that would not form grammatically correct sentences.
- If two quantities are almost the same, choose one.
- If answers cover a wide range (e.g. 4.5, 666.7, 88.7, 90.1, 5000.1), choose one in the middle of the range.
- If none of the above techniques apply, choose the longest answer.
- If all else fails, close your eyes and pick an answer.

*These guidelines should not replace effective and thorough studying.*

**Common Question Prompts Defined**

- **Analyze:** Break into separate parts and discuss, examine, or interpret each part.
- **Compare:** Examine two or more things. Identify similarities (and most often differences as well).
- **Contrast:** Show differences. Set in opposition.
- **Criticize:** Make judgments. Evaluate comparative worth. Criticism often involves analysis.
- **Define:** Give the meaning; usually a meaning specific to the course or subject. Explain the exact meaning. Definitions are usually direct and/or brief.
- **Describe:** Give a detailed account. Make a picture with the words. List characteristics, qualities, and parts.
- **Discuss:** Consider and debate or argue the pros and cons of an issue. Write about conflict. Compare and contrast.
- **Enumerate:** List several ideas, aspects, events, things, qualities, reasons, etc.
- **Evaluate:** Give your opinion or cite the opinion of an expert. Include evidence to support the evaluation.
- **Explain:** Make an idea clear. Show logically how a concept is developed. Give the reasons for an event.
- **Illustrate:** Give concrete examples. Explain clearly by using comparisons or examples.
- **Interpret:** Comment upon, give examples, describe relationships. Explain the meaning. Describe, then Evaluate.
- **Outline:** Describe main ideas, characteristics or events (Does not necessarily mean “write a Roman Numeral outline”)
- **Prove:** Support with facts (especially facts presented in class or in the text). Construct a logical argument.
- **Relate:** Show the connections between ideas or events. Provide a larger context.
- **State:** Explain precisely.
- **Summarize:** Give a brief, condensed account. Include conclusions. Avoid unnecessary details.
- **Trace:** Show the order of events or progress of a subject or event.

**Know the Test**

**Machine-Graded**

- Check your answers. Make sure they correspond to the correct questions.
- Watch for stray marks.

**Open-Book**

- Preparation matters. The better prepared you are, the less time you'll waste during the test.
  - Write down formulas that you’ll need on a separate sheet of paper.
  - Use post-it notes or paper clips to mark important pages of the book.
  - Organize your notes.

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