

# **TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES**

## **INFORMATION**

### **I. BEFORE THE TEST**

#### **A. Know the Material**

1. Reading
  - a. college level textbook
  - b. speed – 350-450 wpm; 85% comp.
2. Listening
  - a. speaker – 125 wpm
  - b. ability to listen – 300 wpm
3. Notetaking
  - a. outlining text
  - b. outlining lecture
  - c. summarizing
  - d. use of tape recorder
4. Studying
  - a. preparation
  - b. review

#### **B. Know the Instructor**

1. Test from the textbook
2. Test from lecture
3. Test from both

#### **C. Get Set - Physically**

#### **D. Get Set - Mentally**

### **II. DURING THE TEST**

A. Attitude – The test is all that exists in the whole world. It is too late to change or alter anything--method, instructor, textbook, time spent, etc.--at this point. Don't get "hung up" on principalities or idiosyncrasies. You're in charge.

#### **B. Strategies**

1. Reduce Test Anxiety. Test anxiety is the uneasiness or apprehension experienced because of the need to take a test. Physical symptoms of test anxiety include excessive sweating, discomfort in the stomach, headaches, rapid heartbeat, and shortness of breath.
2. Preview Tests – Read Directions Carefully.
3. Plan Test-Taking Time
4. Answer the Easiest Questions First

5. Usually Answer All Questions
6. Check Answers Carefully
7. Don't Share Answers
8. Learn from Incorrect Responses

### C. Approaches

#### 1. Objectives

##### a. True-False

- 1) Assume that the statement is true.
- 2) Watch absolute modifiers. Always, never, all, only etc., signal false statements. Frequently, some, many, etc., signal true statements.
- 3) Watch Reasons. True-false questions that state reasons tend to be false.
- 4) Remember that in order for a statement to be true, all parts of it must be true.
- 5) Watch Negatives. Not and never are common negatives. Negative prefixes include: un, non, in, im, il, ir, dis.
- 6) Watch Double Negatives, cross out both negatives. Ex. John is not unfaithful.  
T or F

##### b. Multiple Choice

Stem – the incomplete statement that begins a multiple choice question.

Options – the choices that are given for answers.

Distractors – The options that are not correct answers.

- 1) Set up your stem as a completion without examining your options.
- 2) The basic strategy is to eliminate the distractors.
- 3) It may take reading the stem with each option.
- 4) The following options tend to be distractors:
  - a) Absolute Modifiers
  - b) Unfamiliar Terms
  - c) Jokes and Insults
  - d) Highest and Lowest Numbers
- 5) The following options tend to be correct answers.
  - a) All of the above
  - b) More complete or inclusive answers
  - c) One of two similar—looking answers

##### c. Matching Questions

- 1) Examine both lists to understand the types of items you are to match.
- 2) Use one list as the starting place to make all matches.
- 3) If one list has longer statements, use it as the starting place to make matches.
- 4) Cross out items as you match them.
- 5) Match first only those items that you are certain matches.
- 6) If possible, use logical clues to match items about which you are uncertain.

##### d. Fill-in Questions

- 1) Decide what type of answer is wanted.
- 2) When a question contains two blanks with a space between them, give a two word answer.
- 3) Give intelligent, sound answers.

## 2. Subjective (Essay)

- a. Don't start writing before you start thinking. It is important that you do some preplanning before you begin to write. Decide what answer the instructor is expecting you to give. Instructors want facts. Very seldom do they want opinions. Know the difference between opinions and the facts in your own words.
- b. Understand Direction Words
- c. Plan Your Time. The best way to preplan is to read through the entire examination first. Don't get hung up on one answer.
- d. Answer all parts of the questions.
- e. Write well-organized answers
- f. Proofread Answers
- g. What if time runs out? Don't leave any blanks if possible. Briefly outline the answer that you would have written had time allowed.

## III. AFTER THE TEST

- A. Study all returned exams.
- B. Analyze them for errors.
- C. Learn from your mistakes.