

## Test Taking Strategies

### **PART ONE: Tips to use before the test**

- Make a master schedule listing all of the tests you know you will have this semester. List date, time and class each test is for.
- Find out what the tests are like. If the professor does not explain this in class, ask him/her for this information
- Attend all of your classes. Try to focus and take good lecture notes
- Set up a plan for studying. Schedule times to work on material for each class.
- Manage your time well. Complete all readings and assignments listed in the course syllabus on time.
- Take notes on the material you read.
- When taking notes, try to write them into your own words, rather than just copying them. This will help you to remember and make sense of the information. If you cannot do this during the lecture, you could also rewrite your notes afterwards.
- Review your notes on a regular basis. Read over all of the material that will be on the exam. Try to quiz yourself while doing this. For example, if you have a vocab word listed in your notes, try to remember the meaning before you read it.
- Use learning strategies that work best for you and your learning style
- Use the 5-day study plan before tests.

### **PART TWO: Tips for studying**

- If the professor hands out a study guide, review all of the information included. You may want to write out the definitions/answers on a separate sheet. Leave the study guide blank and use it to test yourself.
- If the professor reviews the material for the test in class, make a list of the concepts, ideas, and definitions that he/she mentions. Review all of the material mentioned, and test yourself on this material.
- Attend study sessions if they are offered. Review the material before the study session. Ask questions about material you feel unsure about.
- If the test includes material from the textbook, use chapter reviews to test yourself. Look up any information you do not know, then test yourself again.
- Check the on-line resources for your text. Use any practice tests or review materials on-line. Make a note of topics you need to look over again.
- If you are given a list of essay questions, make an outline of the main ideas you would use to answer each question.
- Don't cram. Be sure to get a good night's sleep before the exam and eat breakfast.
- On the day of the test, review the study guide again, pay special attention to questions you had difficulty with.
- Have a positive attitude. Tell yourself that you are ready and that you expect to do well on the test. This can make a big difference!

### **PART THREE: Tips to use while taking the test**

- Read/Skim through the entire test so you know what to expect
- Know the amount of time available and gauge the amount of time you can spend on each section of the test.
- Try a "Mind Dump" → jot down info that you may forget right away on the test
- Read all directions very carefully
- Answer the questions you know first, skip difficult questions and come back to them later. The answer may come to you, or the test may provide clues.
- If you feel anxious or overwhelmed, take a short break. Put your pencil down, close your

eyes and take a few deep breaths.

- ❑ Do not rush through the test. Ignore others who finish earlier than you. Often the students who finish last are the ones who get the best scores.
- ❑ Review the entire test before turning it in. Read through each question and check your answer. Be sure you answered all of the questions. If you are using an answer sheet, check to see that the answers you have chosen match the boxes you have shaded.

### OBJECTIVE TESTS

- ❑ Tips for Multiple-Choice questions:
  - Read the entire question carefully, underline the key terms
  - After reading the question, think about what you think the correct answer is, **BEFORE** you read all of the choices.
  - Next, read through **ALL** of the possible answers and choose one that best matches your answer.
  - Cross out answers that you know are wrong.
  - Be careful about answers that include words like “always” or “never”
  - Often, if an answer looks completely unfamiliar to you, it is wrong.
  - Choose the most inclusive answer.
  - Watch for words such as NOT or EXCEPT
  - Read through the question including your chosen answer
  - If you don’t know the answer, try these tips to make an educated guess:
    - If two answers are opposites, there is a good chance one is right
    - If two answers are very similar read them closely to see which includes the right information
    - If two answers mean the same thing, but are worded differently, neither is correct. There can only be one correct answer, so if two answers are the same, they must both be wrong.
    - If the options are numbers, choose one in the middle.
    - The longest answer tends to be the correct one
    - Oftentimes, if “all of the above” is a choice, it is the correct answer. “None of the above” is less likely to be correct.

### ESSAY EXAMS

- ❑ Tips for essay or short-answer questions.
  - Read the question carefully. Underline/circle key words.
  - Underline/Circle key words in the question so you know what the question is asking. Examples:

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <u>List:</u>             | Name items                                 |
| <u>Describe/Explain:</u> | Explain in greater detail                  |
| <u>Compare/Contrast:</u> | Describe similarities and differences      |
| <u>Define:</u>           | List a term and its definition             |
| <u>Give an Example:</u>  | Do not define the term, lists applications |
  - Jot down your ideas and organize them before writing your answer.
  - Always write your answers in complete sentences
  - For longer essays, use an introduction and a conclusion
  - Consider using part of the question in your answer.
  - For essay questions, use a thesis statement and 5 paragraph form.
  - Break into paragraphs with each paragraph focusing on one main idea
  - Write neatly and use pencil, so you can erase mistakes