

GENERAL TEST-TAKING TIPS

- Set up tutoring appointments with MSOE'S Raider Center for Academic Success (RCAS) early in the term to avoid becoming overwhelmed.
- Start preparing for a test as early as you can. "Cramming" is the study method of last resort and is not particularly effective. Early preparation also helps you identify areas in which you may need extra help prior to a test.
- Go over any material from practice tests, sample problems, graded homework assignments, class notes. If you have time, rewriting your class notes can be a good way to reinforce the material.
- Study by yourself sometimes and with one or more classmates at other times. You may gain valuable insight from other students.
- Make sure to attend any review sessions. Go to faculty office hours to clear up any questions you had while reviewing.
- Sleep at least 3 hours the night before a test (set at least two alarms so you don't oversleep!) and eat at least a little something before a test.
- Give yourself a few minutes before a test to glance at your notes.
- Remember to bring any resources with you that are allowed on the test.
- Take a few deep breaths before you start to help you relax and fine-tune your focus.
- Remember to write your name on the test. This may seem intuitive but you'd be surprised how often names are omitted!
- Do a "brain spill" before beginning. Brain spilling or immediately writing things down that are not easily retainable (e.g. formulas, an acronym for a process, vocabulary words, etc.) can allow you to feel more at ease.
- Write as legibly as possible. If your instructor cannot read your answer, you cannot receive credit for it. Do easiest problems and those with the most point values first.
- If you have time, look over your test before handing it in.
- Save any graded tests as study material for future cumulative tests.
- Remember, a test is not a race. You do not receive extra points for finishing first. Statistically, the students who finish first do not necessarily receive the best grades.

TIPS BY TEST FORMAT

Essay:

- Read the directions carefully. You may not have to answer all the questions.
- Budget your time. You don't want to spend the entire test time on one essay.
- Don't write long introductions and conclusions, the bulk of your time should be spent directly answering the questions asked.
- Focus on one main idea per paragraph.
- If you have time left at the end - proofread.
- If you are intimidated by essay questions, it may be helpful to quickly bullet-point your ideas first. By doing that you can get your ideas down on paper without being overwhelmed by the idea of writing. Seeing your bullet points you will realize you know the material and that will help you string your bullet point ideas together into an essay.

Short Answer:

- Read the question carefully and make sure that you answer everything it is asking for (some short answer questions have multiple parts).
- If you don't know the answer, come back to it after you finish the rest of the test. Other parts of the test may give you clues to the answer. If you're still not sure, try not to leave an answer blank. Show your work/write down your thoughts in hopes of receiving partial credit.

True/False:

- If there is no guessing penalty, do not leave any questions unanswered.
- If any part of a question is false, then the entire statement is false. However, just because part of a statement is true does not necessarily make the entire statement true.

Multiple Choice:

- Read all choices then immediately eliminate answers you know are incorrect.
- Remember that you can rule out "none of the above" as soon as you are certain that one of the choices is true.
- If there is no guessing penalty, always make an educated guess and select an answer.
- Do not keep changing your answer. Your first choice is usually correct unless you misread the question.

Quantitative/Math:

- Do practice problems.
- Make a formula sheet. Even if you can't use it on the test, writing down formulas will help you memorize them.
- Even when you know your final answer is incorrect, don't erase your work. You may at least get partial credit for using the correct procedure.
- If there is time left when you finish, check over your work and/or redo problems to see if you come up with same answers. At least look for careless mistakes like forgetting a negative sign or transposing a number.

Open Book:

- Spend an equal or greater amount of time preparing as you would for a normal test. Most open book tests are harder than if it were closed book.
- If notes are allowed in addition to your textbook, write key information and/or formulas on a note sheet so you won't have to search through your book for it.
- Highlight important points in your book. Write down main points on a sticky note and use it to bookmark the page containing that information.

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