

# Steps to improve your test-taking experience



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When taking tests it is very important for you to know and understand first, the different kinds of test questions you may encounter and second, how you can help maximize your potential of doing much better by knowing a few simple skills to help you master whatever test you may be faced with. The three most common different kinds of tests include but aren't limited to; matching, multiple choice and essay tests. In the next few body paragraphs you will learn simple skills that will help you understand how to master each test as well as other general information that can assist you when taking any kind of test.

During any test, first and foremost you must read the directions very careful. The biggest way to eliminate making careless errors is to fully understand what the questions are asking and to follow all instructions. We will first discuss matching tests and the skills needed to take them. During matching portions of tests it is very easy for a student to become discouraged and distracted because of the level of knowledge it seems to take to answer these test questions.

One good thing to remember about matching questions however is that most matching questions are usually broken up sentences, so paying close attention to grammatical clues is key. Also being aware that in most cases a long question is not paired with a long answer. In most cases if the question is long, the answer is short and vice versa. One final helpful hint during matching portions of tests is marking out used answers, this is helpful in eliminating redundancy unless the directions specifically say some answers may be use more than once.

Second are multiple choice tests. Multiple choice tests are most common in college courses and require a lot of attention to ensure getting a good grade. Again first, read all directions. If you are unsure about what the test is asking, ask for clarification from the instructor. A good way to begin taking a multiple choice test is to read all of the questions before attempting to answer any questions. Reading through the questions once is a good way to get your mind active and ready to analyze and dissect each question.

Once you've read through the questions you are ready to re read the test questions and this time reading all possible answers for each question. Without reading each possible answer and choosing an answer before you know of all that are possible, you are setting yourself up to miss the opportunity to find an answer that may be better than the one you've chosen. When rereading test questions and reading all possible answers it's a good confidence booster to mark " sure thing" answers first.

When you are confidently answering questions you know are true, you are more likely to have more confidence venturing onto questions you may not be sure of yet. After you've marked all of your " sure thing" answers, you may need to reread the questions and answers a second or third time to review of any questions you may now know the answers to now that you've cycled back once or twice. Only after you've marked all of your " sure thing" answers will you begin to have to look for clues to answer the remaining questions you are still unsure of.

Paying attention to grammatical cues help in many cases as well as divided context (multiple choice questions that may require you to finish a sentence)

or differing formats (multiple choice questions that may ask you to identify something that is NOT true, or questions that contain double negatives to confuse the test taker). In cases when you are not sure of an answer and there is an option for " all of the above", it is your safest bet to chose this answer. Also when dealing with numbers, such as percentages in statistics, it is usually wise when in doubt to chose the middle term as a possible answer.

If you are still unsure of your answer begin by discarding obviously wrong answers first and eliminate answers from there. The third, final and probably hardest test to master is the essay test. Reading and understanding all directions and guidelines is essential, especially in essay tests. In most cases when you first begin an essay test you have many ideas floating around including important facts and/ or possible ideas you want to express in your essay, because essay tests require your undivided attention it's always a good idea to jot down potential ideas you may have so you won't forget them and your mind is free of unnecessary clutter.

It's always best to start with the easiest questions first to gain momentum in your test and to jump start your creative thinking process. An important aspect of essay tests is the time limit you are given, It's easy to lose rack of time however not getting you whole essay done or expressing your important points in your essay may be detrimental to the grade of your essay. A good way to ensure you have time to spare is pacing yourself.

Another way is to disregard your introduction and/ or conclusion paragraphs a d jump right into the point(s) you are trying to make. Use solid evidence to support your arguments/points and try to avoid personal opinions in you essay. In any kind of test situations, may it be from the ones reviewed above

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or another, some tips are helpful in every test situation. Making sure your name is on your test may seem like a juvenile point to make but it also shouldn't be the reason for your test to be thrown out or given a failing grade.

Understanding and reading all directions is a point that can never be stressed enough as well as understanding the nature of each type of question that is being asked. Starting with the easiest questions and working your way to the hardest is a good way to manage time as well as give yourself the extra boost of confidence needed to shake off the jitters during a test. Never second guess yourself unless you are absolutely sure your second answer is right.

Many times when you second guess your first instinct it is out of fear of your test not "looking right" or out of test anxiety causing you to over analyze your answers. Get clarification if you are unsure about something but be sure to only ask your instructor for clarification, speaking with a classmate can be seen as cheating. Pace yourself to avoid careless mistakes and if you have extra time, use it to double check your answers. By following all of these steps you are sure to have a much more pleasant and relaxing test taking experience.