

Heading in the right direction

Testing taking requires preparation, mental focus, knowing the direction the test will take you and – even more important – reading directions and following them. So you walk into the test with confidence, go through these guidelines.

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Tests demonstrate your ability to understand course material and apply that understanding practically. Success means being thorough and focused to avoid any careless errors. Tests are either objective or subjective. Examples of objective tests are true-false, multiple choice, and fill-in-the-blank. Examples of subjective tests are short answer, essay, or oral exams. Here are some tips to help you perform your best on your tests.

Study tactics

Decide on and adopt those study strategies that work best for you. Review where you succeed and where you are challenged. Check out your academic support center or a trusted teacher for advice.

Consider the past

Look back and review how you performed on a similar test. As part of your preparation, review those tests as well as any sample tests provided by your teacher. Tests build on each other – as you get used to the particular format of that subject, you'll feel more comfortable and be able to prepare yourself even better.

Early birds get the worms

Arrive early for tests. Make a checklist of what you need beforehand, and have it on hand, so you don't get flustered. Good preparation prepares you for better test results.

Be on the alert

Be comfortable but not too comfortable – you could fall asleep or get into a daze that could cause you to skip questions or misunderstand directions. Choose a comfortable location with the space you need. Even when you're taking a test at home, you should maintain good posture, sit up as though you are in the classroom. It helps your focus immensely.

Chill out

Stay relaxed and confident. Keep a good attitude and remind yourself that you are prepared and you will do your best – which is the best you can do. If you find yourself beginning to panic, stop, take a breath. Take several deep breaths – slowly inhale and then exhale to the count of five. Don't talk to other students right before the test, their stress can be contagious.

Read the directions

Read directions carefully! And follow them – some tests require information in a certain format or in a certain area. Even your identifying information – some require you to put

your last name first. Make sure you follow the requested format to avoid careless errors. These types of errors can affect your grade – and you’ll kick yourself for later.

Scan first, answer next

If you have time, quickly scan the test for keywords and any questions for which you are sure you know the answer.. If you teacher permits it, jot any notes that come to mind and make a game plan to time out the different sections.

Employ a strategy

Answer questions in a strategic order. Answer the easy questions first to build confidence. Then go to those with the most point value. On objective tests, eliminate obvious incorrect answers. For essays, take the time to first create an outline for your answer with bullet points; then write the essay.

Check your work

If you have time, review your work. Resist the urge to just walk away when you complete the exam. Check to make sure you’ve answered all the questions, there are no errors – spelling or otherwise – and you put the right answer with the right question.