

# Test Taking

## HOW TO TAKE A TEST

1. Listen carefully to the instructor and read directions!
2. Take your time; don't rush!
3. Focus on yourself – Avoid looking around the room and letting students who finish early distract you.
4. Make sure to read each question carefully.
5. Go through the exam and answer all the questions you can answer instantly.
6. Stay positive – If you reach a question that is difficult, don't dwell on it; put a star next to it, skip it, and go back to it later. Often times, other questions on the test will help spur your memory.
7. Take advantage of any time you have left to go over your test to make sure you've answered everything, and if using a Scantron, be sure that you've correctly filled in the bubbles.

## TEST-TAKING “FATAL MISTAKES”

- Avoid the “Prophets of Doom” – Try not to think “There's way too much material to learn,” or “The questions are impossible to answer.”
- Preparing to Cheat – Don't spend time figuring out ways to cheat; instead spend that time learning the material.
- Last-Minute Cramming – Cramming helps develop your memory in the short-term, but it doesn't store things long-term.
- Pulling an All-Nighter – Studying all night often results in poor retention, poor recall and poor performance. Spread out your studying over the course of at least a week, studying a little each day.
- The Caffeine Binge – Too much caffeine can interfere with your sleep, leaving you exhausted the day of the test.

## IF YOU SUFFER FROM TEST ANXIETY, REMEMBER:

### You can control...

- How frequently you attend class – Be sure to attend all classes!
- The level of attentiveness you bring to the classroom – Be alert & an active learner!
- The system you use to review your notes & materials in preparation for a test – Do what works for you when it comes to studying!
- The amount of time you set aside and spend studying and preparing for the test – Plan ahead!
- Whether or not you get tutoring to help you grasp any concepts you find difficult – CMU offers free tutoring: (989)-774-3465.
- Visiting a Success Coach – We can help with test-taking & study skills!

### You cannot control...

- How effectively the instructor has taught your class – If you do not like how your professor teaches the class, spend extra time to get the proper assistance that you need to do well.
- What questions will be asked – Help yourself by going to your professor's office hours to get some ideas of what will be on the test.
- How long the test period will last – If you finish early, go back through your test! Monitor your time to make sure you aren't spending too much time on easier questions.
- Unexpected personal crises that disrupt your study time – Prepare for the test in advance so if something comes up, you are already ready!

## WEEK(S) BEFORE THE TEST...

- Pace yourself! Organize your time and make sure to allow at least one hour of study time per day to put towards preparing for the test.
- Prepare study materials by making flashcards and organizing lecture notes and readings. (Studyblue.com is a great online tool)
- As you study, make separate piles for learned and unlearned information.
- Put together study groups with classmates.
- Pay attention to your instructor, especially when they repeat something, pose questions to generate classroom discussions, or notify the class that a specific topic will be tested.
- Go to review sessions if they are offered!

## THE DAY BEFORE THE TEST

- Review your weak areas and then, in a separate study session, review all of your study materials for a good view of the overall picture.
- Do not overload yourself with any new information.
- If you're feeling anxious, try to relax with physically tiring activities so you are able to fall asleep.
- Always make sure to get enough sleep the night before a test.

## THE DAY OF THE TEST

- Start with a healthy, protein-filled breakfast and make sure to drink plenty of water – your brain needs fuel to function!
- Review your study materials one last time.
- Relax! Relieve stress and anxiety by practicing deep breathing, listening to music, exercising (even if that means taking a quick walk), meditating, or journaling.
- Make sure to bring necessary testing materials with you (pencil, calculator, extra paper, etc.).
- Get to the class early on test day and chat with your neighbors about what they thought was important to remember. This will help jog your memory and review!
- Chew a piece of gum to increase alertness and reduce stress.

## AFTER THE TEST

- Reward yourself! Plan something fun to do for all the effort you've put into studying.
- Once you've gotten your grade back, look over the test and set a goal for the next test!
- Compare how well you performed with how well you prepared and use this to enhance your study techniques for future tests!
- Get feedback from your professor and discuss any questions you have about answers you got wrong.

	How to prepare...	How to take a _____ test...
Matching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use flash cards</li> <li>• Practice Matching Tests</li> <li>• Make lists</li> <li>• Use pictures</li> <li>• Highlight key terms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before answering, review all the terms and descriptions</li> <li>• Do the ones you know first</li> <li>• Cross out both the term and the description as you answer the question</li> <li>• Use process of elimination to assist you in answering the remaining questions</li> </ul>
True/False	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use flash cards</li> <li>• Know your facts</li> <li>• Highlight statistics and/or numbers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be aware of tests containing words such as <i>always, never</i> and <i>only</i>. They tend to be false</li> <li>• Questions with less definite terms such as <i>often, frequently, and sometimes</i> suggest that the statement could be true</li> <li>• Information in other questions could help you with finding the answer</li> <li>• Don't second-guess yourself just because a sequence of questions appear to be T or F</li> <li>• The ENTIRE statement must be true for it to be correct</li> </ul>
Essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write the essay out</li> <li>• Make an outline</li> <li>• Brainstorm</li> <li>• Pay attention to hints that your professor gives you in class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make an outline before you start</li> <li>• Proofread</li> <li>• Be sure you answer all parts of the essay question for full points</li> </ul>
Multiple Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review all of the material</li> <li>• Make flash cards (study blue)</li> <li>• Recite from...               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flash cards</li> <li>• Review Sheets</li> <li>• Mind maps</li> <li>• Notes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carefully read the question, <b>BEFORE</b> you look at the answer</li> <li>• Look out for terms like <i>not, but, and except</i></li> <li>• Use process of elimination</li> <li>• Always question choices that include absolute words (<i>always, never, only</i>) they are often incorrect</li> <li>• Don't always pick "all the above"</li> <li>• Generally options that don't fit grammatically are incorrect</li> </ul>
Fill-in-the-blanks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review all of the material</li> <li>• Make flash cards (study blue)</li> <li>• Recite from...               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flash cards</li> <li>• Review Sheets</li> <li>• Mind maps</li> <li>• Notes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't let the size of the line confuse you               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One line might represent a sentence, phrase or just one word</li> <li>• Ask your teacher if possible</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Keep an eye out for grammar i.e. a(n)</li> </ul>