

KNOW WHAT TYPES OF TESTS YOU'LL BE GIVEN AND PREPARE ACCORDINGLY

Essay Test Tips

Prep:

Find someone with whom you can discuss concepts that you'll be tested on and challenge each other to be able to explain, defend, make connections and compare/contrast.

Practice writing as much as you can about major concepts without looking at your notes. This is not only an excellent way to catch what you may be forgetting, but also to simulate the test situation to make more efficient use of your time during the test.



Taking the Test:

- ✓ Read the directions carefully. Pay close attention to whether you are supposed to answer all the essays or only a specified amount (i.e. "Answer 2 out of the 3 questions").
- ✓ Make sure that you understand what the question is asking you. If you're not sure, ask your instructor.
- ✓ Make sure that you write down everything that is asked of you and more. The more (accurate) details and facts that you write down, the higher your grade is going to be.
- ✓ Budget your time, don't spend the entire test time on one essay.
- ✓ If the question is asking for facts, don't give your personal opinion on the topic.
- ✓ When writing your essay, try to be as neat as possible. Legibility is critical to understanding what you've written. Consider skipping spaces in case you need to add more information later. If you make a mistake, simply draw a line through it, rather than scribbling it out.
- ✓ Make an outline before writing your essay. This way your essay will be more organized and fluid. If you happen to run out of time, some professors will give you partial credit for the ideas that you have outlined.
- ✓ Start by repeating the question in your answer. (Ex. "*How did the Weinie War impact the sale of hot dog buns?*" –The Weinie War impacted the sale of hot dog buns in several ways...") Don't write long introductions and conclusions; the bulk of your time should be spent on answering the question(s) asked.
- ✓ Focus on one main idea per a paragraph.
- ✓ If you aren't sure about an exact date or number, use approximations i.e. "Approximately 5000" or "In the late 17th century."
- ✓ Budget your time. If you have an hour to write 3 essays, spend no more than 20 minutes on each essay, then if you have time left over at the end go back and finish any incomplete essays.
- ✓ If you have time left at the end, proofread your work and correct any errors.

True-False Test Tips

Prep:

Work with a classmate and give each other sample true/false questions.



Taking the Test:

- ✓ Usually there are more true answers than false on most tests.
- ✓ If there is no guessing penalty, then guess. You have a 50% chance of getting the right answer.
- ✓ Read through each statement carefully, and pay attention to the qualifiers and keywords.
- ✓ Qualifiers like "never, always, and every" mean that the statement must be true all of the time. Usually these type of qualifiers lead to a false answer.
- ✓ Qualifiers like "usually, sometimes, and generally" mean that if the statement can be considered true or false depending on the circumstances. Usually these type of qualifiers lead to an answer of true.
- ✓ Just because part of a statement is true doesn't necessarily make the entire statement true--If any part of the question is false, then the entire statement is false.

Short Answer Test Tips



Prep:

Try to anticipate questions that will be asked on the test and prepare for them. Use any past tests as a guide. Typically what your instructor emphasizes in class will be on the test.

Prep for Short-Answer Tests would resemble the preparation you would do for essay and multiple-choice tests, so read the "Prep" recommendations for each of those. Ask your professor whether the short-answers questions are more likely to be seeking--just a sentence or less? (use Multiple Choice Test Prep); or 2-5 sentences? (for which you'd be better off using the Essay Test Prep).

Taking the Test:

- ✓ Read the question carefully and make sure that you answer everything that it asks 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 and make an educated guess. Other parts of the test may give you clues to what the answer may be.
- ✓ If you can think up of more than one answer for a question, ask the instructor what to do.
- ✓ Try not to leave an answer blank. Show your work/write down your thoughts, even if you don't get the exact answer, partial credit is usually awarded.

Multiple Choice Test Tips

Prep:

A tried-and-true method for remembering English and foreign language vocab terms, definitions, people and events is by making FLASHCARDS. Write the key terms, dates, concepts, etc. and possible a “reminding word” on the front and the definition, event description, reminding sketches, and explanations on the back.



You can also create (and find) sets of digital flashcards using a free online program called “Quizlet” (www.quizlet.com) that creates games and practice tests to help you master the concepts.

Taking the Test:

- ✓ Read the instructions carefully. Occasionally professors will ask you to circle “all the answers that apply” rather than just one. Be sure you know what is being asked before answering.
- ✓ Start by covering the choices so that you can only see the question. Determine what the likely answer is, write it down, and then look for the answer that most closely resembles what you wrote.
- ✓ Be sure to read all four options completely before making a decision about the correct answer. The last one may well be “all of the above” (which is commonly correct, when given as an option).
- ✓ More clues to identifying correct answers (when they’re not otherwise obvious)—Look for:
 - Two similar-looking answers (the correct answer is often one of the two)
 - The “most inclusive” answer (ex. If the choices were: soccer forwards, ballet dancers, horse jockeys, and college students, “college students” would be the most inclusive)
- ✓ Narrow your choices by eliminating the answers you know aren’t correct from your view. Start by crossing off the answers that couldn’t be right. Clues to likely incorrect answers include:
 - Extreme modifiers (like *always*, *never*, and *every*)
 - Unfamiliar terms
 - A joke or insult
 - The highest and lowest numbers in a set

Put a star next to questions you’re really not sure so that you can relocate the question easily in the event that the answer is indicated elsewhere on the test.



- ✓ Unless you are penalized for wrong answers, GUESS! Always look over your test to be sure that you haven’t left any questions blank.
- ✓ When going back over your answers, resist the temptation to change them! The conventional wisdom on multiple choice tests is that your first impulse on which answer is correct is usually the right one. The ONLY times that you should chance an answer are: (a) if you are certain that you mis-read the question or the answer(s) the first time around, or (b) you’ve acquired new information from somewhere else in the test or an epiphany, that was compelling enough to make it clear that your previous selection was wrong.