



Test Taking Skills

- **Do you know why most students blow a test?**
 - Usually from test anxiety due to:
 - Low self-confidence
 - Inadequately preparing for the exam
 - Or lacking confidence in their test taking techniques




Test Taking Skills

- **Most Common Types of College Examinations:**
 - **Essay Type:**
 - May ask causes, compare outcomes, trace the developments
 - **Objective Type:**
 - Vary considerably in structure, and scoring.
 - True/false, multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching type
 - **Problem-Solving Type:**
 - mathematical or scientific, may require using a formula or applying a rule.




Test Taking Skills

- **When an exam is announced make sure you:**
 - Know what materials will be covered.
 - Know what kind of test it will be.
 - Find out as much as possible about scoring, nature and format of the questions.
 - Find out if there are sample tests or previous quizzes.
 - Prepare study questions based on sample tests, previous quizzes, lecture notes, handouts, etc.




Test Taking Skills

- **When an exam is announced (cont.):**
 - Don't overlook any assignment
 - Organize your study materials
 - Prepare study questions based on sample tests, previous quizzes, lecture notes, handouts, etc.
 - Find out if there are sample tests or previous quizzes.




Test Taking Skills

- **When an exam is announced (cont.):**
 - Be on the look out for the words "This material will be on the test".
 - Be sure to attend class, especially the class before the test.
 - Ask questions now. Get help from the teacher, classmates, and the teacher's assistant.
 - Form a study group or test preparation group.



Test Taking Skills

- **Design your study approach according to the type of test:**
 - For an **objective test**, you will need to concentrate on memorizing factual details such as names, dates, formulas, facts and definitions.
 - For an **essay exam** concentrate on understanding general concepts, principles and theories
 - For a **problem solving test**:
 - work examples of each type of problem that may appear on the test.




Test Taking Skills

For a **problem solving test (cont.):**

- Translate your problems into English by putting problems, equations, and formulas into words. *For example,*


The Pythagorean Theorem, $C^2 = A^2 + B^2$
 Or
"The square of the hypotenuse of a right triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides."

- Use Time drills** - Practice working problems fast, work with others and time each other.
- Review Formulas** -Right before the test, review any formulas you will need. Then write them down on the exam just before you start working on the problems.




Test Taking Skills

- Plan for study time:**
 - Plan regular, short, focused reviews, work much better than late night cram sessions!
 - Spend most of your time reviewing material that is the least well known, then briefly review the material that you are most familiar with.
 - Make a final comprehensive review on the night before the test.
 - BUT...go to bed early, so you are mentally and physically alert.**
 - Force worry out, affirm a positive end result!




Test Taking Skills

- What to do during the test:**
 - Arrive early instead of barely on time.
 - Give yourself time to relax and be prepared.
 - If you reach a question and forget something, don't panic, go on and return to it later.
 - Make certain you **fully understand** the test directions before answering any part of the test!
 - Do not panic or feel uncomfortable if other students finish before you.
 - Don't try to be the first one to leave, if you have any time left check over your answers.




Test Taking Skills

- **Taking Essay Exams:**
 - Read all the questions rapidly. Write down any pertinent facts or ideas. This can prevent answers from overlapping.
 - Estimate how much time you will have for each question. Do this by establishing the level of difficulty and importance.
 - Keep track of your time so you don't spend too much time on one question.
 - Answer the easiest questions first.
 - Concentrate on one question at a time, this will help to reduce test anxiety.




Test Taking Skills

- **Taking Essay Exams (cont.):**
 - *Before you start writing . . .*
 - Make a brief outline
 - Remember the essay is graded on what you need to say and how well you say it. (NOT HOW MUCH YOU SAY).
 - Make sure you know what the question is asking.
 - Identify the kind of answer the question requires before you begin writing.
 - Verbs like "illustrate", "list", "define", "compare", "trace", "explain", and "identify" require different types of answers.




Test Taking Skills

- **Taking Essay Exams (cont.):**
 - Get to the main points immediately.
 - Support your answers as concisely as possible.
 - Include factual details to support your answer when appropriate.
 - Write legibly and make corrections neatly.
 - Leave plenty of space between your answers.
 - If you run into a question that you can't answer right away, leave it to be answered last.
 - Don't leave any question blank, do your best even if it is a partial answer.




Test Taking Skills

- **Taking Essay Exams (cont.):**
 - Take time to go over your answers for accuracy.
 - Check spelling, grammar, syntax, spelling and punctuation. Sometimes you can raise your grade by adding last minute information and by correcting careless errors.




Test Taking Skills

- **Taking Objective Tests:**
 - Answer all questions without skipping or jumping around.
 - Guess if you have to, don't leave blanks.
 - If you have to blind guess, choose the longest answer.
 - In multiple choice, anticipate the answer, then look for it.
 - Look for answers to questions in other questions.
 - If among several answers two are similar, except for one or two words, choose one of those two.



Test Taking Skills

- **Taking Objective Tests (cont.):**
 - Do not waste too much time on any particular question. Mark it and return later as time permits.
 - Be very alert of questions that have negatives such as "NOT" or "NEVER", as they might be tricky. Those sentences with double or triple negative must be read very carefully to assure complete understanding.
 - Questions with absolute qualifiers, such as "always" or "never" usually indicate a false statement.




Test Taking Skills

- Taking Objective Tests (cont.):**
 - Check for qualifying words such as "ALL-MOST-SOME-NONE", "ALWAYS-USUALLY-SELDOM-NEVER", "BEST-WORST", "HIGHEST-LOWEST", OR "SMALLEST-LARGEST". When you see one of these qualifiers test to see if it is true by substituting another qualifier. If your substitution makes a better statement the question is false, if the substitution does not make a better statement, the question is true.


For example:
Birds always fly (false)
Birds usually fly (true)
Birds seldom fly (false)
Birds never fly (false)

 Obviously there are some birds that do not fly, so the answer is usually.




Test Taking Skills

- Taking Objective Tests (cont.):**
 - Watch for modifying or limiting phrases inserted into true-false questions. Inserted names, dates, places and other details could make the statement false. (*i.e., John F. Kennedy, killed in 1965, was the 35th President of the USA*).
 - Mark TRUE only if the phrase is true without exception. Any exception will make it false.
 - Be alert for multiple ideas or concepts within the same true-false statement. All parts of the statement must be true or the entire statement is false.
 - If the answer calls for a sentence completion (fill in the blank or multiple choice) eliminate the options that would not form grammatically correct answers.




Test Taking Skills

- Taking Problem-Solving Tests:**
 - Review your formulas.
 - Before the test write down on the exam any formulas, equations, and rules that are difficult to remember.
 - If necessary have a worked example or number the steps.




Test Taking Skills

- Taking Problem-Solving Tests (cont.):**
 - If you are unable to work a problem, go on to the next one and come back to work on it if time allows.
 - Even if you know that your answer is incorrect, turn your work in because you might be given partial credit for using the right process.
 - Show all the steps in answering the problem and clearly identify the final result, making it easy to identify.




Test Taking Skills

- Taking Problem-Solving Tests (cont.):**
 - Show all the steps in answering the problem and clearly identify the final result, making it easy to identify.
 - Estimate first. This is a good way to double check your work.
 - Analyze before you compute. Set up the problem before you begin to solve it.
 - When you take the time to study a problem you can frequently find shortcuts.



Test Taking Skills

- Taking Problem-Solving Tests (cont.):**
 - Make a picture, draw a picture or diagram if you are stuck.
 - Check your work systematically, Ask yourself
 - ✓ Did I read this correctly?
 - ✓ Did I use the correct formula or equation?
 - ✓ Is my arithmetic correct?



Test Taking Skills

- **Taking Problem-Solving Tests (cont.):**
 - **Avoid the temptation to change your answer at the last minute, unless you are sure it is correct.**
 - **Perform opposite operations. If you have time recheck all your answers for example if you added up all the numbers, then reverse the order or use a different function entirely.**
