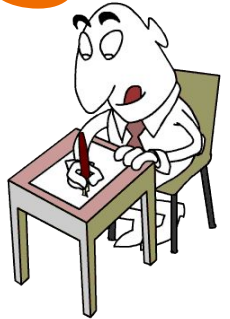


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# Test Taking Tips

— St. Theresa's Library  
2020 —



# Tips: Taking a Test



## PLEASE NOTE:

- This presentation is for taking a test and what to do once you have sat down to write the test.
  - We are assuming you have already prepared and studied for your test.
- If you are looking for information on how to prepare and study, that is a different slideshow.

# Be Prepared

- There is no substitute for preparation.
  - If you haven't studied throughout the semester, if you haven't reviewed prior to test day, and if you don't know the test material, then all of the test taking strategies in the world won't save you.
  - Preparation is **ALWAYS** the key to success.
- Spend as many hours as necessary to understand the material that will be covered on the test.
  - The better you want to do, the more you have to prepare.
- Make sure you know the date and time of your test.
  - Check exam schedule carefully, more than once.



# Don't Be Late!



Always arrive a bit early and take a moment to relax

- Make sure you have time to find the test room.
- You'll increase your confidence if you have some time to relax.
- You'll be able to narrow your focus for the upcoming test.
- Get desk organized and get your pens/pencils ready
- Arriving early may allow you time to ask any last-minute questions of your teacher.
- Also, listen to explanations being provided to other students.
  - You might get some extra insight or extra hints

# SUPPLIES



## Bring the Necessary Supplies

- Make sure that you have the necessary materials for writing the test.
- These supplies may include a calculator with new batteries, multiple pens, a couple of sharp pencils, a highlighter, a protractor, and a good eraser.
- Ask your teacher **BEFORE** the test day what items you are permitted to bring into the test room.
  - Also, ask what items your teacher suggests you should bring to the test.

# Relax!

## Stay relaxed during the test

- Take a few minutes to relax before taking a test.
- If you're struggling to relax, take deep breaths.
- Take a moment and clear your head.
- Focus on something completely unrelated to the test, or even school.
  - Think about something fun you're planning later during the week, or maybe a fun trip you'll be taking.
  - Once you're calm, go and ace the test.
- The calmer, and more positive you are, the better you will do!



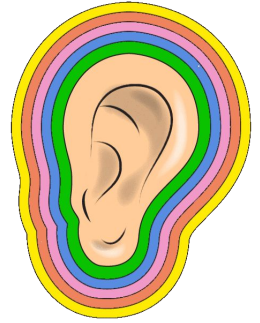
# Stay Focussed



**You are there to succeed...so do it!**

- Avoid distractions like phones - don't bring them to the test room.
- If you are allowed to choose your seat, stay away from friends and/or distractions.
- Do the test at your own pace.
  - Ignore friends who may finish first and want you to hurry.
- Do your best to block out the sounds and motions around you.
  - The front of a row may have fewer coughs, sneezes or whispers.

# Listen Carefully!



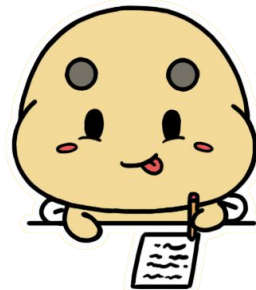
## Listen attentively to instructions by the teacher

- It is not uncommon for teachers to alter test details at the last minute.
- If you miss test instructions, test-taking anxiety will increase.
  - This will negatively affect your test performance.
- Avoid conversation or distractions while the teacher explains details of test
- If you miss test instructions, don't be scared to ask for instructions to be repeated.
  - Don't risk missing instructions for tests!



# Memory Dump

- As soon as you receive your test, and your teacher says you may begin, do a memory dump.
- This can be a particularly useful strategy for improving performance on certain types of tests.
- Use the back of a page or scrap paper, and write down information that you will likely need to know for the test and you fear you may forget.
  - Formulas, equations, dates, lists, etc.



# Instructions



Read instructions **VERY** carefully and watch for details

- Test questions and directions often contain valuable information. Always read all directions carefully to ensure you understand what is being asked.
- Read each question at least twice.
  - Underline or highlight key words and phrases in the question.
- It is not uncommon to have two correct answers on a multiple choice question.
  - Pay attention to details!
- Frequently, test instructions will notify students that they only need to complete two questions, but there will be five options.
  - Do **NOT** do more than what is asked; they won't read them all anyway.

# Just Ask!

- **Ask for Clarification.**

- When you are confused, ask your teacher for help to clarify the question or the expectations for a question.
- Most teachers will try to clarify questions if they can do so without giving away the answer.
  - Want the answer? **Not going to happen!**

- **Don't think your teacher will help?**

- Try anyway...the worst your teacher can say is “no”



# Plan Your Time



Plan how you will use the allotted time

- Read the entire test over before starting.
- Take a moment to estimate how much time you'll have for each section of the test and each question.
- Allow enough time for more difficult sections or sections that are weighted more heavily in the final test grade.
- Pace yourself so you can complete the test in the allotted time frame.
- Complete the questions you know first, then come back and tackle the problems you're not sure about afterwards.

# Cues



Look for cues or help within the test

- If two answers are similar, they're usually not the correct answer.
- Pay attention to grammatical “matching” between the question being asked and the possible answers.
  - If an answer seems right but doesn't match grammatically with the question, it probably isn't the correct answer.
- Look for cues from other questions.
- The test itself may jog your memory.
- One area of the test might hold clues that could help you with other areas.
  - Can't remember a name? Look at other parts of the test to see if it's listed elsewhere.

# No Blanks!



## Answer all of the questions

- Even if you're running out of time and can't answer all of the questions fully, it's still important to answer all of the test questions.
- Not sure? Make an informed guess...you might surprise yourself.
- Many teachers will give some marks for partially completed questions, or if you're able to show your work.
  - Note: There are some tests in post-secondary where you are docked points for guessing.
    - This is **VERY** rare in high school!

# STAY POSITIVE!



## Maintain a positive attitude

- Do not lose confidence or waste time if you encounter confusing or difficult questions.
  - Answer the questions you know first.
  - Leave the ones you're not sure about until the rest are done
- When you are stuck, place a small mark beside the problem and move on
  - You cannot afford to spend too much time probing the depths of your memory.
  - You can return to any questions that you had to skip...just don't forget!
- If you have no clue about the correct answer, make an educated guess.
  - Do **NOT** leave questions blank!

# First Impressions



## Rely on your instincts

- The first answer that pops into your mind is usually the correct answer.
  - Don't change answers unless you're **sure** the answer you've chosen is wrong.
- Be sure to complete the entire test before you start revisiting questions, or changing your answers.
  - Getting all of the test done is your first priority.



# SAVE TIME

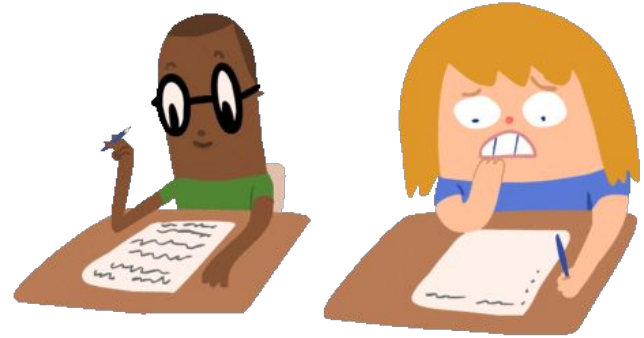


## Plan to finish early and save time for review

- Use **ALL** of the time provided to you for the test or exam.
  - **NEVER** be one of the first ones to submit the test...that's a waste.
  - Use all of the time available...it pays off!
- Go back and revisit the difficult questions you are unsure about.
- Add detail to answers that could use some extra explanation.
- If you are required to complete an essay, review it for spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors.
- Check to make sure you have completed the **entire** test.
  - Note: It is not uncommon for questions to be listed on the opposite side of a page.

# Avoid Being Suspicious

- Teachers don't need to **PROVE** you are cheating
  - They just have to **THINK** you are cheating!
  - You **WILL** receive a zero on the test.
- Don't give them **ANY** reason to think you are cheating.
- Don't bring your phone to the test room.
- Ignore classmates who want to talk to you.
- Need something from your backpack?
  - Ask your teacher.
- Keep binders or notes away from your desk.
- Be ready for teachers to check any supplies or items on your desk.
- Smart watch?
  - Leave it at home!



# HINTS: Multiple Choice



- Read the questions **carefully and completely**.
- Cover up the answers and read the question without distractions.
  - See if the answer comes to you. Then read all of the alternatives before you identify the best one.
- Cross out the wrong answers.
  - When the correct answer is hard to identify, eliminate the wrong choices so you can concentrate on real possibilities.
- Mark your answers clearly and consistently. (Be neat!)
- If you are not sure of an answer, **GUESS!** (Research says to choose 'C'!)
- Ignore any patterns you might notice.
  - It is probably just a coincidence if a string of multiple choice answers, that you know are correct, are all "A"

# HINTS: True or False



- If you are not sure of the answer, go with your “gut” feeling.
  - You have a 50% chance of being right.
  - Do **NOT** leave a question blank.
- Don't look for answer patterns.
  - Teachers generally try to make the order of true-false answers random.
  - Focus your energies on the questions themselves.
- Honour any exceptions to the rule.
  - If you can think of **ANY** exception to the statement, then the statement is probably false.

# HINTS: Essay Questions

- Plan and structure your response before you begin to write.
  - **ALWAYS** create an outline before you start writing the essay.
- Explain your argument, but also **use examples** to demonstrate your understanding of the material.
- Begin by answering the question.
  - At start of your first paragraph, include a sentence which states your stance or argument that you are about to explain.
    - Make it clear!
- Write legibly and clearly
  - You don't want to lose marks because the teacher can not read your work.



# FINAL WORD

- Don't forget: **NONE** of these strategies will work if you are not prepared and you have not studied!
- **Preparation is the key to success** on all tests.
  - These helpful hints just help you to better utilize your knowledge.
  - They will also help you maximize your potential performance on the test.
- However, if you know nothing about the test material, there is **NOTHING** we can do to help you succeed on the test.
- Get ready, be prepared, and don't be scared to work hard.

## GOOD LUCK!



