

Test Taking

Academic Center for
Excellence

University of North
Florida

Before a Test

- Start studying 7 – 10 days before the test. One hour a day for 10 days is much better than 5 hours of cramming.
- Take a study break for 10-15 minutes every hour. Stretch, take a walk, or have a snack.
- Put your notes on cassette or CD and listen in the car or while exercising.

Before a Test Cont.

- Don't talk to other students who are in a panic before the exam. Fear is contagious.
- Get a good night's sleep before the exam so your mind is rested and clear.



During a Test

- Answer the easiest, shortest questions first. You will sometimes find memory cues that will help on other items.
- Next answer multiple choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank questions.
- Then proceed to short –answer and essay questions.

During a Test Cont.

- Read questions carefully and underline key words such as ***discuss***, ***explain***, or ***compare***.
- Answer each question, even if you don't know the full answer. Some points are better than none!
- Don't go back and change your answer unless you are certain you made a mistake. Your first instinct is often the right one.

During a Test Cont.

- Don't worry if other students finish before you do. This could mean that they gave up, not that they knew it or that you will fail.
- Use the full time allowed. If you finish, review your answers or add more information.

Multiple Choice Questions

- Check the directions to see if the questions call for more than one answer.
- Answer each question in your head before you look at the possible answers.
- Be sure to read all answers to multiple choice questions before you choose one.

What About Guessing?

- If you have no clue as to what the answer is and if you are not penalized for incorrect answers, then use the following guidelines to guess.



What About Guessing?

- If two answers are similar except for one or two words, choose one of these answers.
- If the answer calls for a sentence completion, eliminate answers that would not form grammatically correct answers.

Note: none of these suggestions for guessing is meant to take place of studying for the test.

True/false Questions

- Read carefully. Sometimes one word can make a statement inaccurate.
- If any part of a true/false statement is false, the entire statement is false.
- Absolute qualifiers like ***always*** and ***never*** generally indicate a false statement.

Short-answer/fill-in-the-blank Tests

- These questions often ask for definitions or short descriptions.
- Concentrate on key words and facts.
- Be brief.



Essay Questions

- Find out what the question is asking ***precisely***. If the questions asks you to compare do not explain.
- Before you write, make a quick outline.
- When you start to write, get to the point. (One way is to include part of the question in your answer).

Final Points

- Write legibly.
- Avoid filler sentences that say nothing.
- Use a pen.
- Write on one side of the paper.
- Finally, if you have time, review your answers for grammar and spelling errors, clarity, and legibility.

References

- University of North Florida, Counseling Center Tips for Student Success.
- Becoming a Master Student, Dave Ellis, 10th edition.