

TEST-TAKING PRACTICES TO GO

Keep this sheet near by so that you'll always have helpful
& practical test-taking tips at hand

The Learning and Memory Process

These stages are similar to the way information is processed by a computer.

1. Information is typed onto the screen (input)
2. The information is saved in a file (storage)
3. The saved info is recalled and used when needed (retrieval)

To remember, you have to make it your own: understand it, desire it, and process it.

Mnemonics: According to Gerald Miller, students who used mnemonic devices raised grades 77%.

Ex. The Great Lakes: HOMES: Huron Ontario Michigan Erie Superior

Meaningful organization. You probably can't remember these 31 items: aabceeeeeeiimmmnnnoorrsssttuv

But if you organized them in a meaningful way – as words – you could reduce the number of items, increasing your odds of remembering them.

**Chunk items
you need to memorize
into sets of 7**

Pauk, Walter. How To Study in College, 6th Ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997. Print.

Memory Block During Exam: What To Do

1. Mentally put yourself in the environment where you studied.
2. Think about anything related to the info you can't remember
3. Turn to another question for a moment
4. Review answers before turning in test

Subjective Exam Strategies: Essay Tests

1. Write out an outline
2. Include three main points:
Intro
Body
Conclusion
3. After writing, review your response:
Does it make sense?
Did you answer all parts of the question?
Is it organized, focused, well supported, grammatically correct?

Brain Dump

Before the exam, create a personal reference sheet with concepts or formulas you are worried about forgetting. **Practice** writing it from memory. **At the start of the exam**, re-create the reference sheet on a piece of scrap paper from memory to refer to during the exam.

Objective Exam Strategies: True/False

1. Assume statements are true unless you know they are false.
2. If part of a statement is false, the whole statement is false.
3. True/False statements that give reasons tend to be false.
4. A negative word/prefix does not make the statement false.
5. Simplify the question by getting rid of double negatives by crossing them both out.
6. If there are general qualifiers, there's a good chance that the statement is true (generally, probably usually, sometimes).
7. If absolute qualifiers are used, the statement is probably false (all, always, no, never, every, everyone, only, best, entirely, invariably).

The Last Resort: Only If You Have to Guess The following tend to be incorrect answers:

- Options with absolute qualifiers
 - Options with unfamiliar terms
 - Options with jokes or insults
 - Options with highest and lowest numbers
- The following tend to be correct:** Options that read "all of the above" Options with more complete answers
- Options with one of two similar looking answers

Manage Review time:

Daily reviews Weekly Reviews Major Reviews
Create review tools: Study checklists Mind map summary sheets
Flash cards
Cram Systematically Limit what you learn
Recite instead of reread Plan a strategy

Objective Exam Strategies: Multiple Choice

There isn't always a perfect answer
Cross out the incorrect answers
Read all possible responses
Treat each question as a true/false question

Objective Exam Strategies: Fill-in Questions

1. Read questions to yourself to hear what is being asked.
2. If more than one answer comes to mind, write both in the margin. Come back later to choose one.
3. Make sure that your choice fits logically and grammatically.
4. Your answer may require more than one word.

Test Debriefing

After you get the test back, go through and mark where you got questions wrong:
DK (don't know)
SM (silly mistake)
T (Text)
N (Notes)
T/F (true/false)
MC (multiple choice) Essay

Applying the Memory Principles

1. Interest: You must be interested in the topic.
2. Attitude: Be positive that you will remember.
3. Basic Background: How much do you already know? Build on knowledge.
4. Selectivity: Determine what is most important and select this material to learn.
5. Meaningful organization: Group ideas into meaningful categories.
6. Recitation: Say it aloud in your own words
7. Mental visualization: Make a mental picture of what needs to be remembered.
8. Association: Tie new info to something you already know.
9. Consolidation: Time for material to "soak in."
10. Distributed practice: Study in shorter increments rather than for hours straight.

Hopper, Carolyn. Practicing College Study Skills: Strategies for Success. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998. Print.

Subjective Exam Strategies

There are also two levels of questions on subjective exams:
Memory Level: Define, Illustrate, Summarize,
Trace Higher Level: Compare/contrast, Relate, Cause and Effect, Prove, Evaluate, Analyze, Synthesize, Argue

Predict Test Questions. As you are reading, don't memorize material. Elaborate on information as you learn it. Answer a predicted question beforehand.

Reading Essay Exam Questions

Practice translating complex essay questions into topics your class has discussed. Remember your charts and diagrams. Organize information to fit the question. Learn to recognize familiar parts of essay questions