

Name _____ Program _____

Date _____

STUDY SKILLS/TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

QUIZ

1. What do you need to gather before you begin studying?

2. You should survey your notes/textbook for:
 - a. Funny words and phrases
 - b. Study tips and guidelines
 - c. Key points and key words
 - d. Degrees and programs

3. True or False: You should always study in 30-minute time blocks.

4. True or False: It is often helpful to study with a partner. _____

5. Fill in the blank. Before studying, you should identify _____ to be studied.

Tips for Terrific Test Taking

1. **Analyze how you did on a similar test in the past.**
Review your previous tests and sample tests provided by your teacher.
Each test you take prepares you for the next one!
2. **Arrive early for tests.**
List what you need beforehand to avoid panic.
Good preparation prepares you for the task at hand.
3. **Be comfortable but alert.**
Choose a comfortable location with space enough that you need
Don't slouch; maintain good posture.
4. **Stay relaxed and confident.**
Keep a good attitude and remind yourself that you are going to do your best.
If you find yourself panicking, take a few deep breaths
Don't talk to other students right before: stress can be contagious.
5. **Read directions carefully!**
and avoid careless errors.
6. **If there is time, quickly look through the test for an overview.**
Scan for keywords. If permitted, jot any notes that come to mind.
7. **Answer questions in a strategic order:**
Easy questions first to build confidence.
Then those with the most point value.
On objective tests, eliminate obvious incorrect answers.
On essay tests, broadly outline your answer and sequence of points.
8. **Review! if you have time.**
Resist the urge to leave when you complete the exam--
check if you have answered all the questions,
and not made any errors or mis-marked any answers.
9. **Change answers to questions if you erred, or misread the question!**
You may also find information in the test that will correct a previous answer.
10. **Decide on and adopt study strategies that work best for you.**
Review where you succeed and where you are challenged.
Check out your academic support center or a trusted teacher for advice.
11. **Every part of a true sentence must be "true"**
If any one part of the sentence is false,
the whole sentence is false despite many other true statements.
12. **Pay close attention to**
negatives, qualifiers, absolutes, and long strings of statements
13. **Negatives can be confusing.**
If the question contains negatives, as "no, not, cannot"
Drop the negative and read what remains.
Decide whether that sentence is true or false.
If it is true, its opposite, or negative, is usually false

14. Qualifiers are words that restrict or open up general statements.

Words like "sometimes, often, frequently, ordinarily, generally" open up the possibilities of making accurate statements. They make more modest claims, are more likely to reflect reality, and usually indicate "true" answers.

15. Absolute words restrict possibilities.

"No, never, none, always, every, entirely, only"

imply the statement must be true 100% of the time and usually indicate "false" answers

16. Long sentences often include groups of words set off by punctuation.

Pay attention to the "truth" of each of these phrases.

If one is false, it usually indicates a "false" answer

Multiple choice tests

Multiple choice questions usually include a phrase or stem followed by three to five options:

Test strategies:

- Read the directions carefully
 - Know if each question has one or more correct option
 - Know if you are penalized for guessing
 - Know how much time is allowed (this governs your strategy)
- Preview the test
 - Read through the test quickly and answer the easiest questions first
 - Mark those you think you know in some way that is appropriate
- Read through the test a second time and answer more difficult questions
 - You may pick up cues for answers from the first reading, or become more comfortable in the testing situation
- If time allows, review both questions and answers
 - It is possible you mis-read questions the first time

Answering options

Improve your odds, think critically:

Cover the options, read the stem, and try to answer

Select the option that most closely matches your answer

Read the stem with each option

Treat each option as a true-false question, and choose the "most true"

Strategies for answering difficult questions:

1. **Eliminate options you know to be incorrect**
 - If allowed, mark words or alternatives in questions that eliminate the option
2. **Give each option of a question the "true-false test:"**
 - This may reduce your selection to the best answer
3. **Question options that grammatically don't fit with the stem**
4. **Question options that are totally unfamiliar to you**
5. **Question options that contain negative or absolute words.**
 - Try substituting a qualified term for the absolute one.

For example, *frequently* for *always*; or *typical* for *every* to see if you can eliminate an option

6. **"All of the above:"**
If you know two of three options seem correct, "all of the above" is a strong possibility
7. **Number answers:**
toss out the high and low and consider the middle range numbers
8. **"Look alike options"**
probably one is correct; choose the best but eliminate choices that mean basically the same thing, and thus cancel each other out
9. **Double negatives:**
Create the equivalent positive statement
10. **Echo options:**
If two options are opposite each other, chances are one of them is correct
11. **Favor options that contain qualifiers**
The result is longer, more inclusive items that better fill the role of the answer
12. **If two alternatives seem correct,**
compare them for differences,
then refer to the stem to find your best answer

From Study Guides and Strategies, found at <http://www.studygs.net/tsttak3.htm>.

ACTIVE STUDY

Adapted from: Ann Algier, Everything You Need To Know About Learning

A. Introduction

Learning takes time. Very few people have photographic memories. Learning requires repetition- meaningful repetition. This is why active study techniques are so vitally important. The "recording disk" of the brain accepts new material much faster if it "hears," "sees," "feels," "tastes," and detects motion (kinetic energy) during input or recording time. Then too, the more times around the learning circuit, the longer lasting the impression. If you are able to place abstract ideas into diagrammatic form, you will remember the concept.

B. Mnemonics

Material that is difficult to master can be organized by finding the key words in each point, noting the first letter, and arranging the letters into a sense or nonsense word (the sillier, the better). Examples:

1. What are the qualities of a scientist? (mnemonic answer: PIPOC)
P ersistence
I ntelligence
P atience
O riginality
C uriosity
2. Why did the U.S. enter World War I? (mnemonic answer: SPRENCZ)
S ubmarines, Germans lifted restrictions on use of
P ropaganda, British control of
R ussians overthrew the tsar
E conomic ties of U.S. with Britain and France
N eutrality, German violations of U.S.
C ultural ties with Britain
Z immerman telegram

Note: in example 2, the student has devised a mnemonic based on key words. If you have a basic understanding of each point, you ought to be able to write a complete essay from the mnemonic SPRENCZ. Example 1, however, represents the type of mnemonic a student could use to learn a short list of items for an objective test. If you need to memorize a long list of items such as the states in the union, alphabetize and learn in small "chunks." You can always depend on the alphabet. Break down a list, rearrange, put on a study card and master. In the example of learning the states in the union, it is easier to remember that there are four states whose names begin with "A," no "Bs," one "D," etc., then to try to memorize the list.

C. Study Cards

In printing study cards, the student is using kinetic energy (energy in motion), thus making the impression stronger on the brain, and the student will be able to use the cards for overlearning. Another reason for having students make study cards is that they are convenient to carry and flip through for mastery. Reading the cards silently, however, is too passive. Go over the cards orally. A student will not master the cards by passively reading them. Learning requires the expenditure of energy. The student must be actively engaged in producing the sounds, using muscles and burning energy to make the sound.

D. Memory

1. General points to consider
 - a. The student must focus his or her attention on whatever needs to be remembered. If you intend to remember something, you probably will.
 - b. The student must be "sold" on the course. Why is this subject worth knowing? Correlative reading may enhance the student's interest. For example, historical novels are a marvelous way to learn history. The greater the knowledge, the greater the interest.
 - c. Help the students classify and associate. Many authorities feel that you will master information faster if you learn in groups of seven or fewer at a time.
 - d. Have the students overlearn through repetition.

2. Association is a key to memory:
 - a. You remember approximately 10 percent of what you read.
 - b. You remember approximately 20 percent of what you hear.
 - c. You remember approximately 30 percent of what you see.
 - d. You remember approximately 50 percent of what you hear and see together.
 - e. You remember approximately 70 percent of what you say (if you think as you are saying it).
 - f. You remember approximately 90 percent of what you do.

A WEEKLY FLOW CHART FOR STUDYING

