

The studying you do to prepare for an exam will likely pay off if you come to the exam well rested, well fed, and ready to think and write clearly.

Be Prepared on Exam Day

1. *Bring the necessary materials.*
 - a. Writing utensils
 - b. Scratch paper if allowed
 - c. Blue books if necessary
 - d. Calculator, conversion chart, dictionary, etc. if allowed by the instructor
2. *Be on time.*
 - a. Arrive a few minutes early, in time to take a seat and get organized before the test begins.
 - b. If you are late, you may miss instructions and feel rushed as you begin the test.
3. *Sit in the front of the room.*
 - a. If you sit at the front, you may receive the test first and get a head start.
 - b. You will likely have fewer distractions and can concentrate more easily.
4. *Listen to the instructor's directions.*
 - a. Write down any specific instructions that are not included in the test's written instructions
 - b. Listen carefully to any comments or advice that the instructor gives.
5. *Preview the exam.*
 - a. Before answering any questions, quickly look through the exam to note the length, types of questions, general topics covered, and number of points the questions are worth.
6. *Plan your time.*
 - a. Use the point distribution on the exam to estimate how much time you should spend on each part. If an exam has thirty multiple-choice questions worth one point each and two essay questions worth a total of seventy points, plan to spend twice as much time on the essay questions as on the multiple-choice items.
 - b. Leave five minutes at the end of the exam to read through your answers, answer questions you skipped, and make any necessary corrections or changes.
7. *Avoid reading too much into any question.*
 - a. Read the question several times, paying attention to how it is worded.
 - b. Try to relate the question to the course content and the material you have studied.

Taking Objective Exams

1. *Read the directions first.*
 - a. Don't let the pressure of time keep you from reading the instructions.
 - b. Directions may contain crucial information that you need in order to avoid losing points.
2. *Leave nothing blank.*
 - a. Before turning in your exam, check to be sure you have answered every question.
 - b. If you do not know the correct answer to a question and there is no penalty for guessing, then guess. If there is a penalty for a wrong answer, it may be better to leave it unanswered.

3. *Use the process of elimination.*
 - a. On multiple-choice questions, rule out the answers that you know are incorrect and choose the best answer from those that remain.
4. *Look for clues.*
 - a. If you encounter a question that has an answer you are not confident on, choose what seems to be the best answer, mark the question so that you can return to it, and keep the question in your mind as you proceed with the rest of the test.
 - b. Sometimes you will see a piece of information later in the exam that confirms you chose the correct answer or contradicts the answer you gave.
5. *Write answers clearly.*
 - a. If your instructor cannot read your answer, he or she will mark it wrong.
 - b. Use capital letters on multiple-choice, true/false, and matching tests.
 - c. On a machine-scored answer sheet, make sure you fill in the boxes entirely and to make complete erasures.
6. *Check over your answers.*
7. *Do not change answers without good reason.*
 - a. Very often your first impressions are correct. If you start second-guessing your answers, do not change your answers unless you are confident that you now have the correct answer.

Taking Essay Exams

1. *Plan your time and your answer.*
 - a. Read the exam all the way through at least once.
 - b. Weigh the questions.
 - c. Read each question at least twice.
 - d. Examine the words in the question, and consider their implications.
 - e. Make a brief outline of the main ideas you want to cover.
 - f. Write a thesis statement for your essay that responds directly to the question and represents your view of the topic.
2. *Start the essay.*
 - a. An essay exam does not require the extensive introduction you might write for an out-of-class essay or research paper.
 - b. Begin your essay by stating your thesis immediately and giving an overview of the rest of your essay.
3. *Develop the essay.*
 - a. Observe the methods, terms, or other special requirements of the discipline in which you are writing.
 - b. Support your thesis statement with factual statements.
 - c. Support each statement with specific, relevant evidence.
4. *Reread the essay.*
 - a. Correct mistakes such as illegible writing, misspellings, grammatical errors, and accidental missing words.
 - b. Verify that your thesis is accurate (i.e. what you ended up writing about).
 - c. Ensure that you have stayed on topic and fully answered the question.