

TEST TAKING STRATEGIES

Tests are one of the most high-stress situations you can come across in your time at Iowa. This worksheet is designed to give you a wide range of topics to think about as you prepare for a test. This is just an overview; please see our other worksheets for a more in-depth review of these topics.

Multiple Choice Strategies

Multiple choice tests are common on campus. Use the following strategies to get an upper hand on this tricky question type.

1. Read the stem and anticipate the answer before you look at the multiple choices. Read the stem with all choices.
2. Eliminate answers that are grammatically incorrect.
3. Use the process of elimination. Eliminate all questions that you know are incorrect.
4. Note qualifying words. Words like usually, often, generally *could* indicate a true statement.
5. If a word like not, never, or none is in the stem, the correct answer must be a fact or absolute. Other alternatives could be true, but incorrect.
6. Note superlatives. Every, all, none, and always indicate answers must be undisputed fact. This is rare.
7. Skip the questions that you are unsure of, and return to them at the end.
8. The most effective approach to studying is to write a multiple choice study guide. (Usually with a study group).
9. Don't "read into" the question—take everything at face value.
10. If you have a good reason to change your answer—change it—otherwise leave it alone.
11. Multiple choice exams require greater familiarity with details, such as specific dates, names and vocabulary.
12. If, after all else, you cannot decide between two choices, choose what "feels" right.

Tips: Before the Test

- * Use positive self-talk. Instead of saying, "I can't do this" or "I don't know this" say "I can do this," "I'm prepared" or "I'm going to think this through and I'm going to figure it out."
- * Give yourself enough time to review the material—don't start one or two days before. Review material as you learn it throughout the semester and at the beginning of each new unit.
- * Get a good night's sleep. Gather all materials you need for the test before bed.
- * The material you learn while cramming does not last and may be a reason you "blank" on a test.

Tip for Success

Studying should be a daily activity. Reviewing your class material every will help you remember 50-80% information from lecture. Daily review saves time!



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Tips: Day of the Test

- * Eat a healthy breakfast.
- * Read the directions carefully. If you blank on a question, skip it and move on. Sometimes reading other test questions will help you remember answers to those questions you skipped.
- * Take your time. There's no reward for finishing first, so use the entire test time; use the extra time to verify your answers. Check the clock periodically.
- * If you feel anxious, use stress reducing techniques close your eyes. Put down your pencil or take your hands away from the keyboard. Breathe in slowly to the count of 7, and then slowly exhale to the count of 7.

Tips: After the Test

- * Relax. You gave it your best. No matter how the test went, you still have the opportunity improve.
- * Identify techniques you used that were effective in helping you manage your anxiety.

Memory tools serve as bridges to recall information.

Acronyms: Find a word that is made by taking the first letter(s) of main ideas or key words.

Chaining: For ordered lists, create a story where each word or idea you have to remember is a cue to the next idea you need to recall.

Image-Name Technique: To help remember names, invent a relationships between the name and the physical characteristics of the person.

Numbers to Words: Convert the numbers into words with the same amount of letters as there are in each digit. Then create a sentence with words which match the number you need to memorize.

Rhymes: Use rhyming or rhythms to remember facts, figures, dates, etc.

RESOURCES

University Counseling Service 3223 Westlawn South 319-335-7294 ucs@uiowa.edu http://counseling.studentlife.uiowa.edu/	Academic Support & Retention 310 Calvin Hall 319-335-1497 tutoriowa@uiowa.edu http://tutor.uiowa.edu
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Works Cited:

<http://www.collegeatlas.org/how-to-retain-information.html>
Memory 101 for Educators, by Marilee Sprenger
<http://sas.calpoly.edu/asc/ssl/testanxiety.html>