

Midway
College

Test Taking Tips

Office of
Student Affairs

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F is for feedback, not failure

Sometimes when students get an F on an assignment they interpret it as “you are a failure.” That is just not true!

Getting an F only means you failed a test—it doesn't mean you failed your life.

From now on consider an F as feedback. It is a message that you didn't understand the material well enough—it is a message to do something different before the next test or assignment.

If you interpret F as feedback, you can change your thinking and behavior in ways that promote success!

What To Do Before the Test

The key to testing success is PREPARATION! Here are a few tips as to how you can prepare yourself:

Manage your time:

- Daily Reviews: review your notes from class daily. It is much easier to clarify items in your notes when it is fresh on your mind! This should take you 5 to 10 minutes with each class.
- Weekly reviews: review your notes and readings once a week. This is a great time to start putting some facts into memory. Plan to spend 1 hour reviewing each class.

Create review tools:

- Study checklists: make a list for each subject. List reading assignments, dates of lecture notes and problems you need to solve. Remember a

study check list is not a review sheet it is a to-do list.

- Flash cards: use 3x5 flash cards to study definitions, theories, key words, dates, phrases, and formulas to name a few. They are also a great travel study guide.

Plan a strategy:

- Do a dry run: write up your own questions and take this “test” several times. Be honest with yourself when creating the test. Don't make the questions to easy.
- Ask the instructor what to expect: By know what types of questions to expect or the format of the test is extremely helpful.

- Get old copies of the exam: if you know someone who had the class before ask to see their old exam. This is a great way to gauge what types of questions might be asked or how the tests are set-up.



Studying With Groups

Study groups can be extremely helpful if you are prepared! When forming a study group look for people you are comfortable with and share the same academic goals.

What to do in the group?

- Test each other by asking

questions: have everyone bring 4-5 sample test questions and use these to quiz everyone.

- Compare notes: one group member might be a better note taker than another. Capitalize on your peers strengths.
- Set an agenda: if you

don't have a game plan going into the session it is easy to get off topic and not be productive.

- Come prepared: if you do not know the material well enough to discuss it with your group you can not be helpful. Study before you come!

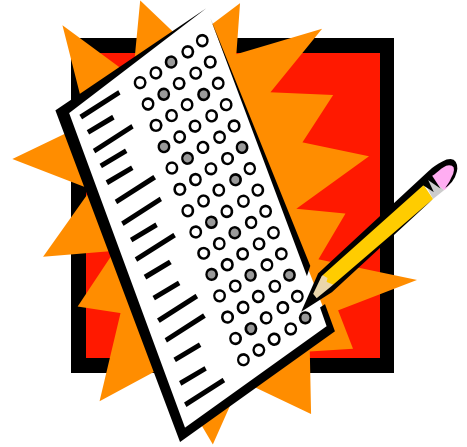
Multiple Choice Tests

There are several things you can do to make your multiple choice tests a little easier on you!

- ✓ Read the question before you look at the answer.
- ✓ Come up with the answer in your head before looking at the possible answers.
- ✓ Eliminate answers you know aren't right.
- ✓ Read all the choices before choosing your answer.

- ✓ If there is no guessing penalty, always take an educated guess and select an answer.
- ✓ Don't keep on changing your answer, usually your first choice is the right one.
- ✓ In "All of the above" and "None of the above" choices, if you are certain one of the statements are true don't choose "None of the above" or one of the statements are false don't choose "All of the above".
- ✓ A positive choice is more likely to be true than a negative one.

- ✓ Usually the correct answer is the choice with the most information.



- ✓ If answers cover a wide range

Other Test Types

True/False

- Answer true/false questions quickly.
- Read the question carefully...sometimes one word can make the statement inaccurate.
- Absolute qualifiers such as always or never generally indicate a false statement.

Short Answer/ Fill in the Blank:

- Concentrate on key words and facts. Be Brief!
- Often the professor is looking for a definition or a short description.

Machine-Graded Test:

- Make sure your test questions match your answer sheet.

- Watch for stray marks.

Open Book Tests:

- Place post-it notes on important pages. Using paper clips also works.
- Write down any formulas on a separate sheet of paper to use as a reference guide.
- Prepare thoroughlythese are normally the most difficult tests.

"Studying is only one part of getting good results on your exam!"

Essay Questions

The following are common words used in essay questions. By knowing what they mean you can better answer a question:

- ◆ Analyze: Break into separate parts and discuss, examine, or interpret each part. Then give your opinion.
- ◆ Compare: Examine two or more things. Identify similarities and differences.

- ◆ Contrast: Show differences. Set in opposition.
- ◆ Describe: Give a detailed account. Make a picture with words. List characteristics, qualities, and parts.
- ◆ Discuss: Consider and debate or argue the pros and cons of an issue.

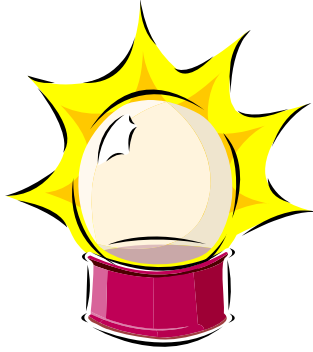


- ◆ Prove: Support with facts.
- ◆ State: Explain precisely.
- ◆ Summarize: Give a brief, condensed account. Include conclusions. Avoid unnecessary details.
- ◆ Trace: Show the order of events or the progress of a subject or event.

How to Predict Test Questions

When you learn how to predict test questions your life can become much easier. Here are a few tips to help you succeed in predicting test questions.

- * Get organized: Have a separate section in your notebook to jot possible test questions down as you think of them.
- * Watch for clues: Professors can give clues as to what will be seen again on a test. Some of these clues include; repeating important points, writing things on the board, or returning to a subject in other classes.
- * Put yourself in the professors

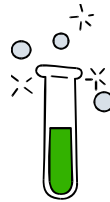


shoes: Ask yourself...what information would you want students to take away from this? What kind of questions would you ask...and ask them!

- * Save all your class information: Save all of your papers, quizzes, papers, lab sheets, and graded materials. If copies of old tests are available use these to predict test questions.
- * For science/math courses: develop problems and solve them with different variables.
- * Don't forget...look for these words: *This material will be on the test!*

Help with Math and Science Tests

- Translate problems into English: By putting into words what $a+b=c$ means it can help you to understand the problem.
- Make a picture: By drawing out an elaborate picture to describe the formula it can sometimes help in understanding the information.
- Estimate first: By estimating what the answer should be it can help you to notice when your computations go astray!
- Use time drills: Practice working problems fast. This will help you in a time crunch situation during a timed test.
- Review formulas: If you review your formulas right before the test it can help keep the information fresh in your mind.



8 Reasons to Celebrate Mistakes

There are several reasons why mistakes can be blessings. Here are a few....

1. Celebration allows us to notice mistakes
2. Mistakes are valuable feedback
3. Mistakes demonstrate that we're taking risks
4. Celebrating mistakes reminds us that it's OK to make them
5. Celebrating mistakes includes everyone
6. Mistakes occur only when we aim at a clear goal
7. Mistakes happen only when we're committed to making things work
8. Celebrating mistakes cuts the problem down to size



Test Anxiety

Below you will find a few techniques that will help you overcome your testing anxiety!

- ⇒ Yell Stop: When you see that your mind is starting to race with worries and fears just yell stop in your mind...or if you are in an appropriate

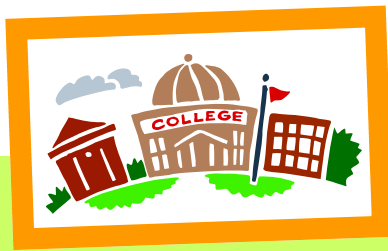
**"Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising every time we fall."
Confucius**

situation yell it out loud!

- ⇒ Focus: Focus your attention on a specific object. This will not leave room in your mind for anxious thoughts.
- ⇒ Breathe: Concentrate on the air going in and out of your lungs. This will help you to calm down.
- ⇒ Exercise: By taking 30 minutes out

of every day to walk or run you will significantly relieve your body tension.

- ⇒ Get Help: If you have tried several of these techniques and they just aren't working anymore, GET HELP. Student Affairs has trained personnel to help you work through your anxiety. Emily or Danielle are available between the hours of 8 and 6 or you can schedule an appointment before or after hours.



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MIDWAY COLLEGE

Location: McManis Student Center
Hours: 8:00 AM — 6:00 PM

We're on the web!
www.midway.edu

The resources used to create this informational flyer are as follows:

Ellis, Dave (2003) *Becoming a Master Student: Concise.*

Nugent, Patricia and Vitale, Barbara (1997) *Test Success: Test-Taking Techniques for Beginning Nursing Students*

<http://www.testtakingtips.com/test/index.htm>

<http://www.eop.mu.edu/study/>

http://www.d.umn.edu/student/loon/acad/strat/test_take.html



Specific Tips for Nursing Students

There are several testing tips that can be focused specifically towards nursing students. Below you will find several helpful hints that will hopefully help you to succeed on your next exam!

Memorization/Repetition:

Memorization is committing information to the brain through repetition. Initial facts and lists can be made on flash cards, or a learning wheel. These resources are portable and easy to glance through in between classes and while sitting at a red light.

Alphabet Cues:

Sometimes it is easier to identify words with letters of the alphabet. This will help you to recall the terms when needed. For example: the ABC's of cardiopulmonary resuscitation are: **A**irway (clear the airway), **B**reathing (initiate artificial breathing), and **C**irculation (initiate cardiac compression)

Acronyms:

There are other helpful tools for memorization. Acronyms are words formed from the first letters of a series of statements or facts. For example: The American Cancer Society teaches the early warning signs of cancer through the

acronym of CAUTION: **C**hange in bowel and bladder habits, **A** sore that doesn't heal, **U**nusual bleeding or discharge, **T**hickening or a lump, **I**ndigestion or difficulty in swallowing, **O**bvious change in a wart or mole, **N**agging cough or hoarseness.

Simple Tips To Help you Succeed!

There are a few small things that you can do to help you succeed on a test.

1. Look for words such as not, except, never, and avoid. These words help you to identify that the question being asked is probably concerned with what is false.
2. Key words such as first, initially, best, and most modify what is being asked. This type of question asks you to place a value on each response and then place them in rank order.
3. The nursing profession focuses on patients. Items that test your ability to be patient-centered normally identify ways you can make the patient a priority.

