

# COLLEGE TEST TAKING: How to play the game

## Pre-game Strategy

- Be organized!
- Review your notes at least three times a week to shorten the length of test prep. study.
- Outline your readings for easier access to the information.
- Prepare for the type of questions to be asked (multiple choice, essay, etc.).
- Make up and practice answering potential exam questions.
- Attend any review sessions that might be scheduled.
- Form study groups with classmates (limit them to five members).
- Check at the Reserve Desk for old exams that may be on file (4th floor—Alkek Library).
- Do not be afraid to ask the professor for help—BUT—don't wait until the last minute.
- Make sure you have all materials needed for the exam.
- Get some sleep the night before the exam—ALL-NIGHTERS ARE A WASTE!
- Eat high carbohydrate rather than high sugar meals.
- Go into the exam with a positive attitude, but avoid overconfidence.

## Strategies for Answering Multiple Choice Questions

1. Read the entire question and all of the options.
2. Eliminate obvious wrong answers.
3. Eliminate options that are similar unless "all of the above" is an option.
4. Check for grammatical inconsistencies.
5. Watch for specific determiners (no, never, always, must, etc.)—there is usually an exception to any rule.
6. YOU MUST KNOW THE MATERIAL—tricks can only help you over some rough spots.

## To Change or Not to Change

- On multiple choice exams, DO NOT live by the old adage, "Always go with your first impulse."
- Change your answer if you discover new information in another question, or if you misread the question the first time.
- Studies show that the odds are 2 to 1 that your test score will be raised rather than lowered if you change the answer for one of these reasons.
- Go with your first impulse as a last resort.
- Incorrect answers fall into five categories:
  1. carelessness
  2. misinterpretation of the question
  3. incorrect reading of the question
  4. lack of information
  5. not studying the material

## Essay Exams--Three Steps to Success

1. Read the question carefully.
2. Outline the answer.
3. Write clearly; vagueness kills.

## During the Game

- Relax before you begin; nervousness before an exam is natural.
- Listen to and read the instructions, and ask any questions you have about them.
- Read the questions as they are, not as you would like them to be.
- Read the questions with each option in a multiple choice test.
- Know how long you have to complete the exam; budget your time accordingly.
- Lapses of memory are ok; relax and gather your thoughts, then move on to the next question—it may "jog" your memory.

## Post-Game Wrap-Up

- Make sure the marks on the scantron add up to the number of questions on the exam.
- Proofread essays.
- Double check to make sure your name, social security number, and test number are on the exam.

## OTHER HELPFUL TEST TAKING HINTS

### To Avoid Stress

- Don't be in a rush—allow time to accomplish all of the things you have to do before the exam.
- Gather all of the materials that you need the night before the exam.
- Once in the testing room, concentrate on the points you want to remember—make sure you concentrate only on the things you have already been studying (trying to learn something you forgot about at the last minute is futile).
- Once the exam begins, copy anything you are afraid you may forget on the back of the exam (be sure to ask if you can write on the test).
- Avoid panicky or obnoxiously overconfident classmates.

### Using Reasoning and Logic During Exams

- Pay attention to key terms in the question.
- Make a sincere attempt at every question.
- Think through the question (synthesize the information).
- Be aggressive in your attempts to answer the questions.
- Translate material in a question to a different form.
- Evaluate your own answer.

### A Word About Finals at SWT

- Final exam schedules are published in the *University Star* and the class schedule book.
- Most final exams are comprehensive (covering EVERYTHING gone over in class, as well as outside readings, etc.).
- Some finals are scheduled for Saturdays, so don't plan to go home!!!
- Start studying two to three weeks before finals are scheduled—well-paced reviews beat cramming Plan study sessions for 1 to 1 1/2 hours, take 15 minute breaks between sessions, and reward yourself for making your study quota.
- Study where it's cool and not too cozy (keeps you alert), and avoid places where you are likely to see friends (the library is NOT ALWAYS the best place to study!!)