



## Test Prep and Test-Taking

### Study Tips:

- ✓ Make a 5-day study plan: study 1-2 hours a day before test. You'll have logged 10 hours of cumulative study which is more effective than cramming the night before the test. Cramming increases test anxiety.
- ✓ Ask professor about test structure, types of questions; ask to review old tests.
- ✓ The number of questions on a specific topic should be proportional to time spent in class on that topic.
- ✓ Form a small study group to recite, review readings, make up test questions, draw diagrams, concept maps. Research shows that group study produces higher test grades.
- ✓ Reduce all notes to two sides of a 4"x6" card that contains all the main ideas, equations, etc. Review it often so that each word/symbol forces you to expand ideas.
- ✓ Make study sheets or flashcards for definitions, theories, formulas.
- ✓ Make sure you can verbally explain steps for quantitative problems.
- ✓ Use chunking for memorization: study in groups of 7 or less.
- ✓ Make an appointment with a tutor for review.
- ✓ For quantitative material, practice, practice, practice. Use old tests or alternate textbooks.
- ✓ For essay tests, construct a matrix with headings that can be used for compare/contrast. Fill in and practice.

### Test-Taking Tips:

- ✓ No brainer: Get plenty of sleep, eat protein, limit caffeine. If self-scheduled, take it sooner rather than later to limit anxiety.

- ✓ Arrive early to test site, sit up front to avoid distractions, don't talk to others about what you studied.
- ✓ Put yourself "in the zone": Channel your inner athlete, focus on positive self-talk, breathe, erase negative thoughts, visualize doing well.
- ✓ It may help to do a "brain dump": before reading the test jot down key concepts you remember, terms, formulas, etc., on the back of test.
- ✓ Before starting, scan entire test, note point values, read directions. Plan how much time to spend on each section and jot down times.
- ✓ Begin with easiest questions to increase confidence.
- ✓ Don't rush: careless mistakes are made by rushing through directions or missing parts of questions. Use the entire time.
- ✓ If you feel stumped by a question, skip it, move on to something familiar.
- ✓ Remember to breathe, stretch, keep up the positive self-talk.
- ✓ Mark up the test, circle key words, make notes in the margin.
- ✓ Avoid looking at the clock too much; it will increase your anxiety.
- ✓ Always check over your work; make sure writing is legible. Don't leave blanks, instead make educated guesses. Don't change answers unless you're certain.

## Post-Test:

- ✓ After your test is returned, use it as a tool to learn from your mistakes. Go to office hours to discuss the test with your professor. Determine which were careless mistakes and which were the result of misunderstanding or insufficient study.
- ✓ Understanding your pattern of errors will help you focus on strategies to use the next time.