

Test-Taking Strategies

Preparing For Tests

Format and Content

Learn how the test will be structured and the material it will cover.

Study Guide

Find out if the professor distributes a study guide and use it to structure your studying.

Seven-Day Test Plan

Sections: Collect the material for the test and divide it into sections or “blocks.”

Distribution: Study the separate sections throughout the week in short intervals (45 minute sessions).

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Section 1 (1.5 hours)	Section 2 (1.5 hours)	Section 3 (1.5 hours)	Section 4 (1.5 hours)	Review Content “Gaps” (1 hour)	Review Sections 1-4 (1 hour)	Test!

Taking the Test

Time Management

Step 1: Preview the entire test, noting how it is structured and the point values for each question.

Step 2: Managing time for a 50 minute, 100-point test

1. Preview: approximately 1 minute
2. Objective Questions: 25 questions, approximately 1 minute per question
3. Essay Question: 1 question, 22 minutes
4. Review: approximately 2 minutes

Step 3: Answer Questions and Review

1. Objective Questions: Mark questions you do not know and move to the next question. Return to these questions after you have finished everything else (other questions may spark your knowledge).
2. Essay: Consult your brief outline and answer the question completely.
3. Review: Review the entire test, ensuring that you have answered every question.

True-False

Underline Key Terms: It increases focus and concentration.

Read the Statement Carefully: If one part of the sentence is incorrect, the option is incorrect.

Absolute Language: Words like “always” or “never” are often found in false statements.

Multiple Choice

Answer Yourself: Try to answer the question before looking at the options. Then look for the answer that most closely resembles your initial response. This can increase your confidence.

Do Not Make Assumptions: The correct answer could be the same letter three or four times in a row. Do not second-guess yourself.

Write on the Exam: Cross out incorrect answers to increase your focus on the remaining options, and cross out the question number when you have completed that question. Underline key terms in the question and look for word clues.

Read the Question Carefully: If the question asks for the “best” answer, read all of the options before choosing.

Essays

Step 1: Read the question carefully.

Step 2: Underline key words or phrases.

Step 3: Compose an outline.

Step 4: Write the essay: Use the question to form your first sentences, and refer to your outline regularly.

Essay Question	Beginning the Essay
Research has shown that the number of violent episodes on television has increased. Has this increase had a measurable effect on crime rates? <u>Compare</u> how Jones and Smith address this question by tracing their arguments in detail. <u>Defend</u> the position of one of these studies by <u>evaluating its logical coherence</u> .	While Jones thinks that television violence is responsible for increased crime rates, Smith’s position, which is more persuasive, shows that this argument is based upon incomplete data.

Resources

Gardner, John N., and Betsy O. Barefoot. *Your College Experience: Strategies for Success*. 13th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2018.

Gore, Paul A., et al. *Connections: Empowering College and Career Success*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2016.

Zadina, Janet N., et al. *College Reading: The Science and Strategies of Expert Readers*. Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014.