

# ***Strategies for Test-Taking***

## **General suggestions:**

- Answer the easiest, shortest questions first
- Answer multiple choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank next
- Your first choice is usually best, but if you believe you misread the question, change your answer
- Then answer short answer and essay questions
- Look for answers in other test questions

## **Multiple Choice Questions:**

\*Check to see whether more than one answer may be called for

\*Answer each question in your head before looking at the answers – this may help avoid confusion when you look at the answers

\*Read ALL answers before selecting one – two answers may be similar, but only one is correct

\*IF you have no idea what the answer is, and IF there is no penalty for guessing, use the following guidelines:

*When a guess is all you have...*

1. If two answers are similar except for a word or two, pick one of these
2. If two answers have words that look or sound similar, pick one of these
3. If the answer completes a sentence, eliminate answers that would not be grammatically correct
4. If two quantities are almost the same, choose one
5. If answers cover a wide range, choose something in the middle
6. If there is no penalty for guessing and 1-5 do not work, just pick an answer – you have nothing to lose!

## **True/False Questions:**

\*Answer quickly. These questions usually do not count for a lot of points.

\*Read carefully – if ANY part of a statement is false, the answer is “FALSE”.

\*Look for qualifying terms, such as “all, most, sometimes, never, rarely” – these are keys to the answer.

\*Absolutes, such as “always” or “never” usually indicate a false statement.

## **Machine-graded tests:**

\*BE SURE your mark corresponds to the question you are answering!

\*Check the test against the answer sheet frequently to be sure you are in the right place

\*Don't leave stray marks – they may be read as answers

### Open-book tests:

- \*As you study, write down formulas on a separate page
- \*Mark (with Post-Its or paper clips) important pages in your book, such as tables
- \*If you will be using your notes, number the pages and prepare a table of contents
- \*Prepare well – open-book tests are often the most difficult!

### Short Answer/Fill in the blank:

- \*Concentrate on key words and facts.
- \*Be brief.
- \*Overlearn – when you have the subject matter “down cold,” you can answer these kinds of questions quickly.

### Essay Questions:

- \*Find out what the question is asking! If you are asked to *compare and contrast*, a wonderful *explanation* is not the answer to the question.
- \*Make a quick outline before you start writing.
- \*Get to the point – don’t bother with introductory sentences.
- \*It can help you get to the point if you include part of the question in the answer.
- \*Use your best arguments first.
- \*Also:
  - 1) write legibly;
  - 2) be brief;
  - 3) use a pen;
  - 4) write on one side of the page to make it more readable;
  - 5) leave space in case you want to add something else later

### In Summary:

- *Adequate preparation is the most important aspect of test-taking.*
- *However, these skills can help lower your anxiety and allow you to focus on showing what you know!*

“Success is the sum of small effort,  
repeated day in and day out.”

*Robert Collier*