

TEST TAKING STRATEGIES: HOW TO ACE YOUR EXAMS



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TOPICS OF PRESENTATION

- **Preparing for a Test**
- **Test Tools**
- **Test Taking**
- **Type of Tests**
- **Managing Test Anxiety**
- **Top 10 Test Taking Tips**
- **Resources**



TEST TAKING PROCESS

Each Week:

- Read text.
- Go to class.
- Take notes.
- Develop study guides.

Before the Test:

- Get enough sleep.
- Eat healthy.
- Arrive prepared.
- Manage stress.

After the Test:

- Relax.
- Refocus.
- Analyze results.
- Use feedback.


Prepare Ahead:

- Get organized.
- Make a study plan.
- Practice active recall.
- Complete study guides.
- Start/join study groups.

During the Test:

- Focus on recall.
- Use test strategies.
- Be systematic.
- Manage test anxiety

TEST TAKING: A 3 STEP PROCESS

- Step 1: Before (preparing for a test)
 - Step 2: During (taking a test)
 - Step 3: After (assessing/reflecting on your test performance)
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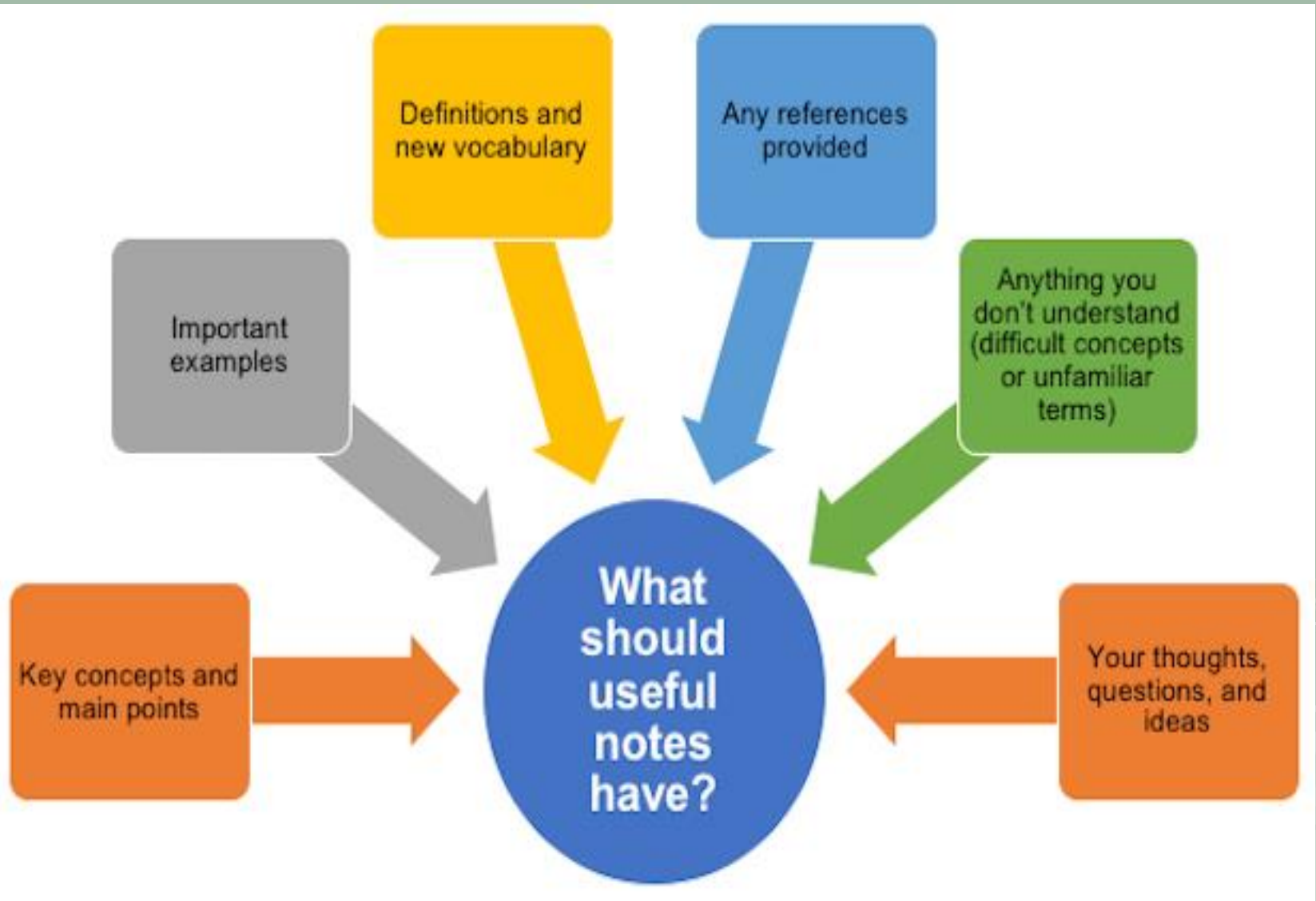
STEP 1: PREPARING FOR A TEST

➤ Learning

- Take good notes: in class, from textbook, or other sources
- Organize and Review notes systematically
- Know how to apply the knowledge (how things work and why)
- Draw connections and make associations
- Combine concepts with visual aids to enhance learning
- Pay attention to clues given by your instructor
- Use a dummy/mirror to practice



Note Taking



Reviewing for the Test

- Know the topics you will need to study for the test
- Organize your notes, texts, & assignments
- Estimate and allow enough time to prepare
- Manage your review time
- Draw up a schedule
- Prepare, do not procrastinate
- Test yourself (use of practice exams)
- Practice smarter not harder
- Finish studying a day before the exam
- Study the most difficult material when you are alert
- Create test tools
- Plan a strategy

Test Tools

- Use your notes, homework assignments, quizzes, sample tests, and outside sources
- Prepare study guides, checklists, flashcards, charts, & pictures
- Use memory techniques
- Generate a list of possible test questions
- Practice homework problems using different variables
- Use practice tests
- Use time drills
- Join study groups



What to Do Before the Test

- Manage your review time
- Use test strategies that have worked best for you
- Organize what you need to have with you for the test
- Get a good night's sleep
- Avoid cramming just before
- Avoid an empty or too-full stomach



What to Do Just Before the Test

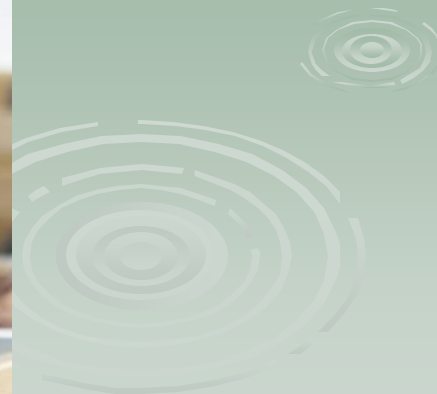
- Allow yourself plenty of time before the test to get your stuff together
- Arrive early to get a good spot in the classroom with good lighting & minimum distractions
- Avoid students who are not prepared, are negative or will distract you
- Strive for a relaxed state of concentration
- Get in the zone



STEP 2: TEST TAKING

➤ What to Do During the Test

- Pay close attention to verbal directions
- Scan the whole test
- Evaluate the importance of each section
- Read the directions slowly twice
- Answer easiest, shortest questions first
- Then answer multiple choice, T/F, fill-in-the blank



STEP 2: TEST TAKING

➤ What to Do During the Test (cont.)

- Pace yourself
- Pay attention to contextual clues
- Look for answers in other test questions
- In margins, jot down memory aids, key concepts, etc
- Avoid “Fact Traps”
- Watch out for “hedge phrases”, “extreme statements”



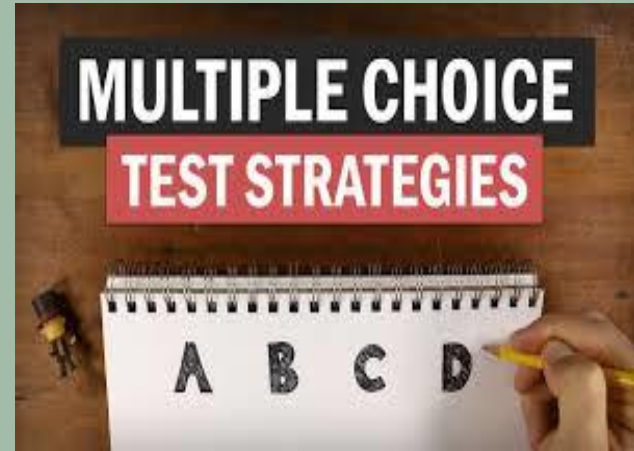
STEP 3: ASSESSING/REFLECTING

➤ What to Do After the Test

- Put it in perspective
- Welcome the feedback
- Make a list of what strategies worked
- List what areas you need to improve
- Go over your test with your teacher/TA



Type of Tests



➤ Multiple Choice Questions

- Check directions to see if more than one answer is called for
- Understand what the question is asking
- Answer questions in your head before looking at answer choices
- Read all answers to each question before selecting one
- Trust your first instinct
- Use guessing techniques when appropriate

Type of Tests (cont.)

➤ True/False Questions

- Read carefully
- Answer quickly
- Look for qualifiers (all-most-sometimes-never)
- Absolute qualifiers often indicate FALSE statements (always-never)



Type of Tests (cont.)

- **Short Answer/Fill-in-the Blank Questions**
 - These often ask for definitions or short descriptions
 - Concentrate on key words and facts
 - Be brief



MANAGING TEST ANXIETY

- Expect some anxiety
- Be prepared
- Develop good study habits and strategies
- Develop a routine/ritual
- Manage your time
- Minimize outside pressures
- Approach the test with confidence
- Use relaxation techniques
- Change positions to help you relax
- Skip the question and go on if you go blank
- Relax; you are in control
- Don't think about the fear
- Use positive reinforcement
- Realize that anxiety can be a "habit"



TOP 10 TEST TAKING TIPS

1. Arrive early
2. Use strategies that worked for you in the past
3. Be comfortable but alert
4. Stay relaxed and confident
5. Read directions carefully
6. Get an overview of the test if time allows it
7. Answer questions in a strategic order
8. Make sure you have answered all the questions
9. Go over the test and change your answers if you make a mistake
10. Analyze how you did and adopt strategies that worked for you



Resources

- Free Northeastern Peer Tutoring on Knack by request at:
<https://www.joinknack.com/school/northeastern-university>
- Test Taking and Test Anxiety:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6w8CHleYdi4>
- Test Taking Strategies:
<https://www.educationcorner.com/test-taking-strategies.html>

