Test-taking Tips

WHAT CAN YOU DO BEFORE THE TEST?

• **Start Now**
The best way to get ready for a test is to study from the beginning of the course. It's smart to prepare a little bit each day. Preparing for a test gradually lets you absorb the material, make connections between concepts, and draw conclusions. Studying each subject every night will save you the agony of having to cram on the night before a test.

• **Create your own study aids.** (Aids such as flashcards)

• **Organize a study group.** If you study with a group, you can combine everyone's resources. A word of caution about study groups--don't let them become social events. You would waste valuable time. Instead, throw a party after the test to celebrate your success.

• **Arrive early on the test day.** Rushing to a test or arriving late can destroy your concentration. Don't try to cram in some last minute studying or answer questions from other members of your class. Tactics like this are generally counterproductive and tend to confuse you.

• **Read and listen to all directions carefully before starting the test.** One of the most important test-taking skills is the ability to follow directions. Some students are so anxious to get the test over with that they skip the directions; this is often a costly mistake.

• **Budget your time.**

• **If you have extra time, check your answers.** If you finish a test before your time is up, don't hand in your test. Use the extra time to check over your answers. Do not frustrate yourself, however, by concentrating on questions that you simply don't know how to answer.

HOW TO TAKE A MULTIPLE-CHOICE EXAM

• **Make educated guesses.** If there is no penalty for guessing, answer every question, even if you have to guess. If you are penalized for guessing, blind guessing will probably hurt your score. If you can eliminate one or two of the choices, then guessing will be more profitable.

• **Don't get stuck on any of the questions.** Work through multiple-choice tests quickly and carefully. Don't get bogged down on a question that you can't answer or are unsure about. Make a small mark beside the question, and if you have the time, return to it later.

• **Fill in answers on standardized tests carefully.** Many standardized tests have separate answer sheets. Make sure that the number you are answering corresponds to the number of the question. If you skip a question, be sure to leave the space for that question blank. Make sure you fill in the blanks completely so that the machine that grades the test can easily record your answer.

• **Read each stem and possible choice carefully.**

• **Eliminate choices you know are wrong.**

• **Turn the stem and each alternative into a true-false question.**

• **Watch for absolutes like “never” and “always.”**