

# TEST TAKING

## In General:

- ALWAYS READ INSTRUCTIONS FIRST. Glance over the entire test, noting which sections should take more time.
- Answer easiest, shortest questions first.
- Answer multiple-choice, true-false, and fill-in-the-blank questions next.
- Answer short answer questions and essay questions last.
- Pace yourself (use a watch to divide your time for each question.)
- Leave plenty of space between your answers.
- Use your first instinct.

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF TESTS

### TRUE-FALSE QUESTIONS

- Answer them quickly. Generally they are not worth much.
- If any part of the true-false statement is false, the whole statement is false.
- Look for qualifiers (such as “all,” “most,” “never,” “sometimes,” “always,” or “rarely”). These are key words. Absolute qualifiers such as “always” or “never” generally indicate a false statement.
- Trust your first impression. Do not “second-guess” yourself.

### MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

- Answer questions in your head first, before looking at answers on test.
- Mark questions you can't answer immediately, and come back for them if you have time.
- If you have no clue, and no points are deducted for guessing:
  1. If two answers are similar, except for one or two words, choose one of these answers.
  2. If two answers have similar sounding or looking words (intermediate – intermittent), choose one of these words.
  3. If the answer calls for a sentence completion, eliminate the answers that would not form grammatically correct sentences.
  4. If two quantities are almost the same, choose one.
  5. If answers cover a wide range (4.5, 66.7, 88.7, 90.1, 500.11), choose one in the middle.
  6. Notice if there are clues in other questions.
  7. If there is no penalty for guessing and none of the above techniques work, close your eyes and go for it.

### MACHINE-GRADED TESTS

- Be careful that the answer you mark corresponds to the question you are answering.
- Check the number of the question against the number you are marking on the answer sheet whenever you switch sections and again at the top of each column.
- Watch for stray marks.
- Follow directions about the kind of writing instrument you use or a scanner might not read your responses.

## **OPEN-BOOK TESTS**

- Write any formulas/basic information you will need on a separate sheet.
- Use tape tabs (post-it notes, paper clips) to indicate important pages.
- If using your notes, number the pages and prepare a table of contents.

## **ESSAY QUESTIONS**

- Read questions carefully. Answer the question being asked.
- Use an outline if you have time.
- Get to the point immediately.
- Review your answers for grammatical errors, clarity and legibility if you have time.
- Other hints:
  1. Write clearly. Sloppy papers are more difficult to grade and can result in lower grades.
  2. Be brief. Show your teacher what you know, not what you don't.
  3. Use a pen. Pens are easier to read.
  4. When possible, write on one side of the page only. Writing often bleeds through and obscures the writing on the other side, making it difficult to read.

## **HOW TO CRAM (even though you shouldn't)**

- Make choices. When cramming you can't learn everything, so choose to study items you believe will be on the test.
- Condense material into "digestible" chunks. You will remember small bits of info easier than you will large bits.
- Recite ad nauseam. Reciting small bits of information until you are sick of them will help put them into your long term memory.
- Relax. You won't test well if you're tense.