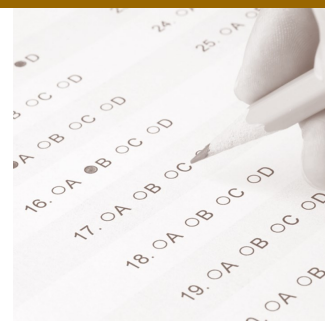


# Triumphant Test Taking

## “MASTERFUL” PREPARATION



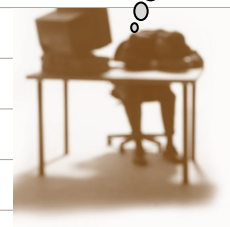
The purpose of a test is to see how well a student has mastered the course material. . . .  
Yes, that's right “**MASTERED!**”

**MASTER: Verb. To exercise control over, to have the power to use something effectively, to be adept in.**

The grade you receive on a test typically reveals the level to which you understand and are able to practically apply new knowledge. It takes **TIME** for your brain to process new information to that level. It takes **PRACTICE** to be able to **USE** the information effectively. That is the reason that preparation for tests begins the first day of class. Here is a checklist for good preparation:

- Starting the first day of class, use your **good student skills**:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Before you go to class complete your reading assignments
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Take reading notes over the key concepts covered in your reading assignment
  - \_\_\_\_\_ GO to class (EVERY class. EVERY week. ALL Semester. NO excuses!)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Concentrate on concentrating during class
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Take good notes IN class (see Note-taking Keys)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Review notes often outside of class
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Complete your homework assignments (designed to help you **MASTER** the material!).
- If your instructor gives you a **study guide**, USE IT! COMPLETE IT! **MASTER IT!**
- While studying for the test, summarize the material in your own words to help your comprehension and ability to apply the information practically. **MAKE CONNECTIONS!**
- Plan to study during the hours of the day you are most “**on.**” Trying to study when you would normally be sleeping is a very **BAD** plan.
- Make up **mental cues** to help you remember things that require memorization, like lists. For example, the names of the great lakes can be easily remembered using the word **HOMES**. Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior. Then say it. . . OUT LOUD!

This is a BAD plan!



## AVERT TEST ANXIETY

*Nerves—we all have them. A nervous mental and emotional state can sabotage even the most masterful test preparation. Take control of your test taking state of mind.*

- Be **masterfully prepared** for the test. (This is the **BEST** way to avert anxiety!)
- Think positively**—argue with yourself if you hear that self-sabotaging voice inside your head say, “I can’t!” **YES, YOU CAN!**
- When you get the test, make notes on the back of the test of those mental cues you made up while you were **masterfully** preparing for the test.
- Take a few minutes to read through the entire test and answer the questions that you immediately know. (But **BE SURE** you have read them thoroughly before answering—**watch out for those tricky wordings!**)
- If you do not understand the directions, **ask** the instructor to explain them.
- Be sure your physical needs have been met—a good night’s **sleep** before the test, **exercise** to relieve tension and stress, a satisfied (but not overstuffed!) stomach.
- Take deep, relaxing breaths when you notice anxiety creeping in on you. Sit up straight, roll your head and neck, inhale, exhale, and get back to work!

# While taking the test. . .

## General Tips

1. Come to class early, and come prepared for the test—at least 2 sharpened pencils, good batteries in your calculator, etc.
2. Pace yourself. Determine how many minutes you have to spend on each question.
3. When you receive the test, survey it to answer any questions you can immediately answer, and to determine how to budget the rest of your time. (Which questions are worth the most? How long should you spend on each section?)
4. Read ALL of the instructions, and understand EVERY question. NEVER ASSUME! Watch for negative words like “NOT,” and absolute words like “NEVER” and “ALWAYS”—these can make a big difference in the answer you should give.
5. Write legibly. Instructors are only human—they cannot read your mind. If they also cannot read your writing, you are in danger of losing points.
6. Stay positive and relaxed (see Averting Anxiety on other side).
7. If you do not know an answer, skip it and return to it when you have answered what you DO know. Also, look for clues as you read the other parts of the test. When you return, RULE OUT OBVIOUSLY WRONG ANSWERS, then TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT!

## Multiple Choice Questions

- You should read the question completely and only answer after you have read all of the choices. This is particularly important when you see that some of the answers are “all of the above” or “none of the above” or “Both A and B.”
- Pay special attention to words like “not”, “most”, “least”, “best”, etc. These can change the meaning of the question.
- Rule out all of the obviously wrong answers.
- If more than one appears to be correct, (or if none of them seems correct) consider each carefully then choose the BEST fit.

## True False Questions

- Mark a statement true if you *DECIDE* that it is COMPLETELY true. A little bit of error will make it false.
- Underline the negatives in a statement (no, cannot, un-, in-), to help you understand the statement. If there are 2 negative words, cross them BOTH out and read the sentence without them. This will help clarify the meaning.
- Statements using absolutes (always, never, all, none) are, more often than not, false. To be true, it **MUST** happen as the statement says it does without ANY exceptions.
- Statements using qualifiers (sometimes, about, frequently) are likely to be true.

## Essay Questions

- Read ALL of the directions and follow them completely.
- Essay questions often have several parts. Make sure that you answer every part of each question.
- Understand the questions asked, and stick to providing good answers to those questions—no more, and no less. **NOTE: The most common mistake on essay questions is failing to answer the question that was asked.**
- Include the terms from lecture and assigned reading when appropriate—this demonstrates your ability to apply the knowledge and use it.
- If the test is pen and paper, take a moment to create an outline on a piece of scratch paper for each essay question. This will help you to organize your thoughts better; it will also help you to avoid leaving anything out.

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Our goal is to help you achieve YOUR goal!