

A pair of black-rimmed glasses is resting on a stack of books and papers. The glasses are positioned in the upper center of the frame. Below them, a red ribbon bookmark is visible, tied around one of the books. The background is softly blurred, showing more books and papers, creating a studious atmosphere. The text "TEST TAKING STRATEGIES" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the lower portion of the image.

# TEST TAKING STRATEGIES

# CREATE GOOD REVIEW TOOLS



Take good notes



Ask your professor if you can record the lecture. Listen to it again later and fill in any blanks in your notes.




Create mind maps

# GENERAL RULES FOR ALL TESTS

- Get practice tests from your professor, or create your own, and take the test in the same time frame you are given in class with the same kind of distractions
- Do a cheat card exercise. Even if you're not allowed to bring a cheat card or sheet of notes into the test, force yourself to make one. You'll find that you're compressing the most important information onto that card, thereby studying it in a very effective way.
- Calculate how much time you should allow for each section according to the point value. (You don't want to spend 30 minutes on an essay question that counts only 5 points.)
- Do a mind dump. Make notes of anything you think you might forget. Write down things that you used in learning the material that might help you remember.
- Answer the easy questions first. This will give you the confidence and momentum to get through the rest of the test.
- Express difficult questions in your own words. Rephrasing can make it clear to you, but be sure you don't change the meaning of the question.
- Visualize your study environment if you're stuck on a question. Research has shown that people can often make connections to things they've learned when they do this, since learning is context and environment-dependent.

**CHECK**  
your work.  
Do your answers  
make sense?




Look for  
and box

**IMPORTANT  
DETAILS.**



**RESTATE**  
the question  
in your  
own words.



Answer the  
**EASY**  
questions  
**FIRST.**




**PREPARE.**  
Sleep well  
and eat a  
good breakfast.



Change an answer  
**ONLY IF  
YOU'RE SURE**  
it's wrong.




**CROSS OUT**  
answers you  
know are  
**WRONG.**



**STUCK?**  
Circle it and  
**COME BACK**  
later.




**READ**  
everything  
**CAREFULLY.**



Don't rush.  
**FOCUS**  
and do your  
**BEST!**



Use  
**CONTEXT  
CLUES**  
to figure out  
unknown words.



Find and underline  
**KEY  
WORDS.**



# MULTIPLE CHOICE STRATEGIES

- Answer the easy questions first, then the harder ones. Don't get nervous if some questions look unfamiliar. Skip them and return to them later.
- Pay attention to qualifiers ("usually," "none," "always," "never") and key words ("except," "all but the following," "the best," "the least," etc.)
- Try to anticipate the correct answer before looking at the options.
- Read all of the options; eliminate the ones you know are incorrect.
- Look for options that contain other options. These are called "umbrella" options because the other options fall within their scope.
- Familiarity of a response option does not necessarily make it the correct choice.
- Sometimes the longer response may be the clue to the correct response.

# TRUE-FALSE STRATEGIES

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100% qualifiers are usually false statements.

*no, never, none, every, all, always, only, entirely*

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Qualifiers that fall between extremes are usually true.

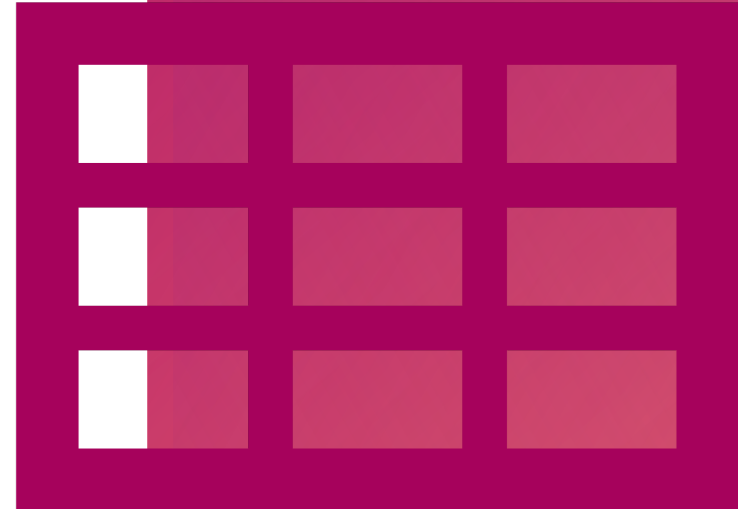
*seldom, sometimes, often, frequently, most, many, few, some, usually, generally, ordinarily*

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Never leave a blank – you have a 50% chance of getting it right!

# MATCHING COLUMNS STRATEGIES

- Read all the items in both columns first before selecting answers.
- Instead of looking at the one-word column first and trying to select a match, read the column with the definitions or explanations and match those to the one-word column.
- Mark easy choices first and eliminate them as you move to the more difficult.



# SHORT ANSWER AND FILL-IN-THE-BLANK STRATEGIES

- If you don't know the complete answer but remember something, write it down. You may get partial credit if you are partly correct. Leaving a blank will get you nothing.
- Give general answers if you do not know specifics. Example: Correct answer = 1904; Approximate and possibly correct answer = 1900's
- Use proper grammar in completing the sentence. Pay attention to plural responses (ex. causes, changes, examples, types of, etc.)
- Consider the number and length of the lines or blank spaces to be filled in as possible clues to the length of your answer. If the instructor leaves half a page for your answer, be sure you fill it and not with extra-large writing.

# ESSAY QUESTION STRATEGIES

- Briefly look over the entire test to budget your time for essay answers. They may take longer than other types of questions.
- Read the essay question carefully. Watch for key words such as “discuss,” “compare,” “define,” etc.
- Determine the amount of time you’ll have for each question, and give more time to higher scoring questions.
- Do a “Memory Dump.” Jot down on scratch paper any ideas, facts, figures, etc. which could be used in answering the questions.
- Make a brief outline of the major points. In some cases, even if you can’t finish the essay, you can get partial credit for the outline.
- Use proper grammar, punctuation and sentence skills. Always write complete sentences and begin your essay with the wording of the question. Example: “The five major causes of the American Revolution were....”
- Proofread your essay and make corrections as needed.

# COMMONLY USED ESSAY TERMS

- **Analyze** - examine critically to show essential features
- **Criticize** - point out strong and weak points (evaluate)
- **Compare** - show differences and similarities between two or more things
- **Contrast** - compare to show differences only
- **Define** - give a clear, detailed, and precise meaning (who or what, never, when or where)
- **Describe** - list physical characteristics but often means discuss, explain, identify or give an account of
- **Discuss/Comment** - present essentials and their relationships
- **Elaborate** - develop theme or idea in greater detail
- **Evaluate** - appraise carefully, giving positive and negative aspects (critique)
- **Explain** - clarify and interpret details of the problem, theory, etc. Present a step-by-step account of or analysis (how and why)
- **Illustrate** - explain or clarify by giving clear, pertinent examples

# MATH STRATEGIES

Math is no different from any other subject, except that the same rules apply every time, so if you study the rules and practice a lot, you are likely to do well on the test. Here are some other tips:

- Put problems into words, it aids your understanding. When you study equations and formulas, put those into words too. The words help you see a variety of applications for each formula. Pay attention to + and – signs, complete problems, and simplify answers.
- Check every answer.
- Don't leave any blanks.

# EDUCATED GUESSING STRATEGIES

Guessing strategies are not a substitute for good study habits and test preparation.

## Frequency of occurrence

Look for items that appear in more than one of the choices.

The following languages are spoken in the Comora Islands:

- a. Spanish and Arabic
- b. **Arabic and French\***
- c. German and Italian
- d. French and English

**(B is correct; French and Arabic appear twice)**

Freud postulated that there are 3 parts of the mind. These are the

- a. id, ego, and conscience
- b. unconscious, id, and conscious
- c. superego, ego and brain
- d. **ego, superego and id**

**(D is correct: these words each appear more than once.)**

## Highest and lowest numbers strategy:

When numerical options vary greatly, chances are that the best response is in the middle ranges. Eliminate the highest and lowest options.

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**The average number of volcanic eruptions recorded annually is:**

- a. 2500
- b. 25
- c. **1000**
- d. 750

**(choose between c and d, the two numbers farthest apart)**

**Columbus sailed to the Americas in what century?**

- a. **12<sup>th</sup>**
- b. 300 BC
- c. **15<sup>th</sup>**
- d. 3rd

**(choose between a and c, the closest or most similar responses)**

## Umbrella Strategy

When one option encompasses the other options

Test anxiety can be reduced by:

- a. **practicing relaxation techniques**
- b. muscle relaxation exercises
- c. deep breathing
- d. visualization exercises

**(a includes all the other options)**

To assist a child in developing social skills, a teacher should:

- a. talk to the child often
- b. engage the child in a game
- c. observe the child's social behavior
- d. **provide a variety of social activities**

**(d includes all the other true responses)**

# STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

[Email](#) us today to  
schedule time with a  
mentor!

