Test Taking Strategies

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1. **Have a good night sleep and eat the day of the exam.**

2. **Arrive a couple minutes early to the exam and focus your thoughts.**

3. **Read the directions very carefully.** Some students lose points on their problems because they do not follow the directions.

4. **“The Data Dump.”** If there are formulas or definitions you know you have a hard time remembering, try to remember them long enough to write them on the back of the test once your test has begun. If a problem comes up where you need those formulas or definitions, then you already have them on the back of your test.

5. **Use your time wisely.** Look through the test before attempting any problem to decide what problems you think are easy or hard. Spend your time on the problems you know how to do first, then move on to the harder problems. Sometimes when working on a problem you may have a revelation about one of the harder problems.

6. **Make sure to attempt every problem** even if you are not sure what you are doing.

7. **Double check your answers.** Set aside time at the end of the test to go back and check your answers. Pretend that you are the grader. Do you think your work was clear? Did your steps make sense? Do you think you did this problem correctly? If not, what doubts do you have about it? I have found that I catch simple mistakes by quickly reviewing my work. I try to go through my exam at least three times.

8. **Spend as much time on the exam as possible.** If you have two hours set aside for an exam then you should spend the entire two hours working on it. You may finish early, but take this time to double check your answers. If you aren’t sure about some of your problems, put your pencil down and take a small break (do some stretches, rest your eyes for a little bit, take deep breaths, etc.). You may have a revelation about problems on your exam during your small break. I have had many students come to me after an exam and tell me that they realized they made errors on the exam after they left. I believe that these small errors can be corrected if you take the time to go through your answers and spend as much time as possible on the exam.

9. **Make sure your work is clear for grading purposes.** Try and be as neat as possible with your work. Sometimes you may try a problem multiple ways and get different solutions. If this is the case, make sure to cross out the work and the answers that you think are wrong and circle the answer you believe is correct. If a grader sees multiple answers they may not give you full credit for the problem even if you had the correct work on the page. Also let the grader know if you did the work on the back of the page or on another paper.

10. **Think happy thoughts.** Try your best and give it all you got!