Test Taking Strategies

1. Gathering knowledge of the truth is the best preparation for tests.
   o Concentrated hours of effective study to force facts into your memory is the best way to prepare for any test.

2. Always arrive early and take a moment to relax and reduce your anxiety.
   o This brief time period will boost your confidence
   o Use this time to focus your mind and think positive thoughts.

3. Listen attentively to last minute instructions given by the instructor.
   o Teachers often make last minute changes.
   o Missing instruction causes extreme anxiety.

4. Read the test directions very carefully and watch for details.
   o You may find that more than one answer may be possible on multiple choice.
   o A key detail may require only three out of the five essay questions.

5. Maintain a positive attitude.
   o Don't let more difficult questions raise your anxiety and steal your valuable time. Move on and find success with other questions.
   o If you are not penalized for wrong answers, guess and move on.
   o Avoid watching for patterns. Noticing that the last four answers are "C" is not a good reason to stop, go back, and break concentration.

6. Have time for review.
   o Proofread your essays and pay attention to grammar and spelling.
   o Make sure you answered all questions. More than one student has failed to notice questions on the back side of the paper.

Guidelines for Answering True/false Questions

1. Look for any factor that will make a statement false.
   o It is easy for the instructor to add a false part to an otherwise true statement.
   o Students often read the question and see some truth and quickly assume that the entire statement is true. For example, "Water boils at 212 degrees in Denver." Water does boil at 212 degrees, but not at Denver’s altitude.

2. Look for extreme modifiers that tend to make the question false. Some EXTREME modifiers.

   all       none       best       absolutely
always     never      worst      absolutely not
only       nobody     everybody  certainly
invariably no one    everyone    certainly not
3. **Qualifying words tend to make a question true.** Some QUALIFIERS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Many</td>
<td>Much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably</td>
<td>A majority</td>
<td>Apt to</td>
<td>Most</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Might</td>
<td>A few</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Unlikely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **Negative words or prefixes complicate the statement.**
   - The prefixes (un-, im-, miss-) will alter the meaning of the statement.
   - Double negatives make a positive. For example, "not uncommon" actually means common.

5. **There is no substitute for the truth.**
   - Many concentrated hours of study to force facts into your memory is the best way to prepare true-false questions.
   - Teachers, however, often try to test your memory of the material by slightly altering it.

**Guidelines for Answering Multiple-choice Questions**

1. **Formulate your own answer before reading the options.**
   - Focus on finding an answer without the help of the alternatives.
   - This process will increase your concentration.
   - Doing this will help you exercise your memory.

2. **Eliminate unlikely answers first.**
   - Eliminating two alternatives quickly may increase your probability to 50/50 or better.
   - Use the true-false methods described earlier and find the false alternative.

3. **Watch out for “NOT TRUE?”**
   - Remember to reverse your procedure and eliminate truth.
   - Use the true-false methods described earlier and find the false alternative.

**Guidelines for Essay Questions**

1. **Organize your thoughts before you begin to write.**
   - A short outline on a separate piece of paper will improve your answer.
   - Write the topics and the key introductory words.

2. **Use the principles of English composition**
   - Form a clear thesis statement (statement of purpose) and place it as near to the beginning as possible.
   - Provide clear explanations to back up the main concept.
   - Remember, a complete answer usually has a main idea, supporting details and illustrative examples.

3. **Write clearly! Teachers need to be able to read it.**
   - Making teachers work hard to read lowers your grade.
   - Write or print clearly, using a dark-colored erasable ball point pen.
Avoid crossing out words or sentences, and don't smudge your paper.
Remember to save some space for a brief but adequate summary.

4. **Identify the verbs or words in the question that give you direction.**
   - Key words in each question describe the task you are expected to complete.
   - Circle the direction words in the question to make sure that you are focusing on the desired task.
   - Sample direction verbs or adjectives, and their generally intended action or task, are listed below.

Go to http://ccc.byu.edu/learning/practice.php to practice strategies
Adapted from Brigham Young University Counseling and Career Center http://ccc.byu.edu/learning/practice.php