



Test-Taking Techniques and Test Anxiety

Germanna Community College
Tutoring Services

Test-Taking Tips and Test Anxiety

- Many students suffer from test anxiety
- Learn how to empower yourself so you can show your instructor what you truly know!
- Tutoring Services can help you

Do You Have Test Anxiety?

- Do you get an upset stomach prior to, or during a test?
- Do your muscles tense up during a test?
- Do you perspire or get sweaty palms while you are taking a test?
- Does your heart beat rapidly during a test?
- Do you get a headache during a test?
- Does your mind go blank when you see questions on a test?

- Do you have difficulty organizing your thoughts on an essay test?
- Do you have difficulty reading and understanding the questions on a test?
- Do you perform poorly on a test even though you know the material?
- Do you have a fear of failing the exam even before you take it?
- Do you remember the correct answer as soon as the exam is over?
- Does this sound like it applies to you?

What Can Be Done About Test Anxiety?

- Test Anxiety is actually a learned response.
- The good news is... if you learned how to become anxious, you can unlearn it!
- Before you can do that, you must determine what causes your test anxiety.
- You will need to eliminate the causes.
- There are several strategies you can use.

Causes of Test Anxiety

- Perhaps you are afraid that you won't live up to the expectations of individuals who are important in your life.
- Perhaps you believe that grades are a measure of your self-worth.
- Perhaps tests make you feel helpless because you don't have control over the situation.
- Perhaps you weren't well prepared for the test.

Eliminate the Causes

- Expectations
 - Try to separate yourself from others' expectations
 - Focus instead on performing at your personal best
- Self Esteem
 - Emphasize performance instead of grades
 - Grades are just a way to keep score!
- Feelings of Helplessness
 - Internal locus of control
 - External locus of control
- Test Preparation
 - Learn effective study techniques

What Can You Do?

- The key to successful test achievement is preparation
- Empower yourself to control your anxiety
 - Face your fears
 - Learn some relaxation techniques
- Learn the art of test-taking techniques
- Learn about resources at Germanna that can help you

Preparation

- Go to all of your classes
- Become efficient in your study habits
 - Study where you can concentrate
 - Use the PQ4R Method:
 - Preview
 - Question
 - Read
 - Reflect
 - Recite
 - Review

More Preparation

- Make flashcards, outlines, and summary sheets
- Form study groups with motivated students
- Create a study schedule and spread your review over several days rather than cramming
- Take good notes

Empower Yourself

- Become familiar with your own personal learning style
- Start an exercise program
- Get plenty of rest
- Eat well
- Face your fears
- Learn some relaxation techniques
- Be more self confident --- be aware of the power of “self-talk”

Now What?

- You have attended all of your classes
- You have completed all required assignments
- You have studied the material on a regular basis
- You have utilized all resources available to you
- You have taken care of your body
- You have learned to cope with stress
- You have reviewed your notes and study materials
- You are now ready to take the test!

The Three Levels of Comprehension

- You will be tested on the literal level
 - Facts, names, dates, locations, definitions
- You will be tested on the interpretive level
 - You must understand the facts at a literal level and then draw conclusions from those facts
 - This requires independent thinking!
- You will be tested on the application level
 - Take the information at the literal level and apply it to an entirely different situation
 - Utilize your knowledge and apply it to a hypothetical situation

Test Day

- Aim for a relaxed state of concentration
- Wear comfortable clothes
- Arrive at the test site a few minutes early
- Don't forget to breathe!
- Think positive!
- You can do this!

Test-Taking Techniques

- Look over the test
 - See how long it is
 - Read the directions carefully
 - If necessary, ask your instructor for clarification
 - Check the format
 - Are there any essay questions?
 - Plan how much time you want to spend on each section
 - Focus your attention on the test, not to others
 - Remember the power of positive thinking!

On Your Mark...Get Set...Go!

- Multiple Choice Questions
- Essay Questions
- True / False Questions

Multiple Choice Questions

- Read the entire question carefully
- Try to answer the question in your head first before you review the multiple answers
- To recall something “on the tip of your tongue,” think of associated facts
- When you are uncertain of the correct choice, eliminate obviously incorrect items and make an “educated guess”
- Don’t change your answer unless you are 100% sure that you have made an error
- Always check your answer sheet for careless errors

Essay Questions

- Organize your thoughts in a brief outline
- Look for key words such as “compare,” “contrast,” “describe,” or “identify”
- Start with a short summary or topical sentence and then make your points
- Don't ramble; do write clearly; think about the most important information that was covered in class

True / False Questions

- Watch for key words such as: “always,” “never,” “all,” or “none”
- If any part of the statement is false, then the whole statement is false
- There are usually more “true” questions than “false” questions
- Most true statements come directly out of the textbook
- Make yourself work quickly; don’t pause to analyze

The Test Is Over!

- Reflect upon the test:
 - Were you well-prepared?
 - How did you feel during the test?
 - What would you do differently next time?
- If you think you have a specific problem that interferes with your test-taking, discuss it with your instructor
- If you continue to have problems with test anxiety, make an appointment with a counselor in the Counseling Office
- Think about the resources available to you
 - Tutoring Services, Library, Instructors,