

Best Strategies for Test-Taking

Fall 2019 // Linn-Benton Community College Learning Center



General Test-Taking Recommendations

- Arrive at the exam location early.
- As soon as you get the exam, look over the whole thing: what are you being asked to do in the time you have?
- Ask clarifying questions of exam proctors if anything seems unclear.
- Triage your tasks: prioritize completing the most high-point questions/sections first.
- Brain dump formulas, mnemonic devices, facts, etc. that you don't want to forget in the margins or on scrap paper.

Specific Strategies¹ for...

<i>Multiple choice questions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Avoid sinking too much time into a single question by employing Thomas Frank's confidence 1-5 rating system.- Anticipate the answer, then look for it amongst the options given.- Narrow your options by striking out any immediately wrong answers.
<i>True/false questions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Look for absolute qualifiers such as: "always", "all", "nearly". If one is present, the question will probably be <u>false</u>.- Look for relative qualifiers such as: "often", "frequently", or "seldom". These will probably be <u>true</u>.
<i>Matching questions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Make sure you understand the directions for matching the items on the lists. For instance, can you use an item more than once?- Answer long matching lists in a systematic way, such as checking off those items already used.
<i>Fill-in-the-blank & short open answer questions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Write no more than necessary.- Make sure your answer makes sense by reading it (quietly!) out-loud.
<i>Essay questions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Draft a brief outline of the ideas you want to/need to mention in the essay, as to not write yourself into a corner.- Integrate the language and keywords of the prompt or question into your answer.- Use evidence and/or examples to support any claims that you are making.
<i>Practical exams</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Familiarize yourself with the process of the exam beforehand, and come prepared. For example, if you are taking a wilderness rescue course and the exam will have you outside in the rain for 10 hours, dress accordingly and bring snacks.- Follow all standard safety procedures, even if they are not mentioned during the test. For example, buckling your seatbelt during a driving test, even if you are on a closed course.

¹ Adapted from North Shore Community College's *Test Taking Strategies*: <http://www.pstcc.edu/counseling/files/pdf/test-taking-hints2.pdf>