Test Preparation

“if ye are prepared, ye shall not fear.” (D&C 38:30)

Three Reasons Students Fail Tests
1. Test Anxiety/Stress
2. Lack of Preparation
3. Poor Test Taking Techniques

Two Types of Test Anxiety
1. Facilitating: motivating pressure
2. Debilitating: stops progress & harms us physically

THREE WAYS TO PREPARE FOR AN EXAM

1. Mentally
   + At the beginning of each semester, develop a daily schedule that allows time for class preparation, study, review, recreation/leisure, eating, and sleeping.
   + Find a study area that suits your personal needs and learning style.
   + Studying and reviewing are two different things, so make sure you have time for both!
   + Take some time every day to relax and let your brain stretch out a little. You need mental breaks to retain more information, and when you have a test coming up, you’ll want to remember as much as possible.
   + Make mental “hyperlinks” as you study--link important facts or dates to a pun or connect-the-dots story with your facts. The weirder it is, the more memorable it will be.

2. Emotionally
   + Positive thoughts make the best emotional preparation.
   + Plan a reward for after your test. Be it a candy bar on your way out of the testing center, an hour to relax with your favorite TV show, or a long run, this will improve your mood and give you something to look forward to.
   + Leave yourself some time before the test to relax your mind and collect your thoughts one last time before you go to conquer your test.

3. Physically
   + Eat a healthy and balanced diet. In order for our brains to crank out their best work, we have to be using the right fuel! This includes three well-rounded meals each day. (midnight pizza does not count as one of the three)
   + Exercise can be an excellent stress-reliever and mind-clearer. Don’t just exercise before the test (that can be a form of procrastination), but two to three times per week will keep your mind in tip top test-performance shape.
   + Physical relaxation is just as important as mental relaxation. Stress can make you forget important information, so make sure you take time to evaluate the tension in your body, and remedy it!

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1. True or False
   a. If any part of the question is wrong, the whole thing is false.
   b. Follow your first instinct (unless you can prove it absolutely wrong).
   c. When in doubt, guess true. Instructors tend to emphasize true information, but know your professor.

2. Fill-in-the-blank Questions
   a. Read the question with the intent to give an answer and make the sentence grammatically correct.
   b. Provide a descriptive answer when you cannot think of the exact word or words.

3. Matching Questions
   a. Use one list as a starting point and go through the second list to find a match.
   b. Move through the entire list before selecting a match.
   c. Cross off items on the second list when you are certain that you have a match.

4. Multiple Choice
   a. Read all the answers and look for the one which best completes the stem.
   b. Use the process of elimination.
   c. When numbers are in each choice, and you’re not sure which is correct, choose numbers in the middle range, and avoid the extremes.
   d. See if you can answer the question before looking at the choices. You’re less likely to be led astray by those sneaky answers.

5. Essay Questions
   a. Before you begin to write, organize your thoughts in a short outline. This can be as complex as a diagram or as simple as a list of words that represent topics you need to cover to answer the question(s) for that prompt.
   b. Paraphrase the original question or short prompt to form your introductory statement.
   c. Write your answer clearly so the reader will be able to understand your ideas. When in doubt, clarify.

BYU TESTING CENTER TIPS

testing.byu.edu

+ Always have your ID card with you. If you forget it or can’t find it, the ID card function on the BYU iOS app is an acceptable substitute, or else have a printout with you of your entire ID card from RouteY.
+ Know the class number (e.g. Bio 100) and professor’s name beforehand.
+ There is a testing room upstairs that plays classical music (the same playlist as the music section on the 2nd floor of the library).
+ Bring a pair of earplugs to the testing center if noise makes it hard for you to concentrate.
+ Food and drink are allowed, as long as they are non-disruptive. (A bag of popcorn or potato chips is probably a bad idea.)
+ Sometimes it’s chilly, sometimes it’s warm, so if you’ll be there a way, plan on layering. Try wearing a short sleeve shirt and bringing a sweater or jacket.
+ Check line conditions before you push the limit for time. (testing.byu.edu --> General Information --> Line Conditions)
+ Be sure to check the hours the testing center is open! (testing.byu.edu --> General Information --> Testing Center Hours)
+ Bring two pencils. If you don’t have one, you can buy one from them for 30 cents, which they’ll charge to your student financial center account.
+ Make sure you are Honor-Code appropriate. They will turn you away if you are not clean shaven, wearing tiny shorts, etc.

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