

## **BEFORE STARTING THE TEST**

- Preview the test.
- Budget time for each portion of the test according to the point value.
- Read the directions to each portion of the test carefully. Reread or ask the instructor for clarification if necessary.
- If scratch paper is allowed, write out a few key ideas or outline your answers to essay questions.

## **TAKING A TEST—objective**

- Answer the questions you are sure of first. This will build up your confidence.
- Answer all questions (unless you are penalized for wrong answers).
- Go back to difficult questions. Items on the test might give you useful information or jog your memory on needed facts.
- Circle key words in difficult questions. This will provide a central focus.
- Express difficult questions in your own words. If you are not sure what the question is asking, ask the instructor to explain it.
- Use process of elimination with multiple choice questions for which you are not sure of the answer.
- Use your general knowledge and common sense. Select the best remaining answer.
- Use all of your allotted time, making sure that all questions were answered or by covering up your answers, attempting to rework the question.
- Do not change your answer unless you are sure of the new answer.

## **TAKING A TEST—essay**

- Budget your time carefully, according to the point value of each question.
- Organize your ideas on scratch paper before you begin writing.
- Spend time on the main points (intro and conclusion can be time wasters)
- Write what is most important first. Then expand your answer, giving plenty of examples and/or definitions if the latter are part of the material to master.

## **AFTER THE TEST**

Test grades are feedback. They are not a measurement of your self-worth, creativity or of your intelligence. If the very idea of taking a test causes your stomach to get creepy and sweat to pour out of your pores, then it is time to rethink your definition of a test. Let's substitute the word "feedback" or "evaluation" for test.

Evaluation is a feedback mechanism that implies purpose and progress. The true purpose of evaluation is to determine your strengths and weaknesses, what you know and don't know, so that you can make adjustments in your study habits to benefit from or build on your strengths in order to improve your weaknesses. CHANGE is essential. This is where I am — this is where I want or need to be. What ACTION

am I willing to take to reach that point? Take time to assess and make adjustments to strategies and goals.

Adapted from: Sowing the Seeds of Success, A Learning Activities Handbook, compiled and edited by Suzanne Skinner and Carolyn DeLecour; Ellis, Dave, The Master Student, 1985, and Judson, The Search for Solutions, 1980.

#### **IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER ABOUT TAKING TESTS:**

- It is okay to make mistakes while learning.
- Evaluate frequently to see where progress is being made.
- Make adjustments where indicated.
- Celebrate success!

#### **WHY YOU SHOULD REVIEW A RETURNED TEST:**

- Look for mistakes in grading.
- Know what questions you missed and why you missed them.
- Take advantage of your instructor's invitation to come examine and evaluate your test in her office. Ask questions while the material on the test is still "fresh."
- Study the instructor's comments on essay questions so that you will know what is expected next time.
- Evaluate what kinds of questions you missed. Study those carefully to know what makes them difficult for you. Review strategies to successfully conquer those kinds of questions.
- See if the questions missed came from the text or the lecture. Concentrate more on that source for the next exam.
- Correct and understand what you missed. This is information that may appear on a later test or the final.
- Review to get an idea what kind of test the instructor might give the next time.
- Review to put the information into long-term memory.
- Review how you studied for the exam. Look for better ways.

Adapted from "A Dozen Reasons to Review a Returned Test" Middle Tennessee State University.