



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Support Operations *for* Academic Retention

Strategies for Taking Exams

Multiple Choice and True-False Exams:

- Answer only questions that you know first. Skip tough questions come back to them.
- Only change your answers when you're sure they are wrong.
- If you're using a separate answer sheet, check every 5-10 questions to be sure you're putting the answers in the right places.
- The longest alternative is often true.
- If two alternatives are opposite, one is probably correct.
- If two alternatives are the same, both can be considered wrong.
- Notice singular and plural verbs. (*Are* indicates a plural answer.)
- The answer may be in the question (word association).
- Answers to a question may be found in other questions (inter-item clues).
- Watch for over-statement or under-statement.
- Watch for true-false questions with two independent clauses, one of which is false.
- Cross out wrong choices in multiple items.
- Cross out used choices in matching items.
- Try changing the wording of difficult true-false questions.
- Specific determiners on True-False exams:

Usually False:

- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| 1. always | 4.all |
| 2. must | 5.only |
| 3. never | 6. usually |

Usually True:

- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| 1. often | 4. generally |
| 2. seldom | 5. may |
| 3. perhaps | 6. usually |



Essay Exam Tips

- Read all the directions and questions before starting to write.
 - Make notes on your planned answers, write down anything you think you might forget.
 - Note the number of items, difficulty of watch question points for each question, and remaining time.
- Plan your use of time.
 - Plan a schedule; allot time for each question according to its point value.
 - Leave plenty of time for editing.
 - If you do the easiest items first, do them rapidly and move on.
 - Stick to your schedule.
- Note the key words in each question.
 - If you know an answer, be sure you answer only what is asked.
 - If you don't know an answer, at least write something.
- Organize each answer before you write it.
 - Jot down a quick outline; if you don't have time to finish a question the outline may be worth points.
 - Remember to include an introduction and conclusion to each question.
 - Qualify your answers when in doubt.
 - Write clearly; print if necessary.
- Edit your exam carefully. Check:
 - To see that you have answered all the questions
 - Spelling
 - Dates
 - Grammar
 - For missing words

Some Don'ts on Answering Essay Questions

- Don't rush.
- Don't answer a question you haven't been asked.
- Don't try to "show" your instructor.
- Don't give your opinion unless you are asked for it.
- Don't avoid words because you can't spell them.



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Typical Terms Used in Essay Questions

Compare - Similarities, difference

Contrast - Differences

Criticize - Give opinion & reasons

Define - Give meaning

Discuss - Talk over

Enumerate - List, name one after another

Evaluate - Give opinion of

Explain - Make clear

Interpret - Make plain

Illustrate - Describe, diagram, graph.

Justify - Show reasons for

Prove - Show truth of

Summarize - Give main points