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
  2. must
  3. never
  4. all
  5. only
  6. usually

  **Usually True:**
  1. often
  2. seldom
  3. perhaps
  4. generally
  5. may
  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.
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