

Test Taking Guide

MULTIPLE CHOICE TESTS:

This guide will help you in scoring well on multiple choice tests, help relieve test anxiety, and improve your grades. Remember that studying is the most effective test preparation that you can do. Reading the text, attending class, and reviewing what you have learned lay the foundation to a good grade. These hints should help turn that good grade into a great one!

First, the anatomy of the test, which consists of the question or the stem. The second part is the answers or the distractors of which there can be three or more.

The first thing to do is to understand the question by following some basic principles.

1. Do not read extra meaning into the question; assume that it is direct and to the point.
2. Understand exactly what the stem is saying before looking at the distractors.
3. Rephrase the question in your mind.
4. After choosing the correct answer, separate it from the other distractors, go back to the stem and make sure your choice does, in fact, answer the question.
5. When a question contains multiple variables as alternative choices, eliminate the variables that you know are not true. Find the answer by the process of elimination.
6. On the A.P. exam ONLY, if you can narrow it down to 2 answers, then go with your best guess. You are not penalized for guessing.
7. On the A.P. exam, which consists of 100 multiple choice questions, try to get as many correct as possible. Shoot for the high 70's (or more, of course!!).

Now use the following test strategies to be the most effective test taker you can.

1. Your first "HUNCH" is usually correct. Be cautious before changing anything unless it is obviously wrong. If you have to erase, erase completely since the scantrons will mark erasure marks as wrong.
2. Frequently the most comprehensive answer is the best.
3. There is no pattern to the answers.
4. Beware of answers that contain specific qualifiers, such as 'always,' and 'never.'
5. Tests are timed (on the A.P. exam, 70 minutes for 100 multiple choice questions). Work quickly. Do not spend too much time on any one question. Leave the difficult questions alone (put a light pencil mark off to the side) and come back. If you lose time you become immobilized. Master time to master the test.
6. Where "all of the above" or "none of the above" is in the answer, it has a high chance that it is correct. DO NOT ASSUME THAT IT IS THE CORRECT ANSWER!!!

FREE RESPONSE TESTS (ESSAY)

The A.P. exam consists of 2 free response/essay questions. You are not given a choice of what questions you answer. On the A.P. exam, read both questions and decide which one you know best. Answer that one first! (it doesn't matter if it is #2)! Watch your time; you have 50 minutes for BOTH questions.

1. Plan BEFORE you write. Underline key words/phrases. Make sure you understand what the question is asking for. Jot down key terms/people/experiments/etc. that will be a part of your answer. BE QUICK!
2. Answer the question in the order it is asked. If the question is organized "A., B., C.," you answer it in ORDER—do not label the sections of your answer!!!!!!!!!!
3. A formal introduction is NOT needed. Launch right into your answer.
4. Be certain to answer each section completely. When you have answered "A" for example, cross it off!
5. BE SPECIFIC! Avoid vague statements. DO NOT assume the reader is an expert in the topic.
6. Don't give your opinion; it will not be in the question!!!!!!!!!!
7. DEFINE EVERYTHING! Even if it is not asked for...it is best to define all terms—3-5 words per term—short and to the point.
8. A formal conclusion is not needed.
9. When essays are graded with a rubric you are only given credit for what is correct. Points are not deducted for incorrect information. Do not contradict your information—that will cause a deduction of the original information!!!!!!!!!!
10. Watch neatness. If you make a mistake, don't scribble it out, a single line is sufficient.
11. If time remains, read through your response. If you see something you need to add, DO IT! Sometimes it is this last minute realization that earns you the points. Draw an arrow off the side, or * and refer to the end.