Test-Taking Tips

Before the Test
* Know what the exam will cover. Prepare a Study Checklist.
* Allow enough time -- at least one week -- to review all material and create study tools for better understanding. Aim for application and synthesis, asking yourself "how" and "why" questions.
* Get a good night's rest. Don't pull an all-nighter.
* Research shows that you'll achieve a higher grade if you prepare for the exam as if you were anticipating an essay exam. You tend to gain a deeper understanding of the material if learning is approached in this manner.
* Eat lightly prior to your exam. Be sure to include proteins, but avoid excessive amounts of sugar and caffeine.
* Practice relaxation techniques (i.e., deep breathing, guided imagery) to control your anxiety level.
* Be confident in your ability to do well. Use positive self-talk.

During the Test
* Ignore/avoid other test-takers. Their anxiety isn't good for you (and can be contagious).
* Sit in your usual seat, if possible.
* Bring all necessary materials, i.e., pencils, pens, a watch, scratch paper, blue book, etc.
* Know exactly how long you have to complete the exam.
* Listen carefully to any verbal instructions.
* When given the test, read the directions.
* Look over the entire test before answering any questions.
* Set up a schedule--budget your time according to the number of points possible.
* Allow 5 minutes to go over the test before handing it in.
* Answer the easiest questions first.
* Change your answer only if you're absolutely sure that your second choice is correct.

After the Test
* Analyze your performance in terms of the test-taking strategies you used. Did your time schedule work? Did you lose points on test items which should have been your strength?
* Identify/separate errors from mistakes.
* Give yourself credit for what you did right.
* Decide how you'll approach your next exam.

Tips compiled by:
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