



# Test Taking Strategies

## **Multiple Choice Questions**

Read directions thoroughly.

Read all answers before answering.

If you have no clue which is the correct answer *then*

- Eliminate all answers that you are confident are not correct.
- If it calls for sentence completion, eliminate the answers that would form grammatically incorrect sentences.
- If two quantities are almost the same, choose one of these.
- If answers cover a wide range, choose one in the middle of the range.

## **True/False Questions**

Read carefully. One word can make a statement inaccurate.

Answer these questions quickly and go with your first instinct.

Look for qualifiers like *all, most, sometimes, never or rarely*.

Absolute qualifiers like *always or never* generally indicate a false statement.

## **Open-Book / Open-Note Tests**

Write down any formulas you need on a separate sheet.

Use paperclips and color-coded tabs to save time when flipping through pages.

Number note and use a table of contents.

Be familiar with readings & notes due to level of detail expected on these types of tests.

## **Short Answer / Fill in the Blank**

Concentrate on key words and facts.

Keep it brief.

Know your subject backwards & forwards.

## **Essay Questions**

Clearly understand what the question is asking.

Make a quick outline before you start writing.

- It helps you to write faster.
- You are less likely to leave out facts.
- If you can't finish, at least you can include the outline.
- KISS – Keep it short & simple.

Be sure to *answer the question*; don't just write all you know about the topic and hope the professor will find the answer.





# Test Taking Strategies

Part 2

## The “SPLASHDOWN” Method

Approach the test when it is handed to you by first turning it over and using SPLASHDOWN. Write out all the key information that you want to remember (dates, formulas, facts, etc.). This method gets the information out of your head on onto the paper all in about two minutes.

Use the first moments to look over the test without answering questions. This helps to identify how the test is structured and allows you to look at the “types” of questions, especially those that are worth more points.

1. Create a ‘timeline’ for each section to determine how much time to spend on each section.
2. Answer all the easy questions first. Change your answer only if you have reason to do so (75% of the time your first choice is correct).
3. Refer to the “splashdown” information you wrote down as needed throughout the test.

## Using The 3-TIER Approach

Read through the questions of the test and place each question into one of three categories:

- TIER 1—These are the easy questions that you are 80%-90% confident you know the answer.
- TIER 2—These are questions that you are 60% confident you know the answer.  
Place a mark next to the question, *not answering yet* but moving on to the next question.
- TIER 3—These are questions that you are less than 50% confident with the answer.  
Place a different mark next to these questions, *not answering it yet*, and move on to the next question.

**First...** Answer all TIER 1 questions.

Next, answer only TIER 2 questions.

Finally, move on to TIER 3 questions.

By approaching the test in this manner, you will have had a thorough review of the test material by the time you get to the TIER 2 and especially TIER 3 level questions. This should help in recalling the necessary information as well as efficiently answering all the questions you have a good chance at getting correct. It is an efficient and effective way to approach getting the maximum number of points on a test.

In reviewing the test at the end, make sure each question has been answered, but refrain from changing answers, especially Tier 1 or Tier 2 questions.