

## REVIEWING READING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read title and subtitle. The title provides the overall topic of the article or chapter, the subtitle suggest the specifics focus, aspect or approach toward the overall topic.
2. Read the introduction & first paragraph. This serves as a lead-in to the chapter, establishing the overall subject and suggest how it will develop.
3. Read each boldface heading. Headings label the contents of each section, announcing the major topic of the section.
4. Read the first sentence under each heading. The first sentence often states the central thought of the section. If the first sentence seems introductory, read the last sentence; often this sentence states or restates the central thought.
5. Note any typographical aids. Italics are used to emphasize important terminology and definitions by using slanted type to distinguish from the rest of the passage. Notice any material that is numbered 1,2,3, or lettered a, b, c or presented in list form.
6. Note any graphic aids—Graphs, charts, photographs and tables often suggest what is important in the chapter. Read all captions.
7. Read the last paragraph or summary—This provides a condensed view of the chapter, often outlining key points in the chapter.
8. Read any end-of-article or end-of-chapter material. This might include reference study questions, discussion questions, chapter outlines or vocabulary lists. Reading study questions will indicate what is important to remember in the chapter. Skim through a vocabulary list to identify terms you will need to learn as you read.

## CREATING A STUDY PLAN

- ✎ Identify your study emphasis (what you will be tested on, is it cumulative, etc.)
- ✎ Inventory the study material you will need to review and identify what's missing.
- ✎ Keep in mind how the test will be formatted (multiple choice, essay, etc.).
- ✎ Break studying into small tasks based on material to be covered, test emphasis, etc.
- ✎ Estimate total time needed to complete each study task.
- ✎ Use a calendar and time management grid to map out tasks, working backwards from the date of the exam..
- ✎ Set realistic goals.
- ✎ Set clear starting and stopping times.
- ✎ Avoid scheduling marathon sessions!

## WHAT TO DO DURING THE TEST

- ☒ Approach the test with a strategy.
- ☒ RELAX!! Use deep breathing when you get anxious or stressed.
- ☒ Pay attention to the directions.
- ☒ Scan the test and budget your time - pace yourself.
- ☒ Look for answers in the test.
- ☒ Always follow your first instinct.
- ☒ Arrive early to the test.
- ☒ Sleep well the night before!

# Test Taking Strategies



**“The keys to success aren’t much good until one discovers the right locks in which to insert them.”**

*~Chinese Proverb*

The College of New Jersey  
CENTER FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Roscoe West Room 131

[css@tcnj.edu](mailto:css@tcnj.edu)    <http://css.tcnj.edu/>

## 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).

## 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.

### Then . . .

1. Answer all TIER 1 questions.
2. Next, answer only TIER 2 questions.
3. 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.

## TRUE/FALSE QUESTIONS

- ✍ Answer these questions quickly. *Read Carefully.* One word can make a statement inaccurate.
- ✍ Look for qualifiers like *all, most, sometimes, never or rarely*. These are key words which the question depends.
- ✍ Absolute qualifiers like *always* or *never* generally indicate a false statement.

## SHORT ANSWERS/FILL IN THE BLANKS

- ◆ Concentrate on key words and facts.
- ◆ Keep it brief.
- ◆ Know your subject backwards and forwards.
- ◆ If you are not sure of the answer, come back to it after you’ve finished the rest of the test and make an educated guess. Look for clues in other questions on the test.
- ◆ Read the question carefully making sure you answer everything it is asking. Some short answer questions have multiple parts.

## MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

- \* Read all answers before answering.
- \* Anticipate the answer and look for something close to it. Look for a response that comes closest to your anticipated answer.
- \* Avoid answers with 100% words. *All* and *Never* mean 100 percent of the time. Often choices with absolute qualifiers are wrong.
- \* If two answers are similar, choose 1 of these answers.
- \* If two answers have similar-sounding or similar-looking words (i.e., intermediate/intermittent), choose one of these answers.
- \* If the answer calls for sentence completion, eliminate the answers that would not form grammatically correct sentences.
- \* If answers cover a wide range, choose one in the middle of the range.
- \* If the question is long and complex, underline the subject and verb to help you.
- \* Cross out answers you know are incorrect.

## ESSAY QUESTIONS

- ✓ Read the directions carefully and do exactly what is asked. If the question requires you to list or enumerate (such as “List the six major types of transportation”), write the numbers 1 through 6 with a type of transportation listed after each number.
- ✓ Make A Schedule. Decide how much time you can allot to each questions. Give more time to those worth more points and that are harder for you.
- ✓ Organize Your Response. Take a few minutes to **Brainstorm** or **Splashdown** and jot down ideas rather than writing the first thing that pops into your head. If the time runs short, use an outline or a diagram to express your remaining ideas.
- ✓ Use an Appropriate Style. Be respectful (do not use slang). Avoid empty words. Words like *good, interesting, and nice* say very little. Be more direct and descriptive in your writing. Write in complete sentences.
- ✓ Be Aware of Appearance. Research has shown that essays written in a clear, legible handwriting receive a higher grade than essays written somewhat illegibly. Proofread for correct grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- ✓ Predict and Practice. Predict possible essay questions by using the table of contents and text book headings to form questions. Practice brainstorming to answer these questions. Do as much thinking as possible to prepare yourself to take the test before you sit down to begin writing.
- ✓ Write something. Despite careful preparation, you may forget an answer. If this should happen, do not leave a blank page; write down something. By writing down something you give the instructor the chance to give you some points for trying!