Test taking strategies

The Before, During & After of Test Taking

Carol Rosenthal, Director
Academic Resource Center, TSC 305
Before

Rehearsal & review strategies
SI, tutoring, study groups

Sleep, nutrition, stress management

Before Taking Test

Take Test

Analyze Returned Test

Start Here

Manage Time

Test Preparation

Take Notes

Read Text

Listen Actively

Memory
Test taking strategies

Thinking with logic
During

Rehearsal & review strategies
SI, tutoring, study groups

Sleep, nutrition, stress management
General test taking guidelines

- Look over entire test before starting.
  - Determine point values and time per question
    - 45 minutes / 75 questions = 36 sec./question (doesn’t include review time)

- Read each question carefully. Don’t “read into”.
  - Brian’s example
Guidelines, continued

- Pass over difficult questions initially.
- Only change answers you absolutely know are incorrect.
- Ask instructor for clarification when needed.
- Make educated guesses: think with logic
Multiple Choice strategies

- Look for answers that are grammatically correct.
  - Small salamanders are:
    - a. mole.
    - b. tarpon.
    - c. cowl.
    - d. newts.
Multiple choice strategies

- Look for root words in the answers that are similar to words in the stem.
  - If an individual **dies** without a will, it is called:
    a. the principle of primogeniture
    b. dying intestate
    c. testamentary freedom
    d. illegal.
Multiple choice strategies

- Look for root words in the answers that are similar to words in the stem.
  - If an individual *dies* without a will, it is called:
    - a. the principle of primogeniture
    - b. **dying intestate**
    - c. testamentary freedom
    - d. illegal.
Multiple choice strategies

- If there is a range of numbers or values, choose a middle value.
  - As late as 1800, less than ____ percent of the world’s population lived in cities of 20,000 or more.
    a. 1
    b. 3
    c. 10
    d. 15
Multiple choice strategies

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  - As late as 1800, less than ____ percent of the world’s population lived in cities of 20,000 or more.
    - a. 1
    - b. 3
    - c. 10
    - d. 15
Multiple choice strategies

- Eliminate silly or suspicious wording suggesting a stereotype.
  - Washo is
    a. one of the teaching assistants for this course.
    b. a chimpanzee that was taught American sign language.
    c. a gorilla who became a sexual deviant in captivity.
    d. the world’s only known talking chimpanzee.
Multiple choice strategies

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Multiple choice strategies

- Be sure the right choice is the best choice.
  - If you do not understand a question during a test, you should:
    a. ask a friend to explain it to you.
    b. skip that question.
    c. look it up in your textbook.
    d. ask your instructor for clarification.
Multiple choice strategies

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Multiple choice strategies

Watch for responses that are essentially the same.

The chemically inactive substances used in experiments to determine drug effectiveness are:

a. prescription medications.
b. federally controlled pharmaceutical products.
c. similar to physician-prescribed drugs.
d. placebos.
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True/False strategies

- For a statement to be true, each part must be true.

Jean Piaget made some revolutionary discoveries about child behavior during the nineteenth century.
For a statement to be true, each part must be true.

False: Jean Piaget made some revolutionary discoveries about child behavior during the nineteenth century. (he made them during the 20th century)
True/False strategies

- Watch for **absolutes** or **qualifiers**.
  Absolute wording tends to be false (implies no exceptions). Qualifiers tend to limit meaning, allowing exceptions – thus normally true.
  
  - Everyone should exercise daily.
  - Children sometimes have emotional problems following their parents’ divorce.
True/False strategies

- Watch for **absolutes** or **qualifiers**. Absolute wording tends to be false (implies no exceptions).

- Qualifiers tend to limit meaning, allowing exceptions – thus normally true.

  - False: *Everyone should* exercise daily.
  - True: *Children sometimes* have emotional problems following their parents’ divorce.
True/False strategies

- Double negatives (two negative words) tend to indicate a positive relationship.
  - Aspirin is not an illegal drug.
  - Aspirin is not an illegal drug.
Let’s make it more difficult:

- The example given in the text of two brothers reared in the same family and cultural environment points out that they:
  a. would have the same attitudes in life.
  b. would both be attracted to the same types of people.
  c. will always be lifelong friends.
  d. may show very different needs for personal recognition from those around them.
Let’s make it more difficult:

- The example of two brothers reared in the same family and cultural environment given in the text points out that they:
  
a. would have the same attitudes in life. *(absolute)*
  
b. would both be attracted to the same types of people. *(absolute)*
  
c. will always be lifelong friends. *(absolute)*
  
d. may show very different needs for personal recognition from those around them. *(qualifier)*
At the time of arrest of a juvenile, the primary treatment goal is:

a. to pick up juveniles on suspicion in high delinquency areas so as to protect the public.
b. to teach the child a lesson by giving him a sample of what it is like to be a criminal.
c. to fingerprint him so that he will be on record.
d. police handling that will not further damage juvenile attitudes toward the law.
At the **time of arrest** of a juvenile, the **primary treatment goal** is:

- **a.** pick up...to protect the public. *(not a treatment goal)*
- **b.** teach a lesson...what it is like to be a criminal. *(unlikely treatment goal)*
- **c.** fingerprint him...be on record. *(not a treatment goal)*
- **d.** police handling....not further damage juvenile attitudes toward the law. *(at arrest; reasonable treatment goal)*
Tests of USU:

True/False:

During photosynthesis, plants create energy that is stored in the bonds of carbohydrates.
False.

During photosynthesis, plants convert (solar) energy that is then stored in the bonds of carbohydrates.

Energy is neither created nor destroyed. It is simply converted from one form to another.
Tests of USU:

Consider the following:

I. Economics is based on the premise that people act only out of selfish motives.

II. Economics suggests that the choices of even an altruistic person will be influenced by changes in perceived personal benefits and costs.

a. I is true; II is false.
b. I is false; II is true.
c. Both I and II are true.
d. Both I and II are false.
Tests of USU:

Consider the following:

I. Economics is based on the premise that people act **only** out of selfish motives.

II. Economics suggests that the choices of even an altruistic person will be influenced by changes in perceived personal benefits and costs.

a. I is true; II is false.

b. I is false; II is true.

c. Both I and II are true.

d. Both I and II are false.
If consumer purchases of a good are not very sensitive to the price of the good, economists say the demand for the good is relatively

a. inelastic.
b. elastic
c. robust
d. inverse.
Tests of USU:

If consumer purchases of a good are not very sensitive to the price of the good, economists say the demand for the good is relatively

a. inelastic (meaning: rigid, inflexible, non-responsive).

b. elastic (meaning: fluid, flexible, pliable)

c. Robust (meaning: hearty, vigorous, muscular)

d. inverse. (meaning: directly opposite)
Tests of USU:

If consumer purchases of a good are not very sensitive to the price of the good, economists say the demand for the good is relatively

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c. robust (meaning: hearty, vigorous, muscular)

d. inverse. (meaning: directly opposite)
Which of the following are *not* scarce?

a. air
b. bubblegum
c. compact discs
d. diamonds

Does “scarce” have a different definition in Economics than in popular use?
After

Rehearsal & review strategies
SI, tutoring, study groups

Sleep, nutrition, stress management
After

- Post-test analysis
- Adjust your study strategies and test preparation
- Use the assistance that’s wiling and available:
  - Professor
  - SI, tutoring, study groups
  - Academic advisor
  - Academic Resource Center, Counseling Center (test anxiety), etc.
# Analyzing Returned Tests

**Name:**

**Class:**

**Date of test:**

**Directions:**

1. List the number for each test question you missed.
2. Place a check in the column that best describes the reason you answered the question incorrectly.
3. Total the number of checks in each column to determine what factors most affected your test performance.
4. Review possible solutions for test errors on the reverse side of this form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insufficient Information</th>
<th>Test anxiety</th>
<th>Careless mistakes</th>
<th>Lack of test wisdom</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I did not read the text book thoroughly.</td>
<td>I did not read the text book thoroughly.</td>
<td>I did not read the text book thoroughly.</td>
<td>I did not read the text book thoroughly.</td>
<td>I did not read the text book thoroughly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information was not in my notes.</td>
<td>I studied the information but could not remember it.</td>
<td>I studied the information but could not remember it.</td>
<td>I studied the information but could not remember it.</td>
<td>I studied the information but could not remember it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I studied the information but could not apply it.</td>
<td>I studied the information but could not apply it.</td>
<td>I studied the information but could not apply it.</td>
<td>I studied the information but could not apply it.</td>
<td>I studied the information but could not apply it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I knew the information but could not match the essay directive/keyword.</td>
<td>I knew the information but could not match the essay directive/keyword.</td>
<td>I knew the information but could not match the essay directive/keyword.</td>
<td>I knew the information but could not match the essay directive/keyword.</td>
<td>I knew the information but could not match the essay directive/keyword.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missed or did not understand vocabulary or terms.</td>
<td>Missed or did not understand vocabulary or terms.</td>
<td>Missed or did not understand vocabulary or terms.</td>
<td>Missed or did not understand vocabulary or terms.</td>
<td>Missed or did not understand vocabulary or terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer did not match the essay directive/keyword.</td>
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<td>Answer did not match the essay directive/keyword.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was tired during the test and could not concentrate.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I knew the correct answer.</td>
<td>I knew the correct answer.</td>
<td>I knew the correct answer.</td>
<td>I knew the correct answer.</td>
<td>I knew the correct answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I changed a correct answer to a wrong one.</td>
<td>I changed a correct answer to a wrong one.</td>
<td>I changed a correct answer to a wrong one.</td>
<td>I changed a correct answer to a wrong one.</td>
<td>I changed a correct answer to a wrong one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I misunderstood the question.</td>
<td>I misunderstood the question.</td>
<td>I misunderstood the question.</td>
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<td>I misunderstood the question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wrote an incomplete response.</td>
<td>I wrote an incomplete response.</td>
<td>I wrote an incomplete response.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not notice a double negative statement.</td>
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<td>I did not notice a double negative statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not eliminate obviously incorrect choices.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not choose the best answer choice.</td>
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<td>I did not choose the best answer choice.</td>
<td>I did not choose the best answer choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I made poor use of the time provided for the test.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Test item missed**

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
Good luck!!!