



# Test-Taking Techniques and Test Anxiety

Germanna Community College  
Tutoring Services

# Test-Taking Tips and Test Anxiety

- ▶ Many students suffer from test anxiety
- ▶ Learn how to empower yourself so you can show your instructor what you truly know!
- ▶ Tutoring Services can help you

# Do You Have Test Anxiety?

- ▶ Do you get an upset stomach prior to, or during a test?
- ▶ Do your muscles tense up during a test?
- ▶ Do you perspire or get sweaty palms while you are taking a test?
- ▶ Does your heart beat rapidly during a test?
- ▶ Do you get a headache during a test?
- ▶ Does your mind go blank when you see questions on a test?

- ▶ Do you have difficulty organizing your thoughts on an essay test?
- ▶ Do you have difficulty reading and understanding the questions on a test?
- ▶ Do you perform poorly on a test even though you know the material?
- ▶ Do you have a fear of failing the exam even before you take it?
- ▶ Do you remember the correct answer as soon as the exam is over?
- ▶ Does this sound like it applies to you?

# What Can Be Done About Test Anxiety?

- ▶ Test Anxiety is actually a learned response.
- ▶ The good news is... if you learned how to become anxious, you can unlearn it!
- ▶ Before you can do that, you must determine what causes your test anxiety.
- ▶ You will need to eliminate the causes.
- ▶ There are several strategies you can use.

# Causes of Test Anxiety

- ▶ Perhaps you are afraid that you won't live up to the expectations of individuals who are important in your life.
- ▶ Perhaps you believe that grades are a measure of your self-worth.
- ▶ Perhaps tests make you feel helpless because you don't have control over the situation.
- ▶ Perhaps you weren't well prepared for the test.

# Eliminate the Causes

- ▶ **Expectations**
  - Separate yourself from others' expectations
  - Focus on performing at your personal best
- ▶ **Self Esteem**
  - Emphasize performance instead of grades
  - Grades are just one way to keep score
- ▶ **Feelings of Helplessness**
  - Focus on what you can do to control the outcome of a test.
- ▶ **Test Preparation**
  - Learn effective study techniques

# What Can You Do?

- ▶ The key to successful test achievement is preparation
- ▶ Empower yourself to control your anxiety
  - Face your fears
  - Learn some relaxation techniques
- ▶ Learn the art of test-taking techniques
- ▶ Learn about resources at Germanna that can help you

# Preparation

- ▶ Go to all of your classes
- ▶ Become efficient in your study habits
  - Study where you can concentrate
  - Use the PQ4R Method:
    - Preview
    - Question
    - Read
    - Reflect
    - Recite
    - Review

# More Preparation

- ▶ Make flashcards, outlines, and summary sheets
- ▶ Form study groups with motivated students
- ▶ Create a study schedule and spread your review over several days rather than cramming
- ▶ Take good notes

# Empower Yourself

- ▶ Become familiar with your own personal learning style
- ▶ Start an exercise program
- ▶ Get plenty of rest
- ▶ Eat well
- ▶ Face your fears
- ▶ Learn some relaxation techniques
- ▶ Be more self confident – be aware of the power of “self-talk”

# Now What?

- ▶ You have attended all of your classes
- ▶ You have completed all required assignments
- ▶ You have studied the material on a regular basis
- ▶ You have utilized all resources available to you
- ▶ You have taken care of your body
- ▶ You have learned to cope with stress
- ▶ You have reviewed your notes and study materials
- ▶ You are now ready to take the test!

# The Three Levels of Comprehension

- ▶ You will be tested on the literal level
  - Facts, names, dates, locations, definitions
- ▶ You will be tested on the interpretive level
  - You must understand the facts at a literal level and then draw conclusions from those facts
  - This requires independent thinking!
- ▶ You will be tested on the application level
  - Take the information at the literal level and apply it to an entirely different situation
  - Utilize your knowledge and apply it to a hypothetical situation

# Test Day

- ▶ Aim for a relaxed state of concentration
- ▶ Wear comfortable clothes
- ▶ Arrive at the test site a few minutes early
- ▶ Don't forget to breathe!
- ▶ Think positive!
- ▶ You can do this!

# Test-Taking Techniques

- ▶ Look over the test
  - See how long it is
  - Read the directions carefully
    - If necessary, ask your instructor for clarification
  - Check the format
    - Are there any essay questions?
    - Plan how much time you want to spend on each section
  - Focus your attention on the test, not to others
  - Remember the power of positive thinking!

# On Your Mark...Get Set...Go!

- ▶ Multiple Choice Questions
- ▶ Essay Questions
- ▶ True / False Questions

# Multiple Choice Questions

- ▶ Read the entire question carefully
- ▶ Try to answer the question in your head first before you review the multiple answers
- ▶ To recall something “on the tip of your tongue,” think of associated facts
- ▶ When you are uncertain of the correct choice, eliminate obviously incorrect items and make an “educated guess”
- ▶ Don’t change your answer unless you are 100% sure that you have made an error
- ▶ Always check your answer sheet for careless errors

# Essay Questions

- ▶ Organize your thoughts in a brief outline
- ▶ Look for key words such as “compare,” “contrast,” “describe,” or “identify”
- ▶ Start with a short summary or topical sentence and then make your points
- ▶ Don't ramble; do write clearly; think about the most important information that was covered in class

# True / False Questions

- ▶ Watch for key words such as: “always,” “never,” “all,” or “none”
- ▶ If any part of the statement is false, then the whole statement is false
- ▶ There are usually more “true” questions than “false” questions
- ▶ Most true statements come directly out of the textbook
- ▶ Make yourself work quickly; don’t pause to analyze

# The Test Is Over!

- ▶ Reflect upon the test:
  - Were you well-prepared?
  - How did you feel during the test?
  - What would you do differently next time?
- ▶ If you think you have a specific problem that interferes with your test-taking, discuss it with your instructor
- ▶ If you continue to have problems with test anxiety, make an appointment with a counselor in the Counseling Office
- ▶ Think about the resources available to you
  - Tutoring Services, Library, Instructors, Counselors