SWELL

Student Workshops for Excellence in Learning and Life

WORKSHOP# 4: Test Taking & Presentations
1. ___ I always begin studying for an exam at least a week in advance.
2. ___ I usually find that my class notes are helpful when I’m preparing for a test or exam.
3. ___ I usually study for an exam with at least one other person.
4. ___ I usually know what to expect on a test before I go into the exam.
5. ___ I study for tests and exams by predicting possible questions and seeing if I am prepared to answer them.
6. ___ I seldom feel overly nervous when studying for an exam.
7. ___ I am confident in my ability to present an informational and engaging presentation.
8. ___ I feel comfortable speaking in public and in being the center of attention.
9. ___ I often practice my presentation the night before and often prepare talking points.
10. ___ I usually prepare visual aids and handouts for my presentations.
Basic elements of classroom presentations:

- **Goals of your presentation**
  Develop your presentation's topic to a few main ideas

- **Audience characteristics and knowledge base**
  Cover mutual ground as a starting point
  Compare and adapt the presentation's goals with the interests of the audience

- **Thesis statement**
  State where you are going and what you will prove

- **Argument**
  Convince them with facts and logic

- **Review and summarize** when complete;
  Summarize what you've told them
  Check for comprehension

- **Questions and discussion**
Techniques of delivery:

- Put your audience at ease with a relevant anecdote or joke, or get their attention with a dramatic gesture or event.
- Make eye contact with the audience.
- Present your report with a conversational voice though vary it for emphasis.
- Use transitions to signal the audience you're moving to a new idea.
- Direct questions to your audience to get them more involved.
- Conclude by summing up your main ideas, points, or arguments.
- Leave time for questions, and invite feedback on:
  - the content
  - the conclusions
  - your manner of presentation
Using visual aids or media:

- Make sure hardware is compatible with your software
- Have several versions of computerized files (on your hard drive, disk, and overhead and/or paper just in case)
- Come early and make sure everything works and that any media (audio, visual, computer) can be seen, heard, understood by all
- Keep all visual materials simple in large text for visibility
- Have supportive materials for each idea
LET YOUR EXPERIENCES GUIDE YOU

Think back to the last presentation that you saw in class. What did you find to be the best and worst parts of the presentation?

Create a short list of presentation DO’s and DON’Ts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DO</strong></th>
<th><strong>DON’T</strong></th>
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PUBLIC SPEAKING TIPS

- **Know the room.** Be familiar with the place in which you will speak.
- **Know the audience.** Greet some of the audience as they arrive. It's easier to speak to a group of friends than to a group of strangers.
- **Know your material.** Practice your speech and revise it if necessary. If you're not familiar with your material or are uncomfortable with it, your nervousness will increase.
- **Relax.** Ease tension by doing exercises.
- **Visualize yourself giving your speech.** Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear, and assured. When you visualize yourself as successful, you will be successful.
- **Realize that people want you to succeed.** They don't want you to fail. Audiences want you to be interesting, stimulating, informative, and entertaining.
- **Do not apologize.** If you mention your nervousness or apologize for any problems you think you have with your speech, you may be calling the audience's attention to something they hadn't noticed. Keep silent.
- **Turn nervousness into positive energy.** Harness your nervous energy and transform it into vitality and enthusiasm.
- **Gain experience.** Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking.
ORGANIZING, WORKING ON, AND LEARNING WITH GROUP PROJECTS

Philosophy of group projects, Group learning, or working in groups, involves shared and/or learned values, resources, and ways of doing things. Effective groups learn to succeed by combining these factors. However, each group, and each individual, will only be as effective as they are willing to embrace and/or respect differences within the group.

The two major objectives of a group project are:

1. What is learned: factual material as well as the process
2. What is produced: written paper, presentation, and/or media project

Conflict can be an extension of creativity; the group should be aware of this eventuality. Resolution of conflict balances the end goals with mutual respect. In other words, a group project is a cooperative, rather than a competitive, learning experience.
**DEMONSTRATION.** In lab courses, you may be expected to show the instructor that you can perform certain basic operations, such as preparing a microscope slide. **The only way to study for this is to practice the operation regularly in class until you are certain you are doing it correctly.**

**ESSAY.** The first thing to do in an essay exam is to read each question carefully, watching for words like explain, compare, describe, analyze, contrast, and be sure that you understand what you’re being asked to do.

**FILL IN THE BLANK.** Sometimes called “completion” exams, such tests require you to provide the correct word or phrase that completes the statement. **One way to study for this type of test is to organize the material into definitive statements as you go.**

**IDENTIFICATION** You usually find such tests in the lab sections of science courses. You’re shown a collection of specimens, which you have to identify and provide information about. **The way to prepare is to memorize several distinguishing characteristics for each item.** Another type of identification test provides the name of a person or place and asks you to supply as many facts about that person or place as you can.
**MATCHING.** The task here is to associate an item on one list with its complement on another list, for instance, matching people’s names with their accomplishments, words with definitions and the like. Check the instructions before you start: “Can any of the answers be used more than once?”

**OPEN BOOK.** Most open book exams are constructed in such a way that you cannot readily find the answer in the textbook. For example, you may be told to analyze the facts or interpret them in some way. Nonetheless, the book can help you recall buzz words and phrases.

**ORAL EXAMS.** These are probably the hardest of all exams because most people are better at padding their writing than their speech. Do not attempt to bluff your way through a question you’re not prepared to answer. Instead, when a question is asked, consider for a moment what you can talk about with some assurance and then proceed with such enthusiasm that the professor is reluctant to redirect you.

**PROBLEM SOLVING.** The best way to study for such exams is to work practice problems until you are confident that you understand how to work the formula in all cases. When you finish each problem on the test, recheck each step of the answer to be sure you haven’t made a mistake. Then label your answer to help the grader find it.

**SHORT ANSWER.** This kind of test requires you to answer each question in several sentences rather than the longer answer required to an essay exam. You study for it much as you do for an essay exam.
How to Answer Multiple Choice Questions

Begin each question by reading the stem all the way through. Then read the options all the way through.

1. Additional hints on decoy eliminating - the true-false technique:
   To use the true-false technique, you make a complete statement from the stem and each of the option, in turn. An option that results in a false statement is eliminated as a distracter. One that results in a true statement is probably the correct answer.

2. Stick to the subject of the course:
   When a multiple-choice question includes options that you don't recognize or seem out of place it is a good bet that the strange options are decoys.

3. Watch out for negatives and extreme words

4. Foolish options are usually incorrect

5. Check for look-alike numbers

6. Check longer or more inclusive options
How to Answer Matching Questions...

The following sequence of steps will help you work through any matching questions systematically and efficiently.

1. Read the directions. Then run your eyes down both columns to get a brief overview of the specific items you will be working with.

2. Read the top item in the left-hand column. Then look carefully down the right-hand column until you find a match for it. Don't stop at the first likely match; instead, continue through to the end of the right-hand column, to make sure there is not a better match.

3. When you are certain that you have found a match, fill in the proper letter or number. If you are not sure of your choice skip the item and come back to it later.

4. This is the secret: Continue down the left column, filling in all the matches that you're sure of. This will drastically and immediately reduce the number of items that are left for the more difficult matches.

5. As you use each item in the right column, circle its letter or number to show that it has been used.
How to Study Matching Questions

If you know your instructor includes a long matching question in almost every exam, here's the best way to prepare for it. As you read and mark your textbook, be alert for facts and ideas that are associated with people's names. On a separate sheet, list the names and facts opposite each other, so that you end up with two distinct vertical columns, as in the following example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Facts or Ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Susan B. Anthony</td>
<td>Women’s movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack London</td>
<td>Call of the Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Washington Carver</td>
<td>Agricultural chemist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To master your list, cover the fact column with a sheet of paper. Look at each item in the name column, and recite and write the corresponding fact or idea. Then, to make sure that you learn the material both ways, block out the name column and use the facts as your cues.
How to Answer True-False Questions...

In its simplest form, a true-false question is a statement that attributes a property or quality to one or more persons or things. These questions are very simple. Most contain qualifiers, negatives, or strings of qualifiers.

Qualifiers may be grouped into sets. The six most used sets are:

1. All - most - some - none (no)
2. Always - usually - sometimes - never
3. Great - much - little - no
4. More - equal - less
5. Good - bad
6. Is - is not

Within each set, the qualifiers may overstate a true-false statement, understate it, or make it just right. Whenever one qualifier from a set is used in the true-false statement, substitute each of the others for it, in turn. In this way, determine which of the qualifiers in the set fits best. If that is the given qualifier, the answer is true; otherwise, the answer is false.
Example: T or F All birds can fly.

Substituting the other qualifiers in the all set gives you these 4 statements:

All birds can fly
Most birds can fly
Some birds can fly
No birds can fly

The statement beginning with the word most fits best, but that is not the given qualifier, therefore the answer is false.

The parts of a true-false statement:

If any part of a true-false statement is false then the whole statement is false. Sometimes two statements are connected by such words as therefore, consequently, or because, implying that the two parts have a logical relationship. In most cases they do not have a logical relationship and are usually false.

Beware of negatives:

True - false statements that contain negative words and prefixes are difficult to sort out and answer.
How to Answer Essay Questions…
Planning before you answer: A good plan before you start writing saves you time, and helps you remember things about the subject matter.

1. Make notes on the back of the exam sheet.
2. Read the examination directions carefully: Notice especially whether you must answer all the questions and whether there are time limits.
3. Read all the questions: Before you write anything, read all the questions.
4. Jot cues alongside each question: While reading each question, quickly note a few words or phrases that immediately come to your mind.
5. Plan your time.
6. Start with the easiest question: Don't sit and stare at the first exam question.
Key words that appear in essay exam questions

1. **Comment** - discuss briefly
2. **Compare** - emphasize similarities, but also present differences
3. **Contrast** - give differences only
4. **Criticize** - give your judgment of good points and limitations, with evidence.
5. **Define** - give meaning but no details
6. **Discuss** - give reasons pro and con, with details
7. **Enumerate** - list the points
8. **Explain** - give reasons for happenings or situations
9. **Give an example** - give a concrete example from your book or experience
10. **Identify** - list and describe
11. **Justify** - prove or give reasons
12. **Trace** - give main points from beginning to end of event
13. **Solve** - come up with a solution based on given facts or your knowledge
Use these ten rules to compose and word your answers.

1. Understand the question with precision
2. Strive for a complete answer
3. Use facts and logic, not vague impressions or feelings
4. Avoid unsupported opinions
5. Be concise
6. Write carefully to avoid errors
7. Be natural and sincere
8. Organize your answer intelligently
9. Keep it simple
10. Proofread!
What is Test Anxiety?
Test anxiety occurs when people get nervous before and during exams. As such, test anxiety is not inherently harmful; when positively directed, this increase in energy actually enhances exam performance. Only when this energy is directed away from positive performance does it turn into a problem.

Forms of Test Anxiety

Physical – trembling, sweating, increased heart rate, nausea and tense muscles. These symptoms occur due to an increase in adrenalin which your body is burning. This adrenalin rush does not have to interfere with your testing ability; it can actually enhance your awareness of the material on the test.

Mental/Psychological – Going “blank,” racing thoughts and a loss of control. These feelings of uneasiness and apprehension can interfere with the ability to do well on an exam.

Emotional Symptoms – wanting to cry, laughing in excess, feelings of anger
Do I Have Test Anxiety?

Ask yourself these questions:

Do I know the material well enough when I take a test?
Do I get so anxious during tests that my concentration suffers?
Do I go blank and find myself unable to recall material I know?
Do I work so fast that I make silly mistakes or misread questions?
Does anxiety often interfere with my performance so much that my grade does not reflect how well I really know the material?

If you answered “No” to number one, you do not have test anxiety. You have anxiety that is realistic, either because you are not studying enough or because you are trying to learn material that is too difficult or too advanced for you.

If you answered “Yes” to number one and “No” to the rest of these questions, you do not have test anxiety.

If you answered “Yes” to number one and “Yes” to any of the others, you have test anxiety.
What You Can Do About Test Anxiety?

KNOW THE MATERIAL

DO NOT OVERSTUDY – SLEEP IS VERY IMPORTANT!

AVOID CAFFEINE

SLOW DOWN

ACCEPT THAT YOU WILL NOT KNOW EVERY ANSWER

DO THE EASIEST QUESTION FIRST

READ DIRECTIONS AND QUESTIONS CAREFULLY

HAVE PATIENCE WITH YOURSELF

AVOID DISTRACTIONS
Student Workshops for Excellence in Learning and Life

Completion of Workshop!

Congratulations! You have completed the fourth workshop - “Test Taking & Presentations"

Print out your certificate and sign and date it. Bring the certificate to your meeting with your advisor so you can discuss the strategies covered in the workshop.