Eleven Point Test-Taking Method

1. When you are handed a test, DO NOT start answering questions immediately. First, write your name on each page of the test. This accomplishes two things: It makes sure that you get credit for your work, and more importantly, it helps relax you by giving you some physical activity.

2. After you have put your name on each page, you are still not ready to start answering the questions. Now, you want to READ THROUGH ALL THE DIRECTIONS AND THE QUESTIONS. This really only takes 1-2 minutes. Why do this? Well, if you do not read the directions, you will not know what to do, and if you do not read through the questions, you will worry about what is on page two while you are trying to answer the questions on page one. Reading quickly through all the questions and directions helps you to relax and see what is coming.

3. Be sure to ASK YOUR INSTRUCTOR IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DIRECTIONS OR SPECIFIC TEST QUESTIONS. Generally, the instructor will answer questions for clarification as long as they don't reveal the answer to the test question.

4. Now, you are ready to start answering questions, but you do not have to answer them in the order in which they appear. You can answer the questions in any order. Some students like to answer the hard ones first, others the easy ones and some like to do them in order. Whatever you do, YOU make the decision and thus take some control over the test.

5. As you are taking the test, BE AWARE OF HOW MUCH TIME HAS ELAPSED. You may have to hurry yourself up or slow yourself down.
The one thing you do not want to do is "bury your head in the test" and never be aware of the time until it is too late; that is, when the instructor tells you the test is over.

- If you get nervous or worried about something during the test, TAKE A FEW DEEP BREATHS. This helps to relieve anxiety. Another tension release is the tensing and relaxing of your muscles. Remember: THE MORE RELAXED YOU ARE, THE BETTER YOU WILL DO ON A TEST.

- As you answer multiple-choice questions, always be sure to eliminate the obviously incorrect answers first. You will save time and it will help to reduce anxiety about choosing the correct answer.

- If after reading the questions and all options the answer isn't immediately apparent, wait a second before you look at the options again. First, look at the questions and try to develop an answer. Then look at the options to see if the answer isn't more apparent.

- CHECK YOUR ANSWERS CAREFULLY. Be sure you're answering the right question on your answer sheet.

- Be cautious when an answer includes such absolute words as every, always, and never. There are few situations in which something is always or never true.

- Generally, it is OK to write comments or thoughts on the test. Doing this can help reduce anxiety and can help you remember specific details or formulas you are afraid of forgetting. Ask the teacher if you can write on the test. If you are using pencil, write lightly and completely erase your notes when you finish the test.