• **When it's possible, prepare for a test.**
  In fact, "overlearn" the material. Research shows that overlearning reduces anxiety and raises test scores. Consistent studying over a period of time is more effective than cramming just before a test. How do you know when overlearning takes place? When you feel you have mastered the subject, study one or two hours more.

• **Show up on time, but not early.**
  If you must get there early, stand alone, away from the crowd. If you pay attention to others' worries, your anxiety level will increase, too.

• **Know in advance if the test has a correction formula.**
  For example, for every four items you answer incorrectly, one right one might be deducted from your total score. If you answer 50 items correctly, but miss 20, after the correction formula, your score would be 45. This is an attempt to correct for guessing.

• **Eliminate alternatives.**
  If the item is a four-choice, multiple-choice format, the odds are one in four you could guess the right one. If you can eliminate any two of the four, your odds are 50-50. If you cannot eliminate any of the alternatives, you have no idea which one is correct, and if there is no correction for guessing, then pick the longest answer and proceed to the next question. Test authors also tend to make the correct answer the longest one.

• **Test authors also tend to make one of two parallel statements the correct answer.**
For instance, if two of the four choices have major differences in wording, and if the other two are almost identical in structure and wording, chances are one of the parallel statements is right. Probably the longer statement will get you points.

- **Read directions carefully.**
  Many points are lost because people don't understand what they are supposed to do. If you have not finished reading the directions or don't understand them, ask the proctors for assistance.

- **If the test is multiple-choice, requiring you to read a “stem” and then select one correct response from four alternatives, attempt to answer the question before you read the possible choices.**
  After you formulate your answer, match your ideas to the possibilities and pick the one most similar. By doing this, you are using not only recognition but recall.

- **Pace yourself so you complete as many items as possible.**
  Sometimes the items at the end of a test are weighted more because fewer people answer them.

- **If the test requires you to read long passages and then answer questions about the reading, read the questions first.**
  By doing this, you will know what you are looking for as you read, and you'll be in a much better position to answer. If the test is timed, this technique also increases your speed and efficiency.

- **Skip items you are unsure of, items about material you've seen before but can't remember the answer immediately.**
Chances are your brain will be searching for and retrieving the information while you are working on other items. When the answer comes to you, go back and mark it.

- **Do not change your answers on multiple-choice tests unless you are very certain about your initial answer.**
  Research has shown that only when you have strong doubts is your second answer more likely to be correct.

- **Read the questions carefully.**
  On essay tests, note such key words as compare, contrast, discuss, evaluate, analyze, define and describe. If you are unsure about essay questions, your response will come across as wordiness. Do what the question asks, be direct, make your point and support it. On multiple-choice test, look out for such negative disclaimers as, “Which of the following could not be. ...?”

- **There is some evidence that if you are slightly cool you will do better on a test. Informal observations certainly support this point.**
  For instance, if you are too warm, you may become sleepy and lose your focus.

- **Re-check your work.**
  Make clerical corrections only.

- **Finally, ask to see your corrected test and scores.**
  By reviewing a test, you become test-wise.

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