

# STUDY LESS AND GET BETTER GRADES!

## PART TWO

### TAKING A TEST!

- 1) Your most important tools for the test, besides a writing utensil and being in the right place, are **CONCENTRATION** and **CONFIDENCE**. If your “class-action” and study method were good, then you have every reason to feel confident... you are prepared! You need a good night sleep. Some eager beavers love studying all night. They may survive the test, but they will be chopped liver for the next three days. On the other hand, you may not give two hoots that you even have a test or quiz, so you did not study at all. Well, you greatly hinder your possibility of a good grade, but follow the steps outlined anyway.
- 2) **Do not study the day of the test** unless something really “bugs” you. Sometimes, out of the blue, you’ll have a question haunting you. Go ahead and find the answer. However, on the day of the test, it is more important to have a clear, rested mind than to try and cram. Cramming like this often produces confusion. Sing, pray, play... whatever it takes to block out anxiety over the test and the subject. You are prepared so don’t worry! Even if you are not *prepared (you are one of the owls mentioned in step “1”)*, cramming the day of the test or quiz is not a good idea.
- 3) **Keep your attitude positive** and lighthearted. Talk to yourself to keep calm. Joke around without being a nuisance to others, but **prevent panic**. Excess fooling around is a sure sign that you are too nervous. Convince yourself to be confident. Students often do not realize that they may do poorly at the beginning of a course, but if they are consistent in their action in the course, they will automatically improve their grade over time. Unless, of course, their consistent behavior is to avoid all forms of learning approaches. Many students panic because they did not study or they have little confidence. Therefore, they do not follow any approach to taking a test except making excuses, acting like they don’t care, mouthing off to the teacher or even accepting a zero on an exam! Some students even plead insanity or stupidity. This type of student will not improve their learning until they improve their approach.
- 4) Once you enter the test area, **calm yourself down**. Try to be quiet... this is **preparing your mind to concentrate** as hard as you can. Whether you studied or not is no longer the major concern at this point. Your focus should be on doing the best that you can on this test.

### 5) THE TEST

The absolute rule, the foremost and utmost statute, the incredibly essential aspect, what is positively a must... do you get the idea this may be important? ... DO NOT BEGIN THE EXAM THE MOMENT YOU RECEIVE IT!

- a) Take thirty seconds to one minute to calm down and get “psyched” for the test or quiz.
- b) Skim the test quickly to get an idea of questions you feel confident in answering first, BUT do not begin answering them, yet.
- c) After skimming, relax for a final minute. The key is not to be spazing out with panic, but to be convincing yourself that you will do the best you can in this situation.
- d) Make a conscious decision to begin the test. For example, look at the clock and note when you start the exam. Then, follow the format below:

### You will go through the exam THREE separate times

1. It is a good idea to skip the first couple of questions on the test to avoid panic. Then, answer only the questions you are POSITIVE are right. Do not answer ANY questions you are not sure of. You may only answer 20-30% of the questions (3 out of 10; 10 out of 30; 20 out of 60, etc.), but you are confident that your answers are correct. Do not worry about the questions that you were not sure of at this point. This will help you to relax and will bring to mind what you have learned from classwork, previous study or common sense.
2. Go through the exam the second time exactly as the first time. Answer only the questions you know. DO NOT GUESS at answers, yet. If you are relaxed and this is not “one of those days” (*in which you could even fail your urine test*), you will invariably remember a lot more information the second time through and you will have gained even more confidence. Questions you have already answered will bring to mind other answers or relevant concepts. NOTE: *a student who is panicking, one who gives up or a student who pretends not to care, will not remember much before, during or after the test.*
3. The third time through (and final time I might add) is what I call the “**logical guess**” stage. You must answer all the remaining questions whether you feel you know the answer or not. Since you must answer the question, you may as well feel confident it is right (even if it isn’t).

A- Convince yourself that the answer you chose is the best answer using whatever “pops” into your head **from class discussions, previous study or common sense**. If something seems remotely related...use it! So many times, students would get answers correct, but they convince themselves that they could not know the answer because they either did not study or they have little confidence or both.

- B- For Multiple Choice questions, mentally discuss (with yourself) information about a question. Make up answers that make sense. Do this BEFORE you look at the actual answers. Then, **eliminate the obvious wrong choices** before you choose the answer. Usually a multiple-choice answer has one or two answers that are obviously wrong. This increases your chances of getting the correct answer. For “Fill Ins” or “essay” questions, use the approach in “A.”
- C- **Relate to the words in a question.** So many students see a “big” word or words they do not understand and then quit on that question. By the way, *quitting is the same as guessing*. Sometimes you recognize the “root” of another word and can, therefore, figure out the meaning of the word. For example, the term “hydroelectric” may seem foreign until you think about the roots: “hydro” means water and “electric” refers to electricity. Therefore, hydroelectric involves a dam like Hoover dam or Niagara Falls.
- D- As a last resort, **make up your own reason** for why you chose the answer you did. It is imperative to answer every question and to know why you answered it the way you did. This helps you remember for future exams and review.
- 6) **Never second-guess an answer** that you have thought out. In other words, do not change answers. The only exception is when you know that you misread the question or answer choices. For example, you thought the question stated “*Sixty six sheep were in the field and one died, how many are left?*” You answered “65.” But the question really stated, “*Sixty sick sheep were in the field and one died, how many are left?*” so the answer is fifty-nine (59). Remember, if you followed this format, you would not have guessed until the end...so all of your answers are well thought out.
- 7) Remember to **take short mental breaks** about every fifteen minutes. You must give your mind a break or it will short circuit...most call that “*blanking out*.” This is when you cannot remember anything except maybe your mother’s maiden name.
- 8) **Always correct exams when returned to you.** This ensures that you will not repeat a former mistake, and it expands your learning capacity. (*I’ll never forget the time I studied 180 pages in a textbook and sixty pages of class notes for one Biology exam. One of the questions asked who coined the term Genetics in 1905. I could have puked! But to this day I remember James Bateson, 1905, coined the term “Genetics.” Too bad I didn’t know it then.*).