



Jackie Reynolds

## 15 TEST-TAKING SUGGESTIONS

1. **Avoid rushing. Get to the test early.**
2. **Pick a good spot to sit and recite notes calmly. The best spot is usually your normal seat, which is hopefully close to the front, and away from distractions.**
3. **Get rid of undue anxiety by relaxation techniques, positive self-talk, and focusing only on the task at hand.**
4. **Wait for oral instructions. Do NOT begin the test as soon as you receive it. You may miss vital information or clues if you do not listen to instructions.**
5. **Jot down memory clues before you begin. If there are dates, names or other items you are afraid you may forget, jot these down on the back of the test. This may relieve some stress immediately.**
6. **Skim the entire exam, reading directions carefully. As you quickly look over the test, look for:**
  - a. **Point Allotment** - Spending the most time on items worth the most points.
  - b. **Type of Questions** - Which will take more time for you? What order would be best to answer the questions?
  - c. **Clues** - Test questions often may have clues farther on in the test or you may even find the answer.
7. **Ask specific questions if needed after the instructor has had time to explain AND you have had time to skim the test.**
8. **Do the easy questions first. This will help your confidence level and allow you to have the rest of the time to concentrate on the harder questions.**
9. **Skip the harder ones and mark them so you will remember to come back to them after you have completed the easier ones and warmed up.**
10. **Do all tests four times. You need to go through the following four steps to do your best:**
  - a. **Skim the test.**
  - b. **Do the easier questions while you mark and skip the harder ones.**
  - c. **Return to do the harder ones.**
  - d. **Look over the entire test to check that you have answered all questions.**
11. **Change your answer if needed. You need to analyze your pattern. If the answer was clearly just a guess, perhaps your first guess IS your best answer. But, if after second thought you feel the need to change the answer, do so.**
12. **Budget your time. In addition to considering the point value of each question, make sure you allow enough time to complete the whole test with time to double-check.**
13. **Never leave blanks! A guess is better than a miss.**
14. **Write answers clearly.**
15. **Make the test serve you after it's over. Don't purposefully try and put the test out of your mind. Talk about strategies with other students. Look up the questions you weren't certain about. You will remember the answer much longer than any other questions if you do.**

**Source:** Ahuna, Kelly H. and Tinnesz, Christine G. (2003). *Methods of Inquiry: Applied Critical Thinking*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.