



Study Skill Workshop #8: Test-Taking Skills

True-False Questions

*Place a "T"- (True) or "F"- (False) in the blank to the left of each of the following statements.

Questions 1-5 relate to the board and card games.

- _____ 1. Everyone loves to play **Sorry**.
- _____ 2. No one plays **Chinese Checkers** anymore.
- _____ 3. **Old Maid** is frequently played by children.
- _____ 4. **Monopoly** is not an unsuitable game for children aged six and under.
- _____ 5. **Bridge** is mostly played by adults.

Questions 6-11 relate to general study skills.

- _____ 6. You should always answer every question on every test.
- _____ 7. Some tests are too lengthy to complete in the allotted time.
- _____ 8. All exams are comprehensive.
- _____ 9. A test may not be without poorly worded questions.
- _____ 10. Never study with a partner.
- _____ 11. Following directions is not unimportant.

#1-5 Adapted from *College Study Skills; Becoming a Strategic Learner* by Dianna L. Van Blerkom (Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1997).

#6-11 taken from *College Learning and Study Skills*, 2nd Edition by Debbie Guice Longman and Rhonda Holt Atkinson (West Publishing Company, 1991).



Succeeding on Essay Exams

*For more help with your writing or any other English skill, please visit the Writing & Reading Success Center (at LAC in the “E” Building Lower Level or at PCC Multidisciplinary Center LL-206).

The most crucial task you have when preparing for and then taking an essay exam is to ask your teacher EXACTLY what he or she wants you to include in your answer, and how you are suppose to write it. This is extremely important because essay tests are subjective, and each teacher is unique in terms of what he or she wants to see and *does not* want to see on your paper.

In addition to what you find out from your teacher, read the following information, adapt it to your situation, and then put it all into action for greater success.

The following material is adapted from *The Confident Student* by Carol C. Kanar (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company 1991: 346-347).

General Guidelines

1. Read the question carefully. Watch for *instruction words*, and make sure you understand what the question asks you to do. Ask the instructor for an explanation if necessary.
2. Think about what you will write. Plan your answer, and allow yourself enough time to write thoughtfully.
3. Jot down a scratch outline of the major points you will cover so that you don't forget them.
4. Incorporate the question into your first sentence, and briefly state your answer to the question.
5. In the rest of your essay, develop the points that explain your answer, and provide enough details to show that you know the material well.
6. Save time at the end of the exam to proof-read your essay and correct errors.



Some Instruction Words Used in Essay Questions

Instruction Words

Compare

Contrast

Criticize or evaluate

Define

Discuss or explain

Illustrate

Interpret

Summarize

Meanings

Explain similarities and differences, highlighting the similarities.

Explain differences only.

Make a judgment about strengths and weaknesses, worth or merit, positive or negative aspects.

Give a precise and accurate meaning.

Give reasons, facts, details that show you understand.

Explain by using examples

Explain in your own words and discuss significance.

Condense main ideas; state briefly.

The following material is adapted from *Right From the Start – Managing Your Way to College Success* by Robert Holkeboer (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company 1993, p. 7:15).

What Most Teachers are Looking for in an Essay Answer:

1. Did the student understand the question and answer it completely?
2. Is the answer well organized, coherent, and logical?
3. Are general statements and main ideas supported by facts and examples?
4. Is the writing clear and understandable?
5. Is the writing mechanically, grammatically, and stylistically correct?
6. Is the writing at least fairly neat (legible)?