



TIPS TO ANSWER DIFFERENT TYPES OF EXAM QUESTIONS

Before walking in to your exam, please review the BRAVO test-taking strategy, as well as tips for writing various exam/ test question formats. If you would like additional assistance in preparing for your exams, please book an appointment with one of our Learning Specialists.

The BRAVO Strategy

BREATHE	<input type="checkbox"/> Arrive early and get a good seat; <input type="checkbox"/> Relax, take deep breaths to lower your heart rate.
REVIEW	<input type="checkbox"/> Before you start writing: read over all the instructions, first, to get an overall sense of the test/ exam; <input type="checkbox"/> Identify questions that are familiar, unfamiliar, easy, difficult, etc.; <input type="checkbox"/> Devise a game-plan for writing your answers.
ANSWER	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the question(s) carefully; <input type="checkbox"/> Follow all instructions; <input type="checkbox"/> First, answer the questions you had identified as “easy”; <input type="checkbox"/> Answer each question fully and in detail. If in doubt, add more.
VERIFY	<input type="checkbox"/> Take a few minutes after each answer to make sure you’re on the right track; <input type="checkbox"/> Verify that you followed all of the instructions. Don’t rush!
OVERSEE	<input type="checkbox"/> When you feel you’ve finished writing your test/ exam, put your pen down and take some time to review your work.

When answering SHORT ANSWER QUESTION(S)

- Analyze the question, carefully.** These questions will state exactly what is expected of you. Make sure to answer the question fully, or you may lose marks. Some examples of short answer prompts include: “define,” “list,” “give an example of,” “describe.”
- Specific questions require specific answers.** Avoid doing an information dump. Your Professor is looking for a specific answer.
- The number of marks given for a question usually indicates the number of points or items you should include in your answers.** For example, if the question asks you to, “give two examples of...,” then the marks for that question will likely be distributed between both examples.

When answering ESSAY QUESTION(S)

When answering essay questions, there are five steps that you can follow:

1. **Analyze the question.**
2. **Brainstorm ideas.** Prepare an outline or diagram of your ideas, before starting to write.
3. **Organize the information.** Write a thesis statement.
4. **Write your answer.** Write two or three paragraphs expanding on your thesis. Add a conclusion, and make sure to use connectors/ transitions.
5. **Check your work** and make any necessary edits.

TIPS FOR WRITING YOUR EXAM



When answering MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION(S)

- Consider the total number of questions, and the time limit.** For example, if you have one hour to complete 60 questions, worth one mark each, then you will have a maximum of one minute to answer each question.
- Analyze the question, carefully.** Read the question carefully before beginning to write so as not to overlook key information.
- Pay careful attention to the “negatives” or parts of words.** For example, if the sentence reads: “it is unwise not to study for an exam,” it actually means: “**it is wise** to study for an exam.”
- Go through the whole test/ exam, once.** You should answer the questions of which you’re sure, first. Make note of the questions that you find difficult, and return to them at the end. Use a symbol for easy recognition of the question(s) you found to be difficult, such as a question mark (?) or asterisk (*).
- Return to the hard questions, or the unanswered questions.** Make an educated guess, if you need to. Be careful of those questions where you could lose marks for an incorrect answer. Ask your Professor how your test/ exam will be marked.
- Try to think about the answers before you read the options.** It’s good practice for you to cover up the options, and then try to answer the question. This will help to eliminate those options that are incorrect.
- Read all of the options before you pick one.** This will help you avoid picking the incorrect answer.
- When deciding between two similar choices/ answers, you should:**
 - Determine the differences between the answers;
 - Decide how the question reflects the differences;
 - Try to imagine each alternative as the answer;
 - As a last resort, make an educated guess.