

Tips for Writing Tests & Exams

To do well in exams, it's important to know the material and be prepared. Establishing best practices for writing exams can help improve your exam performance and reduce your anxiety while writing. The key points to think of when starting an exam are to **prepare, plan, and review!**



Prepare

- Start studying at least one week prior to the exam.
- Sleep well and eat a healthy breakfast.
- Get to the exam 10-15 min early with exam materials (pens, pencils, calculator, etc.).
- Read and listen carefully before starting.

**Do not cram
before an exam!**



Plan

- Preview the exam and ask yourself:
 - What is worth the most? What looks easiest? What looks familiar?
- **Start smart:** Write down key info (formulas, dates, etc.) right away.
- **Review:** read instructions and scan whole exam to understand the format.
- **Plan:** manage your time based on question types and their point values.

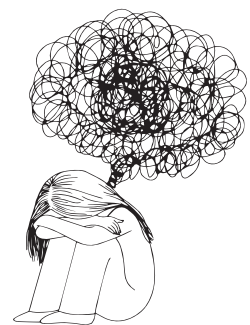


Review

- If you don't know an answer, mark it * and move on. *Come back to it later.*
- If still unsure, trust your first instinct.
- Review for careless mistakes.
- Use all the time. Finishing early doesn't earn extra points.

Overcoming Test Anxiety

- Take a deep breath.
- Notice your physical sensations.
- Visualize success; give yourself a pep talk.
- Work through answers before writing them.
- If your experience of anxiety is significantly affecting your academic performance, reach out for support. You can make an appointment with:
 - ➔ **Counselling Services** (wellness@unbc.ca or visit 5-168)
 - ➔ **Medical Clinic** (250-960-6370 or visit 5-161)
 - ➔ **Access Resource Centre (ARC)** for accessing accommodations (arc@unbc.ca or 5-157)



Exam Question Types

Most exams use multiple choice, true or false, open book, or essay. In order to minimize confusion and anxiety, try a more systematic approach to help make the exam process easier.

Multiple Choice

- Cover the answers.
- Read carefully.
- Try to answer before looking at the choices.
- Uncover the answers one at a time and use a systematic process of elimination.
- If unsure, go with your first instinct.

True or False

- Read the entire question carefully - one word may determine if the statement is true or false.
- Look for qualifiers - *all, most, sometimes, rarely*.
- Watch for negatives - *not* and *cannot*.

Open Book

- Organize notes, readings and other material.
- Write down any formulas needed on a separate sheet of paper.
- Bookmark important tables and indexes.
- Highlight areas that are needed for the exam.

Essay

- Start with the easiest question.
- Outline key ideas.
- Use essay format: intro, thesis statement, 3 paragraph body, conclusion.
- Be clear, focused, and lead with strong points.
- Support with examples.
- Write neatly, double-spaced.
- Use bullet points if time is running out.

