

Exam Day Strategies

Strategic techniques for timed exams.



Strategy	Actions	Why
The Power Start	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write your name down on the exam• Read directions thoroughly• Note length of given time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get credit for your work• Understand how to answer the questions to receive the full points• Pace yourself to answer all questions in given time
The Brain Dump	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the margins of the exam to write down formulas, timelines, and other essential reference material	Margin notes are easily accessible and reduces the overall anxiety that you'll forget something important during timed exams
The Survey	<p>Take 1-2 minutes to familiarize yourself with the exam's organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What's the test format – multiple choice, short answer, essays?• Which questions offer the most points and how will that impact the way you budget your time?• Which section do you feel most confident about and does that influence where you'll begin?• Are answers/clues to some questions embedded in other, later questions?	<p>Understanding the test format and point system allows for strategic choices like guessing on a 1-point question to save time to work through a 10-point question.</p> <p>If points are equal, starting with the section you're most sure about allows you to quickly capture points and boost your confidence.</p> <p>Conversely, getting started on the difficult sections first has some value too. See 'Tough Ones' below.</p>
The Close Read	<p>Read slowly and carefully; circle key terms and make note of words that can change the focus of your answer, such as EXCEPT or NOT.</p> <p>Observe the number of question parts.</p>	<p>Circling key terms and tricky words helps keep your answer on topic.</p> <p>Making note of the number of smaller questions embedded within the larger question ensures that you receive maximum points for your response.</p>
The Tough Ones	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin with a toughest question first.• Work until you get stuck.• Then move on to an easy question, followed by revisiting the toughest question.• Repeat the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When you shift your attention to a less labor-intensive question, you activate <u>diffused mode</u>. Your brain will continue to subconsciously search for the answer to the tough question.• Become adept at this strategy by practicing during HW sessions• This strategy is helpful for exams where partial credit is awarded for attempted questions.