

# Exam Day Strategies

Strategic techniques for timed exams.



Strategy	Actions	Why
The Power Start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write your name down on the exam</li> <li>Read directions thoroughly</li> <li>Note length of given time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get credit for your work</li> <li>Understand how to answer the questions to receive the full points</li> <li>Pace yourself to answer all questions in given time</li> </ul>
The Brain Dump	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the margins of the exam to write down formulas, timelines, and other essential reference material</li> </ul>	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"> <li>What's the test format – multiple choice, short answer, essays?</li> <li>Which questions offer the most points and how will that impact the way you budget your time?</li> <li>Which section do you feel most confident about and does that influence where you'll begin?</li> <li>Are answers/clues to some questions embedded in other, later questions?</li> </ul>	<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"> <li>Begin with a toughest question first.</li> <li>Work until you get stuck.</li> <li>Then move on to an easy question, followed by revisiting the toughest question.</li> <li>Repeat the process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When you shift your attention to a less labor-intensive question, you activate <a href="#">diffused mode</a>. Your brain will continue to subconsciously search for the answer to the tough question.</li> <li>Become adept at this strategy by practicing during HW sessions</li> <li>This strategy is helpful for exams where partial credit is awarded for attempted questions.</li> </ul>