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Your body has needs

Your brain is part of your body.

If one part isn't treated right, the others work write either. So when you're studying…

- **Take regular breaks**
  - Stand up, drink water, look outside
  - Breaks should not be used to catch up on social media
- **Budget time for exercise**
- **Budget time for sleep**
- **Eat healthy food**
- **Watch your intake of coffee, energy drinks, and caffeine**

It’s important to understand your context

You’re always working within contexts, and those contexts have their own requirements and expectations. You cannot excel unless you understand these requirements and expectations.

You need understand the format as much as possible:

- **What exactly will be required of you?**
- **What kind of writing do you need to be prepared to do?**
- **Write down your expectations**
- **Talk with people about your expectations**

5 Questions You Should Ask Before a Test

Before a test, review what you know about the test format. Ask yourself these questions:

1. **What kinds of questions will there be?**
2. **What will they be based on?**
3. **How much writing will you need to do?**
4. **Is there anything else you've learned from your instructor or your TA about the test?**
5. **What are some major themes or ideas that your instructor and/or TA mentioned more than once?**

3 Tips to Understand Your Test Context

1. **Understand the language**
   - Ensure that you know the technical vocabulary and the words with particular technical meanings
2. **Test yourself to see if you really know the words**
   - Define it
   - Use it correctly in a sentence
3. **Get into shape by doing practice exercises based on the test**
   - Motivate your studying! Ask:
     - What kind of question could I be asked with this material? How would I answer it?
     - How could I bring this knowledge into test questions?

3 Tips for Acquiring Vocabulary

1. **Repetition**
2. **Decontextualization**
3. **Active use vs. passive intake**

Exercise

Can you come up with a quick list of 5 technical words for your course or ones that your instructor has used?

Define them and use them in a sentence.

10 Things You Should Do On a Test

1. **Be on time**
2. **Read the question carefully**
   - Lots of students don't answer the actual question
   - Read the question before you start planning.
   - Read it again after you've planned.
   - Read it again after you've written your answer
3. **Annotate the question**
   - Put it in your own words and identify the goal
   - This question is asking me to do X by using Y, Z, and W
4. **Plan your response before you begin writing**
   - Check the plan with the question to ensure it covers all the details

10 Things You Should Do On a Test con't

5. **Use short, simple sentences**
6. **Use a separate sentence for each point**
7. **Use transitional expressions to guide the reader**
   - Avoid vague pronouns (this, it)
   - Avoid repeating key words that make it seem like you are saying less
8. **Manage your time so you can revise/edit**
9. **Do the easy stuff first**
   - Keep an eye on the clock
10. **Use all the allotted time**
    - Don't leave early

6 Types of Exam Questions

Most exam questions that require writing fall into one of these categories:

1. **Definition**
2. **Analysis**
3. **Cause and Effect**
4. **Comparison and Contrast**
5. **Process**
6. **Supported Opinion**

Understand the categories to understand the kind of responses your instructor is looking for

Adapted from:
http://elc.uark.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Answering-the-Essay-Short-Answer-Exam-Question.pdf

1. Definition

- Give details which specifically describe the term
- Provide examples and/or historical incidents which illustrate this term
- Give comparisons to familiar terms
- Classify or break it down into parts
- Provide an illustration of origins or causes

2. Analysis

- Identify the component parts
- Identify the relationship between the parts
- Summarize how the component parts make up the whole

3. Cause and Effect

- Usually you'll be given a "cause" and you trace its probable "effects
- Or you'll be given an "effect" and you discuss/analyze the probable "cause(s)"

- Identify the cause or effect that you're asked to analyze
- Outline the cause or effect you are being asked to illustrate
- Keep a tight focus: effects should be clearly and directly related to causes and vice versa

4. Comparison and Contrast

- Often these will involve your subjects and some basis/context for the comparison/contrast
- Discuss all the items mentioned and analyze them strictly on the basis of the comparison

5. Process

- These questions are designed to test the depth of your knowledge and your ability to analyze how the various components of a system contribute to create the whole

- These questions almost always chronological or linear, they involve multiple sequential steps

- Example: Describe how DNA is used for forensic use

5. Process con’t

- Jot down the steps of the process or draw a schematic before you start writing
  - This’ll help you remember all the critical steps
- Use transitional phrases to show links between the steps of the process you’re analyzing
- Make the sequence of events clear to the reader

6. Supported Opinion

- Know the material, analyze it, form an opinion on the materials, AND support your opinion with facts and figures

A typical question:

Defend or refute the use of acupuncture to relieve pain

How to Answer a Support Opinion Question

1. **Take a stand**
   - Start by writing a clearly worded statement of your opinion or interpretation
2. **Present proof that your stand is reasonable**
   - Defend your statement with data, examples, facts, and research

Sample Support Opinion Question 1

Human eyesight is variable and heritable.

Under what environmental conditions might good eyesight be selected in humans?

Why does eyesight need to be variable and heritable in order to evolve? (Answer in maximum 3 sentences)

Sample Response 1

- “In environments where humans hunted for food, or had to spot predators from a distance, good eyesight would be selected for because it would enhance survival. This could be true both on a large scale (i.e., spotting predators a long way away) and on a small scale (i.e., being able to make distinctions between different types of small
- plants). So conditions in which there were dangerous predators, or a variety of food sources, would encourage the development of good eyesight.”

Sample Response 2

“In environments where humans hunted for food, or had to spot predators from a distance, good eyesight would be selected for because it would enhance survival: however, this is no longer as important in our modern world because we have corrective eyewear such as glasses, and also fewer predators. Natural selection acts on variation, so if traits are not variable, and the whole population has the same trait, then evolution cannot occur. Traits must be heritable in order to evolve; if the trait is not heritable, it cannot increase or decrease in frequency or be passed on to the next generation.”

Sample Response 3

“In environments where humans hunted for food, or has to spot predators from a distance, good eyesight is selected for, and this is naturally because it would enhance survival, which after all is the goal of a species because if we don’t survive long enough to reproduce, the species doesn’t continue. Natural selection is acting on variation all the time, so if traits are not variable, and the whole population has the same trait, then evolution didn’t occur. So, I guess, traits must be heritable in order to evolve; if the trait is not heritable, it can’t increase or decrease in frequency or be passed on to the next generation.”

Sample Response 4

- “In environments where humans hunted for food, or had to spot predators from a distance (and corrective lenses were not available), good eyesight would be selected for because it would enhance survival. Natural selection acts on variation, so if traits are not variable, and the whole population has the same trait, then evolution cannot occur. Traits must be heritable in order to evolve; if the trait is not heritable, it cannot increase or decrease in frequency or be passed on to the next generation.”

Sample Supported Opinion Question 2

How might asexual reproduction offer an advantage in some environments? (Maximum 2 sentences)

Sample Response 5

“Asexual reproduction is fast, it requires less energy, plus of course it does not require 2 parents to have sex or even any number of parents to have sex, so in non-changing environments asexual reproduction is advantageous for the organism and for its species. If the environment changes, asexually reproducing organisms have less genetic variation than sexually reproducing organisms, and so this means they are not going to be able to adapt quickly enough to the new conditions.”

Sample Response 6

“Asexual reproduction is faster, requires less energy and does not require 2 parents, so in non-changing environments asexual reproduction is advantageous. If the environment changes, asexually reproducing organisms may not be able to adapt quickly enough to the new conditions, because they have less genetic variation than sexually reproducing organisms.”