

TAKING TESTS III

In this lesson you will learn about tests that are different from multiple choice, true-false and matching. These tests require you to recognize and select an answer. Short answer and essay tests require you to **recall** and **construct** an answer.

Q: Do recall tests require different preparation?

Yes, when you have a recall test you should prepare differently. You should study systematically and master the material as recommended throughout Study Smart. But, preparation for the test should change.

Let's first look at the purposes and demands of essay and short answer tests. One important characteristic is that you must remember and express your learning. Your answer must be well organized and clear to receive the best grade. In other words, your grade is influenced by how you write as well as what you have learned. Teachers usually have their own criteria to grade recall tests so it is important to find out how your tests will be graded.

To prepare for recall tests you should:

1. *Make sure you know what your teacher expects.* The best way to find out is to ask your teachers. You want to know if spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors count against you.

You also want to know if you have to provide evidence for your answers and what kinds. You can write a sample answer and ask your teacher to look at it for strengths and weaknesses.

2. *Practice writing answers.* You can make up sample questions and write answers. Because essay questions are quite broad, it is likely you will make up questions like your teacher's.

You can also ask students who were in your teacher's classes before what questions were asked. The important thing is to write actual answers. Be sure to review your answers to see how they can be improved.

3. *Organize well the ideas and main points the test will include.* It is very important to understand main points and how they relate to each other. You can do this using skills presented in Lessons 12 and 13 such as outlines, idea skeletons, and summaries.

Q: What should I do during the test?

Below are actions that improve success on recall tests.

1. Read the directions carefully and follow them. Ask if you are unsure of what your teacher wants.
2. Read each essay question before answering any. Decide how much time you can spend on each and stay in your time limits. Make a note sheet for each question - use this to jot down ideas as they come to you and as you think about and plan your answer.
3. Organize your answer. Before writing, think about what you will say and make a brief outline. Follow the organization as you write.
4. Answer the question clearly and directly and use the words and phrases your teacher and textbook use.
5. Review your answers to make sure you have said what you intended and have written clearly.
6. Write neatly and legibly. Use erasable pens or white-out fluid to correct errors. Neat papers get higher grades.
7. Always write an answer to every question that shows you know something. Never leave a question unanswered.
8. For short answer tests, write short clear responses that answer the question. Do not write more than is needed to answer the question. Make your answers easy for teachers to read.

Q: What should I do after the test?

Check your test to make sure your grade was correctly recorded. Read your answers carefully and examine your errors and teacher's comments. If you don't understand why you lost points or made an error, ask your teacher to explain. Then, see if you can write a better answer.

You can even ask your teacher to read your new response. Most teachers expect you to do things in a specific way that may be different from other teachers. It is important to do this checking early to find out these special requirements.

You should think about tests as opportunities to show what you know. If you are systematic when you study and prepare well for tests you can do very well.

Q: How can I get started?

For tests that you have essay questions, write five practice questions. Think

about what you believe your teachers will ask. You can also ask some friends to do the same thing. Use these to practice while preparing for the test. You may be surprised at how similar your questions are to your teachers' questions. You can use Form 20.1 to write your questions.



STUDY SMART

**Form 20.1
Essay Tests***

Course

Text Chapters

Questions

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

*Be sure to write practice answers to these questions.