

Let's face it, life would be very different without grades in college, or time clocks on the job, or performance reviews throughout your career, wouldn't it? You wouldn't have to show up at work if you didn't feel like it, and you'd get a paycheck anyway. You wouldn't have to do a good job because no one would care. And you wouldn't have to write papers, or give presentations, or take tests in college. Not only would you benefit by having more free time, but your instructors wouldn't have to gorge their way through stack of papers assigning grades, either. What a wonderful world that would be— or would it? Realistically, it would probably bring total chaos.



Location:

Lile Hall, Suite 122

Phone:

870-245-5381

Email:

academicsuccesscenter@obu.edu

Website:

www.obu.edu/success

Testing 1, 2, 3 ... Show What You Know



Advice for Exams

The anxiety you feel before taking a test isn't much different from the anxiety you might feel in stressful situations in your career. Exams ask you to demonstrate your knowledge on the spot at a particular juncture in your learning. They help you compare your progress to that of other students and to your professor's set of expectations about what all students should know. On the job, every day will be a test of your skills and abilities, and you'll get your "grade" when your supervisor gives you an accounting of your performance over the last six months or year. Tests are inevitable; so rather than bemoan them, perhaps we should change the way we think about them.

Steps for Test-Taking

The first step of test-taking, of course, is to make sure you're prepared. All of the information is worthless if you haven't gone to class or read the textbook or taken good notes during lectures. Miracles, by their very definition, are in very short supply. Nothing can substitute for being conscientious about your work. Think about preparing for an exam as you would for an athletic event. If you wanted to run a Marathon, you'd have to work for months to develop the stamina you would need to finish successfully.

The same principle holds true for exams in college. In order to have the stamina required to avoid the "injury" of not doing well, tests require this same kind of step-by-step, long-term preparation. Tests in your courses will usually ask you to do one or more of the following:

- *Remember* or recognize specific facts
- *Compare, contrast, synthesize, or interpret* information
- *Apply* theories and principles to recognizable or new problems
- *Predict* the outcomes to a set of variables

- *Evaluate* the usefulness of ideas, theories, or methods for a particular situation.

Look at all those italicized verbs, and you begin to see the span of what will be required of you in all your courses. Think about taking tests as a three-stage project with a beginning, middle, and end. What do you do before the test to get ready? What do you do during the test to do your best? What do you do after the test to ensure productive learning experience you can use for future exams? Taking a test can actually be a learning experience, and you can improve your performance incrementally.



SOURCES :

From Staley, **FOCUS on College Success, 3E.** © 2012 Cengage Learning.