

## Learning Skills, Room 120

### Exam Preparation – More Tips

#### Key Words for Essay Questions

<i>Analyze</i>	Discuss, examine or interpret. Involves judgment
<i>Compare</i>	Show similarities and differences
<i>Contrast</i>	Show differences
<i>Criticize</i>	Make judgments, evaluate comparative worth
<i>Define</i>	Give the meaning in a short answer
<i>Describe</i>	Give a detailed account; tell all you can. List characteristics, qualities, parts
<i>Discuss</i>	Consider and debate the pros and cons. Include evidence to support your evaluation
<i>Evaluate</i>	Give your opinion or an expert's. Include evidence to support your evaluation.
<i>Illustrate</i>	Explain clearly by using concrete comparisons, examples
<i>Justify</i>	Give reasons to support a position
<i>Outline</i>	Give the main ideas, characteristics or events
<i>Prove</i>	Support your facts
<i>State</i>	Explain precisely
<i>Summarize</i>	Give a brief, condensed account. Include conclusions.

#### TEST TAKING TIPS

##### Short Answer Tests

- Usually test factual information, so be prepared to recall dates, definitions, formulas, names, etc.
- Budget your time and avoid spending too much time on any one question. These questions tend to be worth only a few points each.
- Never leave a blank empty. Write something, even if it is only the pet vocabulary of the instructor. Sometimes you will get partial credit which is better than nothing.
- Point form is usually acceptable, even expected on this type of test.

##### Essay Tests

- Think before you write. Create a brief outline of your essay, including numbering to indicate the order in which you'd like to discuss points.
- Plan and budget your time carefully.
- Get to the point. Be concise. Don't worry about being perfect in your choice of words and phrases—just do your best.
- Remember an essay is still an essay, even in test situations. Remember to include an introductory

paragraph, which states your thesis and provides an overview of your essay, body paragraphs, which present evidence supporting your main point, and a concluding paragraph, which summarized your answer.

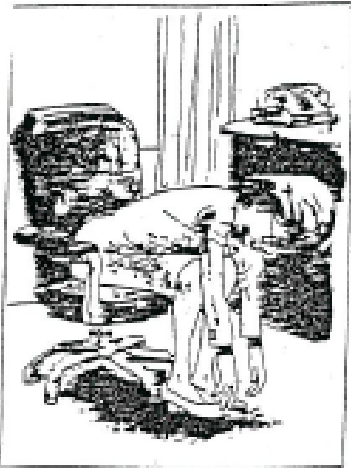
- Read over all the essay questions before you start to write. Underline key words like define, compare, explain, describe or discuss.
- Illustrate your answer with examples or diagrams in order to clearly demonstrate your understanding of the material.
- Write legibly. Graders sometimes presume your ignorance if they can't read your writing.
- If you run out of time, write your answer in outline form, or draw a diagram to show your instructor where you were going with your essay.
- Proofread your essay. Corrections made to your grammar, punctuation, and spelling can improve your grade.

### Multiple Choice Tests

- First, eliminate answers you know are wrong.
- Always guess when there is no penalty for guessing or you can eliminate options. You may lose credit by guessing incorrectly, but an unanswered question will cost you credit automatically.
- Since your first choice is usually correct, don't change your answers unless you are sure of the correction.
- Try to supply your own answer before you look at the alternatives. Choose the alternative closest to your own answer.
- If all else fails and you have to guess an answer, then and only then, consider this advice:
  - The length of the choices is sometimes a clue. When guessing, pick the long answer—it is easier for instructors to write short answers than long ones.
  - If two choices are very similar, choose neither.
  - If two choices are opposite, choose one of them.
  - The most general alternative is frequently the right one.
  - Choose the answer containing the most information.
- Do not spend too much time on any one question.
- Watch for clues in the stem of the question. For example, if the word "combustion" appears in the stem, an answer that repeats the word "combustion" is probably the correct one.
- If you spot a typing error in one of the answers, choose one of the other answers.
- Read all parts of a question carefully and fully.
- Use the options themselves to provide you with hints about the things you need to know. Often earlier test questions will provide information that you can use to answer in later questions.
- If you are uncertain of the correct answer, cross out the options you know are definitely wrong, then mark the question so that you can reconsider it at the end of the test.
- "All of the above" answers are often correct. If you know two or three of the options are correct, "all of the above" is likely correct.
- If you are not sure about a number answer, toss out the highest and lowest options and consider middle range numbers.

## RELAXATION: STRETCHING

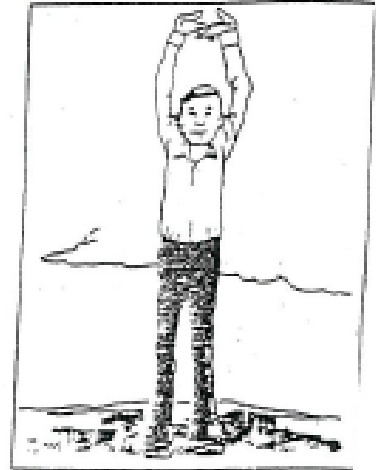
One of your automatic physical responses to stress is muscle tension. A simple, easy way to loosen up tight muscles and combat stress is to do stretching exercises. The following exercises take only a few minutes and can be done at home or at work during “coffee” or lunch breaks. You might wish to check with a health professional before starting these exercises.



**Back Stretch.** While sitting, stretch forward, rest your body on your lap, and relax your head and neck. Hold for about a minute, then press on your thighs to help yourself sit back up.



**Neck Stretch.** While standing or sitting, slowly tilt your head to the right without moving your shoulders, and then slowly tilt your head to the left. Repeat 5 times toward each side.



**Shoulder and Arm Stretch.** Hold your hands together with fingers interlaced and stretch overhead with palms upward. Hold about 30 seconds, relax, and repeat 5 times.



**Passive Back Stretch.** Lie on the floor with your legs on a chair as shown. Relax, pressing your lower back onto the floor. Rest in this position for several minutes.



**Leg Stretch.** With one foot on a support, slowly lean forward. Bend from your hips and keep your back straight. Repeat the stretch 5 times on each leg.



**Upper Body Stretch.** With your feet comfortably apart, reach overhead and stretch to the side. (Try not to move your hips.) Hold for 30 seconds, then switch sides.