When You Need To Guess

- Do not change answers. Unless you know for sure you are wrong, go with your first impression.
- Guess false when absolute words (all, never, must, only) are used.
- Guess true when general terms (most, could, some, may) are used.
- Guess false when terms (since, because, effect, reason) are used.
- The longest and most inclusive multiple choice option is a good guess.
- “None of the above” is a poor guess.
- Guess “all of the above” if that option is used only occasionally, or if you know two of four options.
- If there are a number of options, eliminate the highest and lowest. Choose one that is left.
- B, C, and D are the best choices in five answer multiple choice questions.
- If two of the four choices are almost identical, pick one of the two.
- If two of the four choices are opposite, pick one of the two.
- Guess true or C for a wild guess when no other clues are available.

Best idea: Study hard so you don’t have to guess.

Develop a study plan

- Avoid cramming as it causes short-term retention of materials.
- Plan for long term material retention. When you plan to study a full week before the exam, you are less likely to cram, and will retain the information longer.
- Use a study plan, study small chunks of material in small chunks of time every day (about one to two hours/day). When you set up a schedule and stick to it, you’ll be able to remember the information better when you take the test. See example below.
- Find a study location. The third floor of Karrmann Library, classrooms, and lounges of residence halls are great places to study. Studying where you sleep, eat, or play isn’t always the best choice as there can be too many distractions.
- Go see your professor, a tutor, or a Peer Assisted Learner to ask questions about concepts you don’t fully understand.
- When studying, use your class notes, power point presentations, text book, equation examples, and notecards to help you organize your thoughts and learn the information.
- The day before the exam conduct a trial review of what you have studied over the week.
- When you go to the exam, don’t open your notes or text books—just relax and breathe, and you will be able to better recall the information. Opening your notes/text books may cause you to stress about all the things you “don’t know.”
- Reward yourself for a job well done.

Sample study schedule

Monday, 1–3 p.m. and 4–7 p.m., Chapter 1
Tuesday, 11 a.m.–1 p.m. and 6–9 p.m., Chapter 2, note cards
Wednesday, 1–5 p.m., Chapter 3, review definitions
Thursday, 2–4 p.m. and 6–8 p.m., Review all notes, review practice tests
1 True/False
- Read each statement carefully. Circle key words used.
- Mark as true only if the statement is completely true. If any part is false, mark false.
- Negatives (no, not, except) do not mean the statement is false. Read the statement without the negative and decide if it is true or false. The correct answer is the opposite.

2 Multiple Choice
- Read directions carefully. You may have to choose more than one answer.
- Choose the best answer. More than one answer may be correct, but the most inclusive is the best answer.
- Read it in steps. Read the beginning part of the statement and finish the answer in your mind. Then look for the correct answer in the choices given.
- Look for answers in other questions. Answers often pop up in other questions.
- Do not change answers. Statistically, you are likely to get it wrong.

3 Recall Questions
These questions require more than recognizing the correct answer. You have to know the answer.

Study this kind of information
- Information presented in lists
- Definition note cards—Say and spell words on front for fill-in-the-blank practice. Put detailed definitions on the back for definition and short answer tests
- Charts and graphs—Organized information is easier to remember
- Summaries at the ends of chapters

Practice may include
- Recite information in full sentences in your own words.
- Write short summaries to practice expressing ideas on paper.
- Write and answer your own test questions.
- Work with a study partner to exchange practice questions.
- Use your textbook chapter and section headings. Turn them into questions and then answer them as you study.

4 Essay Questions

Understanding direction words
- Compare and contrast—Show similarities and differences
- Summarize—Discuss main points of subject
- Evaluate/Critique—Offer your opinion, backed up with details
- Discuss—Tell about main points, expand in detail
- Explain why—Give reasons, show cause and effect
- Explain how—Give process, steps, or procedure, and explain each
- Illustrate—Give examples, explain each in detail
- Describe—Give detailed description of different aspects

How to prepare for essay questions
- Create summary notes that pull together information from your text, lectures, and homework as practice for answering essay questions.
- Predict and write test questions using your notes. Ask previous students or check old tests to see the types of questions used.
- Practice writing answers for essay questions you created.

Tips for writing essay answers
- Create a topical outline of what to write before you begin.
- Write a strong thesis sentence stating your topic.
- Limit each paragraph to one main idea.
- Include supporting examples and other details. Write as if your reader is not knowledgeable about the subject.
- Use course-specific terminology.
- Write on every other line so you can add other details between lines when you proofread and keep your answer easy to read.
- Write something on each question. Some points are better than no points.