

HOW TO KEEP CALM DURING TESTS

1. **PREPARE WELL IN ADVANCE.** Keep up day to day if you can, but don't judge yourself harshly if you don't. Avoid last minute cramming. Don't go without sleep the night before (though 4 or 5 hours may be enough). Stop studying an hour or so before the test to relax and compose yourself.
2. **KNOW TIME AND PLACE** of the test and what you need to bring. Be on time, neither too early nor too late, with blue books and supplies. Don't rush.
3. **DON'T TALK ABOUT THE TEST** with classmates immediately beforehand if you know it raises your anxiety level. To do so may increase group paranoia.
4. Read over the test and **PLAN YOUR APPROACH.** Ascertain point values per part, time limits for each section, which question you'll start with, etc. Start with items you are more familiar with to ease your anxiety level. Skip around if needed.
5. Don't hesitate to **ASK FOR CLARIFICATION** from the professor, teaching assistant, or proctor if you have questions about directions, procedure, etc., rather than letting anxiety build up because you aren't sure about what you are expected to do.
6. **DEVELOP AN AGGRESSIVE, YET REALISTIC ATTITUDE.** Approach the test determined that you will do your best, but also accept the limits of what you know at the moment. Use everything you know to do well, but don't blame yourself for what you don't know.
7. **ACTIVITY REDUCES ANXIETY.** If you go blank and can't think of anything to write, go on to another question or another part of the test. On an essay, jot down anything you can recall on scratch paper to stimulate your memory and get your mind working.
8. **RELAX YOURSELF PHYSICALLY** during the test if you notice that you are not thinking well or your muscles are tight. Pause, lay your test aside, and take several slow, deep breaths. Concentrate on your breathing. Do this if you notice that you are worrying excessively about one problem, not reading carefully, or forgetting information you know.
9. **PAY ATTENTION TO THE TEST**, not to yourself or others. Don't waste time worrying, doubting yourself, wondering how other people are doing, blaming yourself, etc. Don't worry about what you should have done; pay attention to what you can do now.



For more tips on how to take tests, check out the “Test Preparation” section on the SLAC website.