

Tips for Online Exams

Online exam-taking may be a new experience for many, and it can be unnerving when you aren't sure what to expect. While the format of an online exam can vary based on your class and instructor, there are general steps you can take to effectively prepare for and take online exams.

Before The Online Exam: Prepare

- ⇒ Read and understand the test guidelines. Will the test take place at a specific date and time, or will there be a window of time for you to take the exam?
- ⇒ Know the test format. What types of questions will be on the exam?
- ⇒ Make sure your computer is fully charged or plugged in, and that you have adequate internet access.
- ⇒ Consider where and when you can take the exam.
- ⇒ Utilize practice exams.
- ⇒ Study for the exam just as you would an in-person exam.

During The Online Exam: Focus

- ⇒ Keep an eye on the clock.
- ⇒ If you have technical problems, reach out to the instructor *immediately*.
- ⇒ If you are utilizing a browser-lockdown platform or if you need to leave your camera on as you take the exam, remember to follow the required procedures. Think of these additional precautions as the equivalent to being in the classroom with your instructor present.
- ⇒ If you find yourself feeling nervous, try utilizing relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, muscle relaxation, or positive imagery. If you have the option, covering your professor's face with a sticky-note or minimizing the screen can help you feel like you aren't being watched.
- ⇒ Note whether or not you can skip questions and come back to them, or if once you've moved on from a question you cannot go back. If you cannot go back to questions, budget your time wisely. If it's a question you don't know, take your best guess. If it's a question you can find the answer to with some thought, keep in mind that you may have less time to spend on future questions.
- ⇒ Look at each question as a new opportunity. If you weren't sure of the right answer on the last question, try not to let that have an effect on your attitude for the next question.
- ⇒ Check your work before you submit it, and make sure to hit submit before exiting out of the exam.

After The Online Exam: Review

- ⇒ Assess your own progress. How did you do? What questions did you find confusing? How can you prepare differently for the next exam?
- ⇒ Check your grade. If you have questions about your score, reach out to your professor. Review your exam and take note of what points you missed.

A Note about Open-Note Exams

While open-note exams may seem like they would be easier to take than a typical, closed-note exam, the opposite is most often true. Open-note exams are exams for which you can use reference materials (notes, textbook, readings, and potentially the internet). While closed-note exams tend to place more emphasis on **recall** and **memorization**, open-note exams may require higher-level thinking skills like **analysis**, **critical-thinking**, **problem-solving**, and **application**. The “right answer” may not be found in your notes.

Before the Exam:

- ⇒ Prepare as you would for any other exam
- ⇒ Organize your reference materials. If there are facts or formulas you need to know for the exam, copy them onto a separate piece of paper to save time looking them up.
- ⇒ Identify key concepts and terms, and know where you can locate them by using stick notes and tabs. Study the key concepts and terms BEFORE you take the exam, just as you would for a closed-book exam.
- ⇒ Create your own study guide and create short-answer or essay questions based on the learning objectives to practice higher-level thinking skills.

During the Exam:

- ⇒ If you have the option, skim the whole exam first and find out what types of questions are asked.
- ⇒ For essay questions, make a quick outline of your response before you start.
- ⇒ Don't place too much emphasis on your reference materials. Think of them as an asset rather than a crutch. You likely won't have time to re-read your textbook, notes, or discover any new information during the exam.
- ⇒ Manage your time effectively: do what you know first (if you have the option). If you finish before the end of the time allotment, spend time reviewing and proofreading your work.

After the Exam:

- ⇒ As with any exam, make sure to check your grade. Review your graded exam to see what you did well and what you can improve on for next time. If you lost points on a short-answer or essay question and you aren't sure why, reach out to your professor.
- ⇒ Talk to your mentor about what went well, and brainstorm what you could do differently for the next exam.

Sources:

<https://blog.cengage.com/tips-taking-online-exams/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-xVwAdCgdIQ>

<https://www.educationcorner.com/openbook-tests.html>