EXAM DAY

Become familiar with the venue before the exam. Make sure you know where it is and how to get there easily.

Try to take things easy the night before the exam.

Unless in extenuating circumstances, stay in the exam room for the duration of the exam time.

During the preparation time/before you have to begin writing:

There are several steps you can take before you begin writing to make the most of your time. Common errors made by students in examinations are not leaving enough time to attempt each section or spending too long on a section that is worth less than others. To avoid these errors always read the instructions carefully before you begin. Look at the weighting for each component and use this as a guide to organise your answer time. Don’t forget to allow time for planning and reviewing. This should be at least 10% of your total response time. Also check to see if information contained in one section of the questions could be useful in helping you to answer another section later on.

If you have a choice and do not have to answer all the questions, choose the questions that will best allow you to demonstrate you have learnt and remembered about the topic. Do not choose a question that you do not understand; however, do attempt all the questions that you are required to.

Cues

Objective tests often have ‘cues’ or tips built into their questions in the form of logical structures or grammatical patterns. You can use these cues to help you choose the correct answer.

Common cues:

- In True/False Tests every part of a true sentence must be true. If any one part of the sentence is false, then the whole sentence is false. For example: ‘Green frogs are extinct in every country in the world’ is false.
- Watch out for absolute terms. These are words such as: no, never, none, every, always, only, entirely. The use of these words in a statement often means that it is an extreme or impossible claim and so is likely to be false. For example: ‘It never rains in Perth.’
- Partial qualifiers such as: ‘sometimes, often, frequently, generally’ open up possibilities in statements and so are often true.
• **Grammatical agreement of ‘a’ and ‘an’** - In a multiple choice test that requires you to finish a statement, the answer should agree grammatically with the stem or part of the statement that is provided in the question.

E.g.: A biologist who specialises in the study of the relationships of an organism to its environment is known as an:

a. ecologist ✓
b. structuralist
c. taxonomist
d. naturalist.

Since the stem ends with the word ‘an’, the correct alternative must began with a vowel sound. ‘Ecologist’ is the only word on the list to do this and so must be the correct answer.

• **Singular and Plurals**
If the stem uses the word ‘is’, then the correct answer will be a singular word. If the stem uses the word ‘are’, then the answer will be a plural or a word that means more than one object.

**Exercise. Choose the correct answer for this stem.**

Important in feeling pain are:

1. bone
2. ear
3. muscle
4. nerves.

**SHORT ANSWER TESTS**

Short answer tests require you to demonstrate your knowledge on specific topics clearly and concisely. Write your answers in direct sentences that contain all the information you can remember that relates to that question. You can also use the words in the question to help you with your answer. For example, in the question ‘Describe the various challenges international students might experience while studying in Perth’ the words **describe, various** and **might** all give you clues as to **how** to answer the question, while the words **challenges, international, students** and **Perth** tell you what content your answer needs to cover.

For more information and further examples, see [Better Tests – Short Answers](http://life.curtin.edu.au/learning-support/improve-your-skills.htm).