

Analyzing Past Tests

You can help yourself to perform better on tests by analyzing your strengths and weaknesses as a test-taker. Download a copy of the form that follows, then follow the directions below. This process should help you to determine how you can improve in the way you prepare for and take tests.

Directions:

1. Complete the top portion of the form. Be as specific and honest as possible in describing the way you studied (or didn't study).
2. Under questions missed, write in the numbers of the actual test questions that were incorrect on your test. If you missed questions 5, 8, 13, and 29, those are the numbers you should write in that column.
3. Now go across the rows of the chart. For example, if you got #5 wrong, determine:
 - How many points were taken off?
 - What kind of question or problem was it?
 - What do you think was the reason that you got it wrong?
4. Look for patterns. Ask:
 - What kinds of questions did you have the most difficulty with?
 - Which questions were worth the most points?
 - What can you do to improve on your next test?
 - How can make sure you get more of the high value questions correct next time?
5. Ask yourself what you still don't understand about the test or test question(s) that you answered incorrectly.
 - Did you have difficulty understanding the instructor's comments?
 - Write down any questions that you need to ask your instructor.
 - If you have questions for the professor, or want to clarify how you can improve in your next test, make an appointment to discuss these issues.
6. Make a list of the things that you need to do to be more successful in your next test. Ask questions like:
 - How can I make sure I understand the material?
 - Do I need to manage my time better so I can spend more time studying?
 - How can I determine what is important to study?
 - How should I prepare for the test?
 - What strategies should I use while taking the test?
7. Look at tests from other courses and see if there is a pattern. What can you learn from your successes and failures?
8. If you see that you have difficulty with a particular kind of test question, such as essay questions, or you want to learn more about test taking strategies, you might want to enroll in a Study Skills Course, or seek assistance at the Tutoring Center.

