

Writing Tests & Exams: Taking the Exam

Establishing best practices for writing exams can help improve your exam performance and reduce your anxiety while writing. The key points to think of when starting an exam are to **preview**, **plan**, and **budget**!

Preview, Plan, Budget

#1: Preview

Previewing the exam can help prepare you for what's ahead. It can help reduce anxiety and uncertainty.

- How many questions are there?
- What looks familiar?
- What are the questions asking?

#2: Plan

Note Section Priorities:

- What is worth the most?
- What looks easiest?
- What can I do quickly?



#3: Budget

Decide on the amount of time you plan to spend on each question. Check in throughout the exam to make sure you're meeting the budgeted time.

- Give yourself time to review at the end.
- Consider point value when allocating time.
- If you get stuck on a question, move on and return later.

Overcoming Test Anxiety



- Take a deep breath.
- Notice your physical sensations.
- Visualize success; give yourself a pep talk.
- Work through answers before writing them.
- Seek support if you find that your experience of anxiety is significantly impacting your academic performance. You can make an appointment with:
 - The Counselling Centre (counselling@smu.ca or SC 406)
 - The Learning Skills Strategist (studentsuccess@smu.ca or SC 301), or
 - Reach out to the Fred Smithers Centre to learn about accessing accommodations (fredsmithers.centre@smu.ca or SC 309)



To learn more, book a one-on-one Learning Skills coaching appointment or attend a Learning Skills Workshop!
Visit www.smu.ca/studentsuccess
StudentSuccess@smu.ca

