**When you take a test**, you are demonstrating your ability to understand course material or perform certain tasks. Successful test taking avoids carelessness.

**These suggestions may help you avoid careless errors!**

**Prepare:**

* **Analyze how you did on a similar test in the past:** Review your previous tests, and sample tests, especially when studying for the final exam. Each test prepares you for the next: the more tests you take, the better you will develop your strategies
* **Arrive early for tests:** Before a test, list everything you will need for it that is allowed (pencils/pens, calculator, dictionary, etc.). Good preparation helps you focus on the task at hand
* **Be comfortable but alert:** Choose a good spot in the room and make sure you have enough space to work. Maintain comfortable posture in your seat, but don’t “slouch”.
* **Stay relaxed and confident:** Keep a good attitude. Remind yourself that you are well-prepared and are going to do well. If you find yourself anxious, take several slow, deep breaths to relax. Don’t talk about the test to other students just before entering the room: their anxiety can be contagious

**Test Taking:**

* **Read the directions carefully:** This may be obvious, but it will help you avoid careless errors
* **If there is time, quickly look through the test for an overview:** Note key terms; jot down brief notes. If you can, mark the test or answer sheet with comments that come to mind. Ask if that is permitted!
* **Answer questions in a strategic order:**
  + **Answer easy questions first** to build confidence, score points, and mentally orient yourself to vocabulary, concepts and your studies. It may also help you make associations with more difficult questions
  + **Then answer difficult questions** or those with the most point value. With objective tests, first eliminate those answers you know to be wrong, or are likely to be wrong, don’t seem to fit, or where two options are so similar as to be both incorrect. With essay questions, broadly outline your answer and sequence the order of your points
* **Review:** Resist the urge to leave as soon as you have completed all the items. Review your test to make sure that you
  + Have answered all questions
  + Did not mis-mark answers
  + Did not make simple mistakes

Proofread spelling, grammar, punctuation, decimal points, etc.

**Change answers to questions if you have made a mistake, or misread the question:** or if you find information elsewhere in the test that indicates that your first choice in incorrect.

**Decide on and adopt study strategies that work best for you.** Review your test preparation and identify those habits that worked well and replace those that don’t!