

Taking Tests With Confidence[™] using Biofeedback

by Adele Greenfield

Professional speaker & seminar leader

- **Control your fears and anxieties about taking tests.**
- **Build your confidence with proven test-taking strategies.**
- **Prepare yourself mentally and physically.**



**TAKE TESTS WITH CONFIDENCE
USING BIOFEEDBACK**

**by
Adele Greenfield**

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Who is Adele Greenfield?

Your personal guide through this program is Adele Greenfield, an international authority on self-improvement and career development. Head of Greenfield Resources in Charlotte, North Carolina, Adele has trained thousands of people through her speeches and seminars. Besides speaking, she also consults with numerous organizations.

Her background is in teaching - most of it on a college level where she worked with full-time students and those returning to school part-time after being in the business world for several years.

Adele is often featured on radio and TV, and her articles have appeared in such diverse publications as *Training Magazine*, *The Executive Female*, *Industry Week* and *Educational Record*.

But, most important, Adele lives what she teaches. She conveys to her audiences her own steadfast belief that life can be better for all of us.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	6
LET'S GET REALISTIC	9
WHAT SCARES YOU MOST?.....	10
STEP 1: BE AN ASTUTE LEARNER. THOROUGH PREPARATION IS A PRIMARY WEAPON IN OVERCOMING ANXIETY.	15
STEP 2: PREPARE YOURSELF MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY	18
PHYSICAL FITNESS.....	18
10 TIPS TO GET IN SHAPE FOR TOP PERFORMANCE.....	19
NUTRITION	20
PRACTICE WITH THE GSR2 2BIOFEEDBACK SYSTEM	24
DE-STRESS: RELAX AND RE-ENERGIZE.....	25
STEP 3: LEARN THE MECHANICS OF STUDY SKILLS.	29
HAVE FUN	31
YOUR "READY" STUDY POSITION	33
READING	34
MIND MAPPING	35
TECHNIQUES TO BOOST YOUR MEMORY	39

STEP 4: REVIEW THE WEEK BEFORE THE TEST.	40
STEP 5: RELAX YOURSELF JUST BEFORE THE TEST.	41
STEP 6: USE TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES THAT WORK.	43
OBJECTIVE TESTS - MULTIPLE CHOICE, TRUE/FALSE, AND SENTENCE COMPLETION.....	43
ESSAYS.....	44
WORDING IS IMPORTANT.....	44
WHAT TO DO WHEN FATIGUE HITS.....	45
STEP 7 REWARD YOURSELF AFTER THE EXAM IS OVER.	46
PROGRAMMING FOR SUCCESS.....	47
APPENDIX 1: TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS	48
APPENDIX 2: HOW TO STIMULATE YOUR BRAIN SO YOU COME UP WITH CREATIVE IDEAS ...PAINLESSLY	49

Introduction

Do you panic at the thought of taking a test? Help is on the way.

Welcome to **TAKE TESTS WITH CONFIDENCE**. By going through this program and working with your GSR2 (galvanic skin response) biofeedback unit, you will learn to beat test anxiety and pass your exams with flying colors. Some of you are still in school and want to do well. On the other hand, many of you have finished school and are studying for a test in order to become certified or licensed. Or, perhaps you want to move up in your career. No matter what your age or grade level - whether you're in Junior High School or a "Senior Citizen" - you can use these strategies to become more confident the next time you take a test. Any test!

What will test-taking strategies do for you? These strategies will help you become more knowledgeable about studying and test-taking and they will enable you to program yourself for success. Knowledge is power. With power comes self-control. And, with self-control comes confidence. How you feel about yourself has an impact on your being able to learn and apply new skills. How you feel about yourself has an impact on test-taking.

Does it work? You can believe it! These strategies will work for you if you practice them. As the expression goes, "use it or you lose it"

Unfortunately, many people don't use it. I see it all the time. These days, I spend most of my time traveling around the world giving speeches and seminars on self-improvement and career development. I've found that people are so busy, and their lives so cluttered, that they don't read and they don't take the time to follow instructions. I am also a former college teacher and the students who didn't do well on tests were the ones who did not pay attention to the instructions. But, there were three other reasons they had trouble with tests:

1. They did not have good study skills.
2. They were not skilled test-takers.
3. They did not mentally program themselves for success and, because they didn't *believe* they were successful, they often had a low opinion of themselves.

The bottom line? It's not only *what* you know but *how you show what you know* that can mean the difference between an outstanding grade and an average grade. Just by taking the time to apply the test-taking skills and use the self-programming strategies, you'll be ahead of the pack.

I want you to succeed and this program is designed to help you do just that. To be successful, keep these points in mind as you go through this program:

1. **Be flexible.** There is no one right way for everybody all of the time. Mold and shape this program to fit your specific needs and time frame.
2. **Take action.** Are you getting ready to get ready to get ready? What kind of life do you want and what kind of person do you want to be?

Only you can make it happen. Give yourself a chance.

3. **Use this workbook as a resource.** Take some time for self-discovery. The workbook was designed with you in mind. Do the exercises and pay attention to checklist, etc. They're written to help you succeed. And, remember to review it from time to time.
4. **Reward yourself.** Moving forward takes courage. Each new step in the right direction deserves a pat on the back.

Success is not in getting on top; it's how you bounce on the bottom.

- *General Patton*

LET'S GET REALISTIC

Let's take a look at the "worst case" scenario. What is the worst thing that can happen if you don't get a good grade on a particular test? Think about it and write your answer in the space below.

Now that you know the worst (and it probably won't happen), you can be prepared to ask yourself the key question, "Then what'?" **What if the worst *does* happen, then what will happen? Write it down.**

And then what could happen? Write it down.

How will you handle it?

Handling the "worst case" can enhance your performance. According to Dr Charles Garfield's research, peak performers go through a "worst case" scenario. They figure out what they will do if the worst happens. (It rarely does, but just in case.) They then discover that they can handle it. Armed with this and a good dose of healthy optimism, they proceed, knowing they have all the bases covered. Peak performers are not victims of circumstances; they are **victors.**

WHAT SCARES YOU MOST?

If the thought of taking a test makes your heart pound, sets your teeth on edge, and causes your stomach to turn upside down let's take a look at what is happening. You are experiencing a physical stress reaction. Test anxiety is stressful.

However, it's been said that stress can add zing to your life or it can add sting. Let's go for the zing!

Stress comes when the demands made on us are greater than our resources.

Any demand made on the mind/body system can create stress. Studying for and taking tests can be demanding.

Good stress/bad stress depends on your interpretation. The test isn't the important thing-it's how you react. What I might see as a threat, you might see as an opportunity. Or, perhaps even fun.

Our stress reactions are based on thought. Thoughts trigger feelings.

When it comes to test anxiety, the feeling is FEAR! And, one of the major causes of fear thinking that you have little or no control. What is your fear about? **Complete these sentences, writing whatever comes to mind.**

Taking a test can mean

If I _____

What scares me most is _____

What you wrote down represents your thinking process or self-talk. Your thoughts - those words now on paper – trigger your feelings. **What did you discover about yourself?**

As you think about tests, you can help yourself or hurt yourself, depending on your point of view or how you see the world. Optimists see the world as friendly. Pessimists don't. Which are you? Which would you like to be?

To learn more about your point of view, Einstein suggested that one of the most important questions you can ask yourself is: **Is the world friendly? What's your attitude? Do you see the world as friendly or do you see the world as hostile?** _____

Dr. Martin Seligman's research showed that optimists perform better than pessimists and optimists are more apt to learn from their mistakes. They are also likely to use supportive self-talk to help themselves.

We all talk to ourselves. Optimistic self-talk sounds like this:

- I know I can succeed when I follow my plan for studying and test – taking.
- I am intelligent.
- I have all the resources I need.

Be *for* your case instead of *on* your case. Change sabotaging self-talk to helping or supportive self-talk. Whenever you start to sabotage yourself, change those internal sentences. Neutralize your negativity with positive statements.

When you say, *I can't do this.*

Change it to, *This may be a bit tough and I can handle it.*

When you say, *I know I'm going to fail.*

Change it to, *I have the resources to do well.*

When you say, *This won't work.*

Change it to, *I can study the material and do just fine.*

When you say, *I was never any good at.*

Change it to, *Up until recently, I wasn't good at... and now I can*

Notice how these change statements are positive and they are realistic. Program yourself to perform in a positive way. Use self-talk to help you.

- I know can succeed when I follow my plan for studying and test-taking.
- I am an intelligent person.
- I have all the resources I need.

We don't usually sabotage ourselves on purpose. It's often unconscious

What do you think you might say to sabotage yourself?

Substitute a supportive sentence or two. Change your sabotaging self-talk to:

STEP 1: BE AN ASTUTE LEARNER. THOROUGH PREPARATION IS A PRIMARY WEAPON IN OVERCOMING ANXIETY.

Think like the instructor or the examining organization. If you have an instructor:

- Choose a compatible instructor, when possible.
- Get into his or her head. Learn the angle or viewpoint.
- Match the instructor's viewpoint.

Guidelines for Classroom Students:

1. Be visible.
 - Sit in front, towards the center

- Be active - ask and answer questions
 - Volunteer
2. Pay attention to cues.
 - Writing on the board
 - Words such as *important, stress, research, what I want you to know*
 3. Write down things that are repeated.
 - Use pens or pencils that are fun to write with
 - Fun color and shapes
 - Brightly colored highlighters to organize important facts (there's more on taking notes later in this workbook)
 4. Listen for the "language."
 - You use the same language or jargon
 5. Assess the approach: Is It logical or intuitive?
 - Lean heavily on one or the other
 - Combination
 6. Do you need to be visual, auditory, or kinaesthetic?
-

7. Find out what kind of test you need to study for
 - Format - essay, true/false, multiple choice, demonstration, oral

The key question: Am I speaking the instructor's language?

When there is no instructor, apply the same "match and thank like they do" principles. Only do it with the testing organization. What is it like? How is the manual worded? How do the publications read? What is the philosophy?

STEP 2: PREPARE YOURSELF MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY

When it comes to test-taking, you are not just a mind, you have a body, too. That's why it's important to prepare yourself both mentally and physically.

PHYSICAL FITNESS

Fit people handle stress better. Take care of your body and keep fit.

Exercise helps you think better. It increases your capacity not only for physical work, but mental work as well. You'll also have more energy.

Working out reduces excess muscle tension, increases your ability to concentrate and improves your memory and reasoning ability. People who are in shape often sleep better, burn more calories, and feel good about themselves.

Your body was meant to move and you can make it fun. Choose activities you like such as walking, cycling, swimming, tennis, dancing, yoga, or racquetball. Do the ones you enjoy most and vary them when you want. Do them alone or with friends or family. Here are some ideas.

10 Tips To Get In Shape For Top Performance

1. Set realistic, short-term goals. Then, program yourself by positive self- talk and picturing yourself in your mind's eye exactly the way you'd like to be. This will affirm your goals. Your attitude helps shape your body, too.
2. Make a commitment to keep in shape for the rest of your life and you may have a longer and better life for it.
3. If you're not used to it, start gradually and build yourself up.
4. Train, don't strain.
5. Stop if you feel pain. Get professional advice.
6. You don't have to compete, especially if your school or your work is very competitive.
7. Take short movement breaks throughout the day. It will reduce fatigue as blood carries oxygen to your muscles.
8. Use the right kind of equipment and that includes footwear.
9. If you're of the age when you should talk to your doctor about your fitness plans, do so. If your health is not up to par, get advice.
10. Have fun. Enjoy the natural energy "high."

NUTRITION

Food is fuel. What you eat can affect your energy level, your moods, the quality of your performance, and your overall health. See for yourself. Keep a food and feeling diary. At the end of a month, review it. Do you notice any patterns? Do you eat nutritious foods which fuel your body for high performance? What's missing? Are you eating too much sugar, fats, or "junk" foods? Is your empty calorie lunch the secret to your mid-afternoon slump?

Here are some general guidelines taken, in part, from the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs and the book, *Facts to Relax By*, written by Dr. Glenn Schiraldi and published by the Utah Valley Hospital.

1. Eat a variety of foods and rotate them. For example, if you have orange juice every morning, switch to other fruits such as grapefruit or pineapple on some days.
2. Avoid saturated fats and cholesterol. Food should be steamed or baked rather than fried. Fatty foods take longer to digest as your body diverts blood from your brain to your stomach. This can slow you down. Good fats can be found in most fish. Not only do researchers think this can help your heart (not a bad idea to start at a young age), fish contains dopamine and norephrine, chemicals essential for smooth brain functioning.

3. Drink water to help regulate your body temperature. It also helps your kidneys flush out waste products from your blood.
4. Eat only when you're hungry. Rather than overeat, stop when you're satisfied. Have you ever tried to concentrate when you've felt bloated? To learn to listen to your body, try this at home. Fill an average-sized plate with healthful, good food, blindfold yourself, and eat.
5. Avoid overly processed foods. With many foods (and there are exceptions), the closer to the way it is harvested, the better. The more you cook some foods, the more value you may lose.
6. Eat breakfast. If you skip it, your blood sugar (glucose) can go down, leading to fatigue and possible errors. Your brain needs glucose to function well. And, a lower functioning brain can result in a lower grade. By the way, if you're skipping a meal to lose weight, it doesn't work. Skipping breakfast can actually cause weight gain
7. Avoid salt. For some people, it has been associated with a variety of medical problems. Use spices, lemon, and other flavorings instead.
8. Eat fibers and natural carbohydrates such as fruits, vegetables, seeds, legumes, and whole grains. Fiber is the

indigestible part of these foods. It moves quickly through the digestive tract, carrying bacteria and food with it, like a vacuum cleaner. It appears to slow the absorption of sugar, fats, and cholesterol into the bloodstream. It also prevents constipation. Peeling a potato robs you of a necessary part of the food. Processing a wheat kernel to make white flour removes the germ and outer bran layers which contain most of the fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Cooked white flour is digested and absorbed as quickly as simple, processed sugar.

9. Avoid added sugar. It can raise your glucose level too high. Your pancreas secretes insulin which quickly drives the glucose out of the blood and into your cells. Since your brain needs a steady supply of glucose for energy and effective thinking, you may feel tired and anxious when it dips below normal. Natural carbohydrates such as fruits and vegetables are absorbed more slowly and give your brain a steady supply of glucose.
10. Eat carrots, broccoli, onions, or cabbage. These contain calcium pectate which can reduce your cholesterol by 10%-20%. Yes, even teenagers need to be concerned. Eating these vegetables cooked is fine. It only slightly diminishes the amount of calcium pectate.
11. Avoid caffeine. Caffeine stimulates the stress hormones so it can make you feel nervous. It contributes to dehydration and can reduce iron in the blood. Caffeine is also addictive.
12. To eat for rest, eat vegetables and / or whole grain. These foods release serotonin a chemical in your brain

which makes you sleepy. While this may be great to get a good night's sleep, it's not a good idea to eat only these foods before studying or taking a test. Instead, if you want to eat for productivity, Dr. Charles Wingate of the Biomedical Research Division of NASA suggests an ounce of low fat complete protein (like low fat dairy, fish, certain cereals, food mixtures such as beans and brown rice) along with vegetables and/or grains to offset the serotonin effects. This is especially important for breakfast. Breakfast Studies backs this and there have been similar results found by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and M.I.T.

13. Red meat gives you a heavy feeling. Not a good choice if you want to perform well.
14. Eat real food. Read labels and you'll see that much of what you eat isn't food. For example, calcium sulphate is often referred to as a dough conditioner. It is *Plaster of Paris*. Silicon dioxide is another name for sand. It's the basis of glass. Know what you're ingesting so you can decide if it's right for you.

PRACTICE WITH THE GSR2 2BIOFEEDBACK SYSTEM

BIOFEEDBACK IS A WAY TO LISTEN TO YOUR BODY. It is a leaning system which allows you to measure and amplify internal body activities. Because it gives you information immediately, you soon learn to control these activities.

Developed by clinical psychologists and engineers, the GSR2 is a reflection of variations in your sweat gland activity and pore size. Both of these functions are controlled by the sympathetic nervous system. When your emotions - either excitement or nervousness - take over, your skin resistance changes. It decreases. When you are calm and relaxed, it increases. This is represented by a tone. The calmer you are, the lower the pitch.

While excitement such as looking forward to a test is positive, extreme nervousness can sabotage you. The key is to relax enough so you can eventually get excited.

One thing we know about biofeedback is that your body doesn't lie. You may think you're calm, but if your thoughts about a stressful situation get the best of you the tone will change. Your body doesn't know the difference between something real or something imagined, that is, something you just think about without actually doing. If you think of sucking on a lemon, wouldn't you salivate? Almost as much as if you were really sucking on a lemon?

As you practice biofeedback, listen for subtle changes. Be aware of your thoughts as changes occur. Most of the time, these little changes go unnoticed. Pay attention to how your body responds to the little as well as the big stressors.

Your GSR2 unit is automatic. It runs on a battery. When you put your fingers on the sensor, it turns on and when you remove your hand, it turns off. No switch is needed and it can be used almost anywhere. The audio program tells you how to use it for relaxation and visualizing success

DE-STRESS: RELAX AND RE-ENERGIZE

Counter a stress reaction with relaxation. Besides using your GSR2 biofeedback unit, there are ways you can relax quickly and easily. I call them *relaxicizers*.

A good time to relax is when your stomach is fairly empty. Don't do a long relaxicizer (over 3 minutes) right after a meal. Since relaxation interferes with the digestive process, you need to digest your food first.

If you have a medical problem, please get medical advice. For example, if you take medication for diabetes, heart problems, or a thyroid condition, the balancing that takes place with relaxation can throw the medication off.

1. **WHEN IN DOUBT, BREATHE!** Use your diaphragm. Sometimes this is called abdominal breathing. It's

like there is an inner tube around the lower part of your rib cage and the abdominal area. It inflates as you inhale and deflates as you exhale. This tends to calm you down.

2. **UNWIND WITH THE TENSE-RELEASE:** As a quick exercise, tense any set of muscles or even your whole body. Inhale. Feel the tension. Hold for a few seconds. Don't strain. Then release the tension as you exhale.
3. **TREAT YOURSELF WITH THE 3-5-7 BREATHING EXERCISE:** Take 3 fairly deep breaths and hold the exhalation out after the third. Don't breathe in until you need to. Then take 5 breaths and, after you exhale the fifth breath, hold the exhalation out. Do the same after 7 breaths. Then, breathe normally.
4. **ENERGIZE WITH THE ENERGY SHAKE:** Shake your body. Start with bending and straightening one leg then the other. Now, quickly. Your body is almost vibrating. Shake your hands as if you put your hands under running water and (oops!), there are no towels. Now, shake your hips and shoulders and head. Let your body shake for a few more seconds. As long as you'd like. This gets your blood flowing and can energize you.
5. **PRACTICE AUTOGENIC PHRASES (ADAPTED FROM DRS. SCHULTZ AND LUTHE'S ORIGINAL AUTOGENIC TRAINING):**

Repeat each phrase silently-and slowly- about 10 times. Between each set of 10, say once, silently: I am at peace.

My right arm is hearty and warm.

My left arm is heavy and warm.

My right leg is heavy and warm.

My left leg is heavy and warm.

(Reverse the order if you are left-handed.)

I am breathing easily.

My pulse is calm and regular.

My forehead is pleasantly cool.

You can add gentle reminders such as:

My jaw is loose, limp, and relaxed.

I am moving up.

My shoulders are relaxed and comfortable.

My body is relaxed and my mind is alert and ready.

I allow all my muscles to relax.

I am calm.

Whenever I choose, I can relax myself and be peaceful.

6. **USE AFFIRMING SELF-STATEMENTS:** What you say to yourself determines how you think and feel. Be a good coach to yourself and affirm yourself with positive affirmations about relaxation:

My body is relaxed and my mind is alert and ready.

I allow all my muscles to relax.

I am calm.

Whenever I choose, I can relax myself and be peaceful.

Affirm yourself with affirmations about studying and confidence:

I am free to receive information.

I can confidently study and learn this information.

I (your name) am confident.

7. **ACT AS IF:** Act as if you are calm and peaceful. Anything you can pretend, you can eventually master. Fake it 'til you make it!
8. **DO A MENTAL REHEARSAL:** Relax and see yourself - rehearse in your mind - the way you'd like to be. Put yourself in a relaxing, peaceful place. See yourself as poised and confident. If you get the least bit anxious, go back to your peaceful scene and begin again.

STEP 3: LEARN THE MECHANICS OF STUDY SKILLS.

We were born with the capacity to learn but the act of **studying is learned behavior**. You can acquire and build on this skill. Students who get good grades attribute it to their study skills and test-taking savvy.

Make sure you know what you need to know. Remember, knowledge leads to control. What do you want to accomplish? Make a study plan.

Timing is important.

1. Procrastination will do you in. Get a datebook and record your study times - your best times, when you are most alert. Decide on a schedule and stick to it.
2. Keep the time consistent, whenever possible.
3. We learn more in four, 1 - hour sessions spread over 4 days than in a single 6 hour session in one day. Therefore, short spaced repetitions are better than long periods without a break. Limit yourself to 1 hour at a time and then take a short stretch break.
4. Study similar subjects at separate times.
5. If you have more than one subject area, take a 10 minute break between them. Don't do one language after the other. It's too confusing.

Understanding how and why we learn can help us learn more effectively. I often tell instructors that people learn for their own reasons, not for the instructor's reasons. Why are you studying this material? Sometimes remembering the purpose for your studying helps you get mentally set up for learning.

We also take information in according to our point of view- the way we see the world. Sometimes we need to get outside of our viewpoint and look at things from a different perspective. Here are some alternatives that will not only help you learn but also help you remember the material.

- Get moving - use your body
- Use crazy, off-the-wall associations as you link one thing to another
- Make things attractive - the brain likes beautiful things
- Draw (you don't have to be an artist)
- Stand when you study certain material
- Get specific - your brain needs direction
- Plan a skit
- Think out loud - you retain more
- Classical music with 60 beats per minute may enhance learning, *if* you don't find it distracting

Charlene Swansea, who conducts workshops about how the brain works, suggests that you do something weird. For example, she tells her students to get on their back and put their feet up while reading the material under the kitchen table. As if that weren't enough, she asks them to use a funny voice. Once that's been established, say the material while naked in the tub and then sing it in the closet, leaving the door open a bit. No, not so people will hear you - for air! Bet you'll remember a study session like that.

Have fun

Are you having fun? Get excited about learning. One way to add to add excitement is to use humor. Why use humor?

- It speeds the assimilation of information
- It improves decision-making and problem-solving skills
- It boosts productivity
- It relieves tension.

James Thurber once said that humor is life's chaotic happenings remembered in tranquility. Humor consultant, Joel Goodman, advises us to put more smileage into our lives, jest for the fun of it. And famous humorist, Will Rogers, reminded us that we're only here for a spell, so get all the laughs you can. How do you get those laughs? Keep it on your conscious mind. Look for it. It's everywhere.

- Make funny associations.
- Create a joke out of the material when you can.
- Ask other people.
- Imagine you're a famous comedian - how would he or she use this material for a laugh?

When you're not under the kitchen table, in the tub, or in your closet, have **a special place** for studying. A place where you can take notes, highlight, work on paperwork, etc. Make your space convenient and conducive and use it only for studying. Nothing else. Here are some ideas.

- Choose a quiet place.
- Remove all distractions.
- Get cooperation from the people with whom you live.
- Make sure the temperature is right for you.
- Adjust the lighting so it is comfortable, without harsh glare.
- Have everything you might need at your fingertips. It saves time and avoids frustration.

Checklist:

- eraser
- pencil
- pen
- sticky tape

- calendar
- clock
- books
- ruler
- paper
- marker or highlighter
- scissors
- stapler and staples
- adjustable back supporting chair that swivels

Get your things together. If everything is scattered around it clutters your mind. Organize things in handy, colorful organizers. Use storage systems such as file folders and card files. Make it attractive.

Your "READY" Study Position

Your chair should not only provide support for your back, it should also allow your feet to be flat on the floor. With your feet on the floor in a parallel position, toes pointing forward, think of every little bone in your back floating upward towards your neck. Let your spine move up, without muscle tension. When the moving up sensation reaches your neck, allow your head to move up and away from your body. Your neck feels free as if it's releasing your head

and you follow the movement of your head. Allow your whole body to follow. Think of your spine as long and your back and chest as wide. This way, you use your spine, not muscle tension, to stay upright.

Remind yourself of this throughout the day. Even when you lean over a desk. Lean forward from your hips. Your study space and your study position serve as triggers and you are ready for studying.

Reading

Before actually reading a book, preview it. Here's how. Read the table of contents and introduction. Check the index. Quickly skim by glancing at each page, reading headings, illustrations, maps, pictures, glossary, captions, as well as the first and last paragraph of each chapter. Then look at any summaries or questions. Formulate question.

If you can mark in the book, highlight anything important during the preview phase and use the highlighter when you go back and actually read the book.

Take notes. Use a fun pen or pencil, in a color you enjoy. Keep your notes well-organized and brief. I like Mind Mapping as a way of taking notes as well as generating and organizing ideas

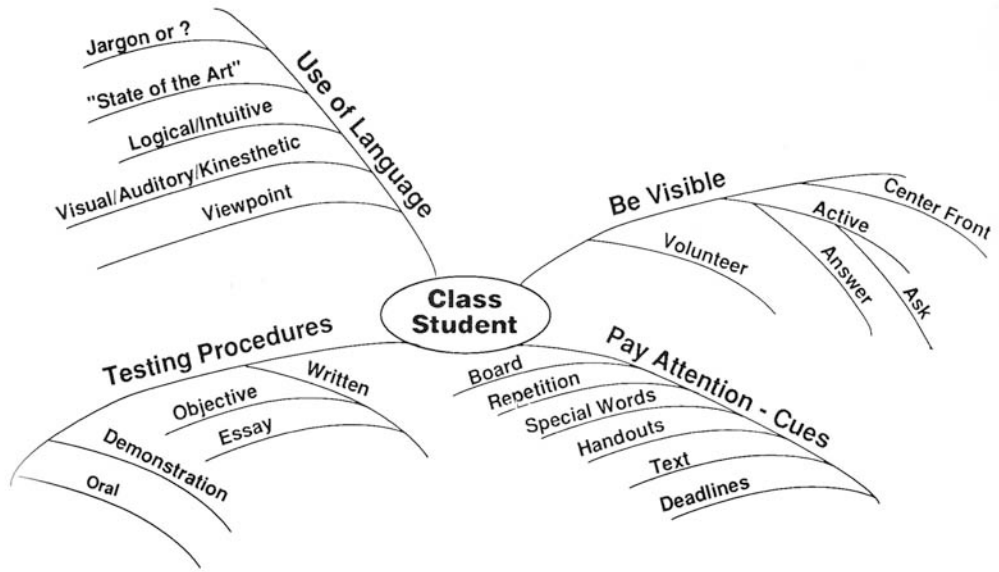
Mind Mapping

Mind Mapping is a clustering of ideas or data around a central theme or idea, creating a picture of what you read.

Developed by Tony Buzan to organize thinking and increase productivity, Mind Mapping is not only a pictorial, non-linear way of taking notes, but also a way to access your creative channels and develop ideas essays and other written assignments.

Here's how it works. First, you draw a circle in the middle of the paper. For taking notes, write the topic or central theme in the center. For example, if the instructor says there are several things you need to consider when it comes to being an effective classroom student, you might write "class student" in your circle. It's best to print it. Then, draw a line off to the side and you might have a sub-heading or idea such as "be visible" over it. Map out the information under that sub-heading, each one on its own line.

You don't have to limit yourself to printing; you can also draw some of your ideas. These images work well as they are fundamental units in our memory. No need to be an artist. This is just for you. Stick figures or symbols will do just fine. For example, a stylized drawing of eyes could symbolize getting noticed. Dollar signs mean money, etc.



Example of Mind Map

With a network of lines, you create more sub-headings and information. When you're finished, you might want to highlight or circle similar points that may fall in different branches. With color codes, it's easy to pull things together and recognize them quickly.

Then, redo the map, organizing it, moving it clockwise around the central circle. You can:

- move from fact to example to how to apply the facts
- put ideas in logical order, listing them
- arrange things chronologically
- move from problem to cause to solution
- state an end result and go over the steps to achieve the goal

With Mind Mapping, you have a schematic of your ideas, all on one piece of paper.

Suppose you're not taking notes. You want to write a paper or an answer to a test question. For ideas you generate yourself, you can use the same process. Put your central thought in the circle. Draw a line off to the side and, when an idea comes jot it down and put sub-ideas on the line which branch off from this. You can do it for an overview of your entire paper or perhaps just a part of it. Use it when you have to write an essay or a few short paragraphs. Just let the ideas flow and once you see them, you can organize them clockwise following some of the organizational suggestion above.

Most of us are forced to outline in school. This is a linear way of expressing thoughts. By linear, I mean step-by-step,

logical, and in sequence. One reason we find this so difficult is that we have to order our ideas before we actually come up with them. Don't you find that you often write your paper, then do the necessary outline? I did! Before I learned Mind Mapping

Because it allows youth free associate and brainstorm, Mind Mapping helps you create. You can loosen and let your mind do what it will. It's amazing what you can come up with once you start the ball rolling. Done on a single sheet of paper, you can easily see all the elements and how each relates to one another.

After you've practiced this a few times, you'll see that you can use it for many different functions besides taking notes and creating ideas for something you need to write. Here are some uses:

- finding solutions to a problem - look for at least 20 solutions
- prepping for an oral presentation
- looking at a topic from a different point of view, for example, as a character in history
- figuring out obstacles and ways to overcome them
- sketching out all the things you need to do in a day or a week
- setting goals

For more information, see Tony Buzan's book, **Use Both Sides of Your Brain**. If you're interested in creative writing, take a look at Gabriele Rico's book, *Writing the Natural Way*. This uses a variation of Mind Mapping called "clustering."

Techniques to Boost Your Memory

1. Visualize and verbalize. Associate - form a picture in your mind and verbalize what that image might mean. Make these associations off-the-wall for easy remembering. The more way out, the better you'll remember it. Use humor. We remember things that are fun.
2. Take advantage of every opportunity to talk about your material. Discuss it with friends, family members, and enjoy your conversations
3. Use acronyms - new words formed by taking the first letters of words in a phrase or list.
4. Make up rhymes.
5. Take notes of lectures or reading material with a pen or pencil that is fun to use. Read your notes out loud. What was the instructor's or the author's point of view?
6. Tape your notes (read them into a cassette recorder) and listen to them over and over for spaced repetition. Bombard yourself with the material. Listen to your tape when driving in the car, walking, getting ready to go out, eating, or getting undressed at night. If you use earphones, keep the volume low. Do NOT use earphones and exercise at the same time. It can cause hearing loss.
7. Read your notes while listening to the tape. This provides both auditory and visual stimulation.
8. Repeat the ideas in your own words.
9. Use the material in whatever way you can. We remember what we use.
10. Act it out. We also learn through movement.
11. Stand when reading important material. We do think better on our feet.

12. Ask yourself questions. Reflect on the material. Discover. Go beyond the facts to analyze, apply, synthesize, and draw conclusions about the material. How can you expand on the information? What does it mean to you, to your life?

STEP 4: REVIEW THE WEEK BEFORE THE TEST.

To review your material:

- Ask yourself questions on the main points and details.
- Take a sample test or have someone quiz you.

During this week, it's a good idea to use your GSR2 to replace negative thoughts with positive ones. Affirm to yourself several times:

- I am fully prepared and eager to demonstrate my knowledge and ability.
- I am calm and alert.
- Important points are clearly in my mind.
- I see myself confidently taking this test.

See yourself calmly and confidently taking the test.

STEP 5: RELAX YOURSELF JUST BEFORE THE TEST.

Pack everything you're going to need:

- 3 sharpened pencils
- pen (at least 2)
- eraser (for changing your mind)
- watch
- drawing tools (if needed)
- glasses or contacts
- book (if it's an open book exam)
- sweater or jacket (in case the room is cold)
- comfortable clothes (and shoes)
- ruler
- GSR2
- Other: _____

On your way, affirm to yourself:

- I am fully prepared and eager to demonstrate my knowledge and ability.
- I am calm and alert.
- Important points are clearly in my mind.
- I see myself confidently taking this test.

When you're at the test site, use the "let go" exercise, do the tense-release, then breathe easy continuing the affirmations silently. And, picture yourself taking the test with confidence.

STEP 6: USE TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES THAT WORK.

Knowing the best strategies gives you control. Then you can do your best. Ready. Set. Go!

1. Get into your ready, anchor position. Feet flat and parallel, body moving up.
2. Preview the test. Read essay questions, skim objective questions, read and re-read the instructions carefully.
3. Ask yourself what a question means
4. Prioritize so you have a time management plan, giving you more control.
5. Answer easier questions first. Work as quickly as possible.
1. 6 Watch out for double negatives. It turns the statement into a positive.
6. Write legibly. Write in pencil and use an eraser.
7. Use all the time you've got. Check and double check your answers for accuracy, grammar, and spelling.

Objective Tests - multiple choice, true/false, and sentence completion

- If no points taken off for wrong answers, guess. You have a chance of getting it right.
- Work first on those items giving you the most points in a given amount of time.
- With true/false test items, true mean 100% true (watch out for "always" or "never" - often these are false).
- Standardized tests are usually arranged in order of increasing difficulty.

Essays

- Read instruction carefully.
- Mind Map your ideas. After they're sketched out, put them in order, relating one idea to another.
- Show that you understand what is asked of you and that you know the material.
- Be clear and well-organized - the examiner wants to see how you present the material.
- To be clear, it's usually a good idea to use plain English. Overblown prose makes you look pompous.
- State your objective at the beginning of the essay.
- When you're through, let it sit, go on to another question, then come back and revise it.
- Check your spelling.

Wording is important

1. **Identify, enumerate, cite, define, list, indicate, state, give, or name:** present facts, names, dates, places
2. **Describe or discuss:** usually this means you need to write an essay
3. **Review, outline, or summarize:** be concise and still give enough detail
4. **Diagram, illustrate, or sketch:** do a drawing or illustration
5. **Develop or trace:** pay attention to the sequence
6. **Relate, compare, or distinguish between:** describe similarities or differences
7. **Demonstrate, explain why, justify, show, support, or prove:** logically prove your point of view

What to do when fatigue hits

- Take a short stretch break, even if you stretch in your seat. Stretch your legs, arms, fingers, neck and shoulders, etc.
- Do a couple of minutes of palming. With your palms facing you, cross your right fingers over your left (see drawing). Put your cupped palms over your eyes. Place your elbows on your desk and rest the heels of your hands on your cheeks. Stay like this from 30 seconds to a minute or two.
- Become aware of your breathing and say to yourself, "Let go"
- Use these affirmations:
 - Let go.
 - I am eager to demonstrate my knowledge and ability.
 - I am calm and alert.
 - I see myself confidently completing this test.
 - Close your eyes for a moment and visualize yourself calmly completing the test.



STEP 7 REWARD YOURSELF AFTER THE EXAM IS OVER.

Analyze your performance and decide what you want to repeat and what you have learned. What will you do the same and what will you change the next time you take a test?

ENJOY THE FREEDOM!

PROGRAMMING FOR SUCCESS

The next part of the program helps you use the GSR2 for visualization. Here you will learn to direct your images and your self-talk, reprogramming yourself as you change your old negative beliefs. Create a new pattern for yourself.

First, complete YOUR SUCCESS LADDER. On line 1, write down what you fear least about test-taking. On line 10, write what you most fear, then fill in the ladder from 2 to 9, going from less fear to most fear.

YOUR SUCCESS LADDER

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

While listening to the last section of the audio program, get comfortable, either relaxing on your back or on an easy chair. If you have a tendency to fall asleep when on your back, sit on a chair.

APPENDIX 1: TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS

Being a student takes time. The better you organize your time, the less hassle there will be.

1. Get organized: Get a datebook and record all assignments, allot time to completing them, and highlight your deadlines. Be your own boss. No excuses for not following your plan.
2. Keep all your notes for each subject in one place. If your notes are scattered, it's tough to find them and just as tough to study from a bunch of papers.
3. Make sure you have all your supplies where you need them to avoid the hassle of looking for them when you're on a roll.
4. Use organizers or handy storage systems. File boxes, folders, card files, a place for books, etc.

5. Keep a small notepad with you and, when you get an idea, jot it down. When it's time to study, organize your jottings.

APPENDIX 2: HOW TO STIMULATE YOUR BRAIN SO YOU COME UP WITH CREATIVE IDEAS ...PAINLESSLY

You don't have to have an I Q of over 135 to be creative. In fact, studies show that a high I.Q. does not mean you are creative. We are all creative, but sadly enough, we only use a fraction of our potential. Here's how to expand your creativity.

1. Sharpen your awareness. Ellen Langer, author of *Mindfulness*, advises us to use affective, responsive, perceptive faculties. Avoid rigid reflexive behavior in favor of a more improvisational and intuitive response to life. Focus on the process rather than the outcome and be creative in whatever you do. Taste things in a different way. Try something else. Notice things.
2. Look for at least 20 solutions to each problem. The first few will probably be logical; then you'll come up with some great possibilities.

3. Defer judgment - it inhibits creativity. Judge your ideas only after you have several.
4. Fantasize. Play "what if". Ask yourself what would happen if... in many different situations. It's a wonderful idea generator.
5. Go for the opposite. The opposite of true is not necessarily false. It can be an even greater truth. Consider it and you will look at all sides of an issue.
6. Write out a problem or concern objectively. No emotion Just the facts
7. Change the word "problem" to *opportunity* or *challenge* and you change your perspective.
8. Write, draw, or paint automatically. Just put down whatever comes to mind without thinking about it. Don't limit yourself to just this. You can become artistic - dance, sculpt, write poetry, etc.
9. Look away from the tried and true. Get crazy. For example, ask yourself, "How would Donald Duck solve this?"
10. Change your mind. Change negative, self-defeating thoughts into constructive ones.

11. Know when and where you get your best ideas. Financier, Wayne Silby, quoted in a creativity article, July/August 1989, Psychology Today: "Often we have the answers to our problems, but we don't quiet ourselves enough to see the solutions right below the surface " Quieting letting ideas just sift around, is known as the incubation phase of creativity.

12. Use Mind Mapping.

GOOD LUCK!

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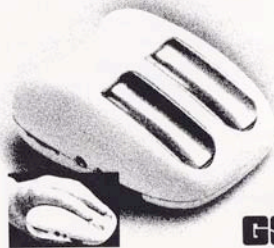
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