

Ace Your Online Tests

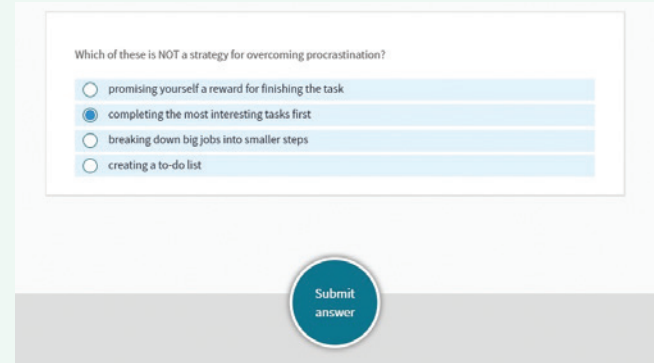
Many students will take online tests in traditional, hybrid, and online courses in college. Online tests might include any of the question types described in this section. You can prepare for online tests in much the same way you prepare for traditional tests, but be aware that online testing environments present their own particular challenges.

the GOAL

Ace your online test!

how TO DO it

- 1. Don't rely just on your notes.** Many instructors will allow you to reference your notes when taking an online test. For this reason, online tests are often harder than traditional tests. So don't get complacent. Prepare for an online test as if you won't have access to your notes, and during the test, get in the habit of referencing your notes only if you really need to.
- 2. Resist the temptation to look online for answers.** The answer you discover might not be what your instructor is looking for. It's much better to check your notes to see what you were taught in class.
- 3. Collaborate if it is allowed.** If your instructor doesn't forbid collaboration on tests, open up an instant message window with a fellow student. Take the test together, and take it early.
- 4. Don't get distracted.** When you're taking an online exam, it's easy to fall prey to real-life diversions, like Twitter, Netflix, or a sudden urge to rearrange your closet. Whatever you do, take the test seriously. Go somewhere quiet where you can concentrate—not Starbucks. A quiet, remote spot in the library is ideal. You might also try wearing noise-canceling headphones.
- 5. Be aware that you might lose your Internet connection in the middle of the test, and plan accordingly.** To be on the safe side, type all your answers and essays into a Word document. Then leave time at the end to cut and paste them into the test itself.
- 6. Use any extra time wisely.** Take a few minutes to obsessively check your answers and spelling. Your online test platform may not have spell-check. (Of course, double-checking your answers is good advice for traditional tests, too.)
- 7. Be aware of the testing environment.** For example, some online tests won't let you change your answer once you hit "submit," and others might have time limits for how long you can spend on each question. Some online tests will let you skip around, provided you finish the test in a certain amount of time. Be sure to ask your instructor what you can expect. If possible, ask your instructor if you can practice in the online platform before taking the test.



your TURN

Have you taken an online test before? In a small group, discuss your experience with your peers. What were some common pitfalls you and your group members faced? How might you approach your online test in the future? Use the strategies above, or brainstorm your own.