

Test Taking Strategies

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Objectives

- Recognize value of basic study tips to prepare for test taking
- Develop understanding of basic test taking strategies
- Gain knowledge to assist in decreasing test taking anxiety
- Practice anxiety reducing techniques
- Apply specific strategies that can be utilized to aid in successful study/test taking performance

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Study Tips

- Class attendance
- Assigned material
- Organized and clear lecture notes
- Questions to increase understanding
- Meet with professors

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Study Tips

- Tutoring services
- Remediation programs
- Advisory assistance
- Study groups



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Study Tips

- Learn the technical vocabulary
- Index cards
- Organize information
- Review systematically
- Review early



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Study Tips

- Divide material into logical sections
- Concentrate on one section at a time
- Take frequent study breaks
- Practice answering questions
- Examine previous tests

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Study Tips

- Ascertain location, date, time of test
- Determine the test format (multiple choice, essay, matching)
- What to bring?
- Pencils/calculator
- Get plenty of sleep



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Study Tips

- Get up early enough to avoid rushing
- Eat a healthy breakfast
- Snacks
- Avoid Caffeine
- Get to the test site early
- Do not continue to study



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Anxiety Reduction

Relaxation response: any technique or procedure that helps you become relaxed

- Effect of negative self-talk
- Short-term and long-term relaxation response
- Emotional (somatic) test anxiety
- Deep breathing techniques

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The Tensing and Differential Method

1. Put feet flat on the floor.
2. Grab underneath the chair with hands
3. Push down with feet and pull up on chair at the same time for about five seconds
4. Relax for five to ten seconds
5. Repeat the procedure two or three times
6. Relax all muscles except the ones that are actually used to take the test

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The Palming Method

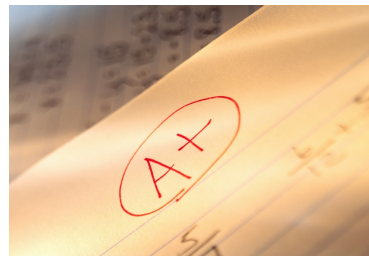
1. Close and cover eyes using palms of hands
2. Think of some real or imaginary relaxing scene
3. Visualize this relaxing scene for one to two minutes
4. Open eyes and repeat
5. Add sounds or smells to enhance the scene

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What are Test Taking Strategies?

Skills and approaches, unrelated to the traits a test is intended to measure, which:

- May increase test takers' scores
- May include the effects of coaching or experience in taking tests



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The Parts of a Question

- **The case** (sometimes called scenario) – the description of the client and what is happening to him/her
- **The stem** – the part of the question that asks the question
- **The correct response**
- **Distracters** – incorrect but feasible choices

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POW

- **Put** the question into your **own words**
- Rewording the question to gain understanding
- Increases comprehension
- What is the question *really* asking?



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Key Words



Vital

Least

Primary

Most

Next

Best

Most Important

First

Immediate

Initial

Highest Priority

Primary

Essential

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What is the Time Frame?

Words like early or late in relation to symptoms are very important

- Preoperative
- Postoperative
- Care on the day of surgery



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Eliminating Answer Choices

- Take out the two answers that you know are not correct
- Anxiety decreases with a 50% chance of picking the right response
- Strategy for use in multiple choice questions

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Predicting Answers

- Do not pick the answer that jumps out at you
- Make sure to carefully consider each answer choice
- Eliminate the wrong answers to derive the correct answer

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When doing a physical assessment of a 17-year old primigravida who is at 30 weeks of gestation, a nurse should expect which finding is related to mild preeclampsia?

1. Epigastric discomfort
2. Trace proteinuria
3. Dyspnea
4. Blood pressure of 150/100 mm hg

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- See it jump out from choice 4?
- *This is the wrong answer*
- All choices are related to preeclampsia
- The question is asking about *mild* preeclampsia
- Choices 1,3, and 4 relate to *severe* preeclampsia
- **Trace proteinuria** is the correct response

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ADPIE

Utilize the nursing process

- Assessment
- Diagnosis
- Planning
- Implementation
- Evaluation



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Assess

- Always **assess** before you **act**
- Question regarding care that includes both assessments and implementations
- “Is there enough information given to take action?”
- If there is not, you must assess first

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The night after an exploratory laparotomy, a patient who has a nasogastric tube attached to low suction reports nausea. A nurse should take which of the following actions first?

1. Administer the prescribed antiemetic to the patient
2. Determine the patency of the patient's nasogastric tube
3. Instruct the patient to take deep breaths
4. Assess the patient for pain

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Determine the patency of the patient's nasogastric tube

- Two of the choices require you to take action and are therefore implementations (1 and 3)
- Choice 4 is tempting because you see the word "assess"
- Think further, is pain an issue for this patient? No....nausea is

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Assessment versus Implementation

- Eliminate the implementations first unless you are certain the question gives you enough information to take action
- If the question does not give you enough information to act, you must assess
- eliminate the answer choices involving unnecessary assessment

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A nurse enters a client's room and finds that the wastebasket is on fire. The nurse immediately assists the client out of the room. The next nursing action would be to:

1. Call for help
2. Extinguish the fire
3. Activate the fire alarm
4. Confine the fire by closing the room door

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Activate the fire alarm

- The order of priority in the event of a fire is to rescue the clients who are in immediate danger
- The next step is to activate the fire alarm
- The fire is then confined by closing all doors
- Finally, the fire is extinguished
- Remember RACE(rescue, activate, contain, extinguish)

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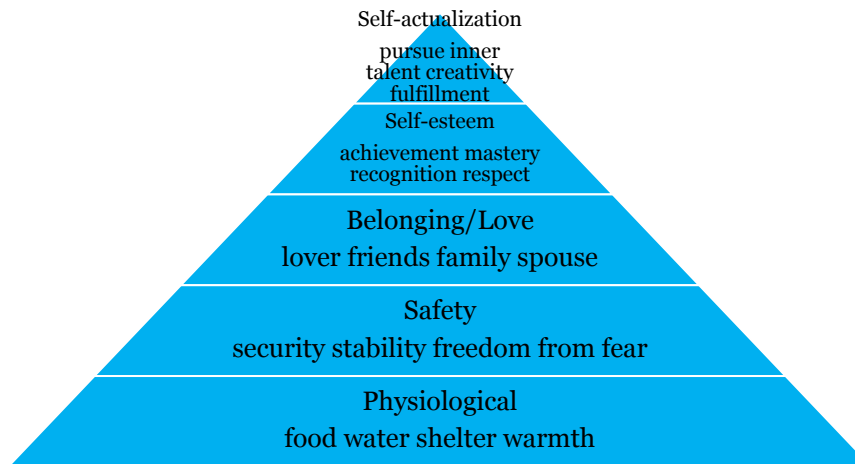
Prioritization

- *Most, first, best, initial* in a question
- You must establish priorities
- You are picking the answer with the **highest** priority



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Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



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Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- Dictates priorities in care
- Needs must be met on the lower levels prior to addressing higher levels
- Physiological needs always come before psychosocial needs (safety, security)

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Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Pain is considered a psychosocial need unless:

- it is extreme (kidney stones)
- interferes with the ability to render care (changing dressing on a burn patient)

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Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- Safety and security involve emotional needs
- Example: Mastectomy patient needs to communicate loss
- When you find questions regarding human needs-use Maslow's Hierarchy

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Think Safety First

- If there are physiological needs in some choices and psychosocial needs in others you can eliminate the psychosocial answers
- After that...keep Maslow's second rung, safety in mind



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A nurse is performing an admission assessment on a patient scheduled for possible gallbladder surgery. The patient is scheduled the following day for an oral cholecystography. Which of the following would be most important for the nurse to include in the initial assessment?

1. Any allergies the patient might have
2. Specific location of any pain
3. Family history of gallbladder disease
4. Review of any medications the patient has been taking

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Any allergies the patient may have

- All choices are assessments
- All of these assessments should be included in the initial interview
- The potential for an allergic reaction is specific to safety

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PHAN

- **Priority-Hierarchy-ABC's-Nursing process(ADPIE)**
- Follow the pathway when answering priority questions

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Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development	
Approximate Age	Psycho Social Crisis
Infant - 18 months	Trust vs. Mistrust
18 months - 3 years	Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt
3 - 5 years	Initiative vs. Guilt
5 -13 years	Industry vs. Inferiority
13 -21 years	Identity vs. Role Confusion
21- 39 years	Intimacy vs. Isolation
40 - 65 years	Generativity vs. Stagnation
65 and older	Ego Integrity vs. Despair

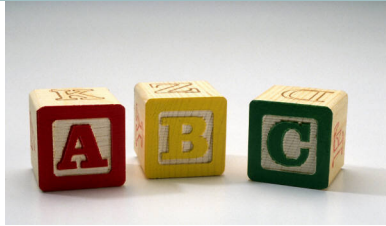
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ABC's

- Airway
- Breathing
- Circulation
- Should be used after Maslow for priority questions
- Must be relevant to the question, not all responses are the airway

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- Airway breathing and circulation are essential to life
- Although Maslow lists excretion as a physiological need, it will not be important if the patient cannot breathe!

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A patient who is one day postoperative after gall bladder surgery reports pain at the surgical site. Before giving a narcotic analgesic medication to the patient, it is essential for a nurse to take which of the following actions?

1. Measure the drainage from the patient's T-tube
2. Record the patient's report on the chart
3. Take the patient's pulse rate, respiratory rate, and blood pressure
4. Determine if the patient has voided

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Take the patient's pulse rate, respiratory rate, and blood pressure

- All of the choices are assessments
- Remember Maslow's first, examine the patient's physiological needs
- Pain is considered a psychological need unless it is extreme and or points to a physiologic problem
- If the patient's other needs are met, the nurse would take action to try to alleviate the pain

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Select All That Apply

- Select all that apply questions on the NCLEX are increasing in numbers
- Treat each answer as a true or false response

True**False**

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Repeated Words

- Words from the question are often repeated in the answer
- Frequently the same word or a synonym will be in both the question and the answer

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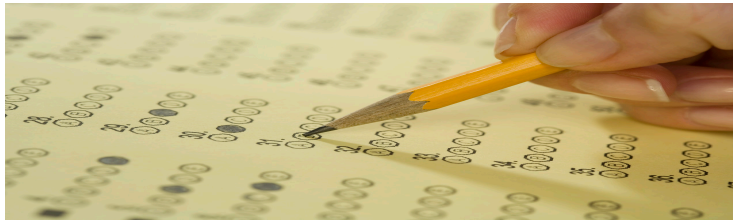
Opposites

- When two answers are opposite such as high blood pressure and low blood pressure or increase the drip rate and stop the IV, or turn on the right side and turn on the left side, the answer is usually one of the two

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Same Answer

- If two or three answers say the same thing in different words none can be correct
- If the answers are too alike, then neither one is correct



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Umbrella Answer



- One answer includes the others
- There may be more than one correct answer
- One answer is better than all the others because it includes them
- Also known as global option or comprehensive option

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A nurse from the emergency room receives a telephone call from the emergency medical services and is told that several victims who survived a plane crash and are suffering from cold exposure will be transported to the hospital. The initial nursing action of the emergency nurse is which of the following?

1. Supply the trauma room with bottles of sterile water and normal saline.
2. Call the laundry department and ask the department to send as many warm blankets as possible to the emergency room.
3. Call the nursing supervisor to activate the agency disaster plan.
4. Call the intensive care unit to request that nurses be sent to the emergency room.

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Call the nursing supervisor to activate the disaster plan

Activating the agency disaster plan will ensure that the interventions in options 1, 2, and 4 will occur

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Odd Answer Wins

- The answer that is different from the others is apt to be the correct answer
- It may be the longest or the shortest or simply very different in content or style



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Absolutes

- Answers containing universal or absolute words are very apt to be incorrect
- Very little in life or nursing is always correct or incorrect
- Answers stated in absolute terms should be looked at with great caution

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Absolutes

- All
- Every
- Total
- Nothing
- Always
- Each
- Only
- Any
- Nobody
- Never
- None

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Test Item Check List

DID YOU CAREFULLY...

- Read the stem?
- Read all of the options?
- Read the stem again?
- Look for key words?
- Eliminate obviously incorrect options?

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Key Strategies

POW

Key Words

ADPIE

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

PHAN

Erikson's Stages of Development

ABC's

Elimination

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Summary

- Make use of study tips
- Apply anxiety reduction techniques
- Maintain consistent utilization of test taking strategies
- Work the process for every question, every time!

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