Top 10 Tips For Passing a Chemistry Exam
Tips For Chemistry Exams
From Anne Marie Helmenstine, Ph.D.

Prepare Before The Test

- Study
- Get a good night’s sleep
- Eat breakfast
- If you’re someone who drinks caffeinated drinks, today is not the day to skip it
- Similarly, if you never drink caffeine, today is not the day to start
- Get to the exam early enough that you have time to get organized and relax

Write Down What You Know

Don’t risk drawing a blank when confronted with a calculation!

If you memorized constants or equations, write them down even before you look at the test.
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Read The Instructions

- Read the instructions for the test!

- Find out whether points will be deducted for wrong answers and whether you have to answer all of the questions

Preview The Test

Scan the test to see which questions are worth the most points

Prioritize the high-point questions, to make sure you get them done
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Decide How To Use Your Time

- You may be tempted to rush on in, but take a minute to relax, compose yourself, and figure out where you need to be when your allotted time is half way over.

- Decide which questions you’re going to answer first and how much time you’ll give yourself to go back over your work.

Read Each Question Completely Before Answering It

You may think you know where a question is going, but it’s better to be safe than sorry.

Also, chemistry questions often have multiple parts. Sometimes you can get hints how to work a problem by seeing where the question is going. Sometimes you can even find the answer to the first part of the question this way.
Answer Questions You Know

There are two reasons for this:

- First, it builds confidence, which helps you relax and improves your performance on the reminder of the test.

- Second, it gets you some quick points, so if you run out of time on the test then at least you got some right answers.

Answer Questions You Know

It may seem logical to work a test from the beginning to the end.

If you are confident that you have time and know all the answers, this is a good way to avoid accidentally missing questions.

But most students prefer to skip over harder questions and then go back to them.
Show Your Work

- Write down what you know, even if you don’t know how to work the problem.
- This can serve as a visual aid to jar your memory or it can earn you partial credit.
- If you end up getting the question wrong or leaving it incomplete, it helps your instructor understand your thought process so you can still learn the material.
- Also, make sure you show your work neatly. If you are working out an entire problem, circle or underline your answer so your instructor can find it.

Don’t Leave Blanks

It’s rare for tests to penalize you for wrong answers. Even if they do, if you can eliminate even one possibility, it’s worth it to take a guess.

If you aren’t penalized for guessing, there is no reason not to answer a question.

If you don’t know an answer to a multiple choice question, try to eliminate possibilities and make a guess.
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Check Your Work!

- Make sure you answered every question
- Chemistry questions often provide means of checking your answers to make sure they make sense
- If you are undecided between two answers to a question, go with your instinct.

Best Of Luck
On All Of Your Exams!