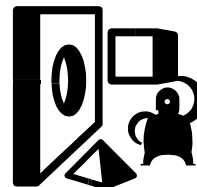


Test Strategies: Problem Solving Tests

Academic Success Center
Iowa State University



Preparing for Problem-Solving Tests

1. Focus on major ideas, concepts & formulas
 - ◆ Review all notes & text material
 - ◆ Highlight topics emphasized
2. Work out sample problems
 - ◆ Prepare by solving lots of problems, even unassigned problems
3. Explain your work
 - ◆ Next to each problem
 - ◆ Might get you more points even if you are wrong
4. Complete out sample problems out of sequence
 - ◆ Randomness prepares you for the test
5. Work within a time limit
 - ◆ Similar to when you take an actual test
6. Practice
 - ◆ Use text and problems to make practice test

Taking Problem-Solving Tests

1. Write down formulas on back of the test
2. Look over the test, skim questions
3. Allow more time for higher point items
 - ◆ Save time to review
4. Start with easier problems
 - ◆ Reduce anxiety promotes clear thinking
5. If you get stuck:
 - ◆ Work backwards
 - ◆ Break down into smaller problems
 - ◆ Guess answer and check it
 - ◆ If all else fails, go for partial credit
6. For difficult problems:
 - ◆ Make sure you understand the problem (identify givens and unknowns, mark key words, sketch diagram)
 - ◆ List formulas relevant to solution
7. For all problems:
 - ◆ Once you have a method, follow it
 - ◆ Check each step for consistency
 - ◆ Document all work, is it easy to read
 - ◆ Evaluate your solutions, check answer to question