



## SCORE BOOSTER TIPS

This score maximizer offers 20 booster tips that can potentially increase your exam grade.

### Score Booster #1: Know the Testing Techniques.

Each professor has his or her own preferred testing techniques. To master the art of test-taking, you should start by understanding your teacher's methods of testing your knowledge from the readings. Different types of test questions require different testing skills and each can reveal your knowledge in a different way. Your score will show how well you have prepared for the test and how skillful you are in handling these different types of test questions.

### Score Booster Strategy 2: Arrive Early and Be Prepared.

Double check the time and location of the exam before the exam day. Use double alarm clocks for early morning exams and make sure you are well rested and have eaten a healthy (not heavy) lunch. If you follow this system, you will arrive prepared and will have less to worry about. Walk in with confidence and you are more likely to do fine.

### Score Booster Strategy 3: Listen to and Read the Instructions.

Typically, your professor will give oral instructions at the very beginning, during the distribution of the test papers. Listen carefully to the instructions. Once you get the test, read the instructions and plan your strategy accordingly.

### Score Booster 4: Start the Memory Dump First.

Pressure usually causes tension, which in turn can cause you to forget key concepts. To prevent log jamming, one way to reduce tension is to keep the memory flowing by using a splashdown approach. As soon as you have the test paper, write down any important notes or ideas on any scratch paper provided, or on the back of the test sheet, while the ideas are still fresh in your memory. This will help ease your anxiety and keep you focused on one problem at a time. Reference these ideas to answer exam questions later. Do not overdo it. Limit this to a quick process time of 1-2 minutes.

### Score Booster 5: Skim the Entire Exam.

Do not rush into the exam problems right away. Look at the big picture first and take a closer look. Take 30 seconds to skim through all the pages of the exam. Take a mental note on the organization of the exam and mark the halfway point of the exam as a halftime milestone to pace yourself. Budget your time accordingly. Allow at least 20% of the total time for review and to have in reserve.

Here's the rule of thumb for time allowed for each type of question:

- True/False Questions: 10-15 seconds
- Multiple Choice/Matching Questions: 60-90 seconds
- Fill in the Blank Questions: ~30 seconds
- Essay/Calculation Questions: 10-20 minutes

### Score Booster 6: Plan the Attack.

After reading the instructions, scan the entire test quickly to see what types of questions are on the test. Mark down the ones that you can do quickly and accurately. Keep an account of the number of questions in total and the points on each. Budget your time accordingly. If the points are evenly distributed, again mark down the midway point. You should not spend more than 50% of your time

**SCORE BOOSTER TIPS & STUDY GUIDE**

to answer the questions up to that point. Table Response, Free Response, and Essay questions usually take longer and have more weight, so plan to spend more time on these problems.

**Score Booster 7: Do the Problems Sequentially.**

I generally recommend my students to go through problem-by-problem linearly, since most teachers like to organize in a logical fashion. The next question could be somewhat related to the current question, and answered from the previous questions. In this case, jumping around won't help. It is also harder to organize your time and flow. You might also miss some questions by accident, and not notice until it is too late. Therefore, the balanced approach is to go sequentially and skip questions only if you go blank. Mark it down to come back the second go-around.

**Score Booster 8: Trust Your Instincts.**

Remain calm and confident. Trust your memory. Use your instincts to think through the problems and connect all the dots with the key concepts you have mastered. Avoid second-guessing your own instincts. Also, do not look at the pattern of previous answers on your answer sheet to guess the next answers. The correct answers are usually shuffled very well so that no pattern is recognizable. You are much better off working out each question based on your knowledge - a better bang for the buck.

**Score Booster 9: Take All the Time Allowed.**

I mean A-L-L! Some students like to rush to finish and race to be the first to turn in the exam. Why? You have spent hours and hours to prepare for such an important event and can't bear to take the time to re-examine each problem so you can maximize your performance? An extra 15 minutes of work could mean the difference between a B or a C grade. Take the time to review your answers and pick out any errors. Typically, the second run on the exam have the potential to catch mistakes that contribute to 5-10% of the total grade.

**Score Booster 10: Improve Your Concentration.**

During a test, as you might have experienced, it is ridiculously easy to lose concentration. Pull yourself back immediately. Worry is the most common form of distraction. When this happens, think positively and picture yourself surviving the test. If you have done the work, you should trust the outcome.

**Score Booster 11: Read the Whole Question.**

Many like to immediately write down the answer for something obvious without reading the question in its entirety. It is a common mistake that costs unnecessary points. Spend a few more seconds to take a close look before drawing any conclusions. If something is too obvious, it could be a trap. Be aware of this and read the question thoroughly.

**Score Booster 12: Detail Your Answer.**

For any question where you have to write a lot (Free Response) or draw in detail (Table Response), you should write down as many relevant details as possible to support and confirm your knowledge of the subject. It shows how well you know the subject matter and that you have done your homework. This will enable you to maximize the credit you receive. Remember, your instructor cannot grade you on what you are capable of doing, only on what you actually write down.

**Score Booster 13: Keep Your Eyes on Your Own Paper.**

Classrooms are more and more becoming overcrowded; this can lead to you sitting too close for comfort to other test takers, and the temptation can be so great to...just...take...a...peek --

NO! Trust me, there are a plethora of reasons not to cheat, but the best one I can offer you is this: there are likely multiple versions of the test distributed, and the answers on your neighbor's sheet,

while giving him or her an A, would likely result in a much lower score for you. Don't do it; it's not worth the zero you will get if you are caught. Plus, the person you cheated off of could also face disciplinary actions. Cheat sheets are also a no-go situation. Trust your skill, not your cunning.

**Score Booster 14: Apply the Guessing Rule.**

Don't guess randomly. Make an educated choice by eliminating at least one answer choice first. Never leave a question blank unless you have absolutely no clue and there is a penalty on wrong answers. If you're running out of time, write the outline and key concept and equation for partial credit, especially on essay questions.

**Score Booster 15: Think of the Answer First.**

Read the question carefully and try to come up with an answer before looking into the answer choices. If you have some idea of what the correct answer might be you'll be less likely to be fooled by "trap" choices, which are common, especially in the sciences.

**Score Booster 16: Verify Your Answer.**

Use logic, if applicable, to check your answer. Ask yourself how you know each of your answers is correct. There could be more than one way to derive the correct answer, so try an alternative way to double check your answer.

**Score Booster 17: Work the Problem in Reverse to Verify.**

This technique works word problems. Starting from the "Unknown", derive backward to see whether the "Known" can be reproduced.

**Score Booster 18: Recheck the Test.**

If time allows, take time to relax and clear your mind. Then review all your answers one more time. If time is limited, at least review the questions that are worth the most points.

**Score Booster 19: Review the Results.**

Unless this is the final exam, you should get your test back and rework the questions you missed. Pay particular attention to these weak areas during the next part of the course. Learn from the mistakes so that you may avoid making the same ones again.

**Score Booster 20: Always Include the Units in Your Answers.**

This is an easy point to forget, and can cost you points, both in science courses and in this general studies course. The units of any quantity are extremely important in academia. The key is to be precise.

That wraps up this booster tips guide. Hope you have learned something and apply them on not just our exam but on your other exams, too.

Until next time,

Prof. Blackwood

Above tips adapted from  
Dr. Wayne Huang, PhD  
Rapid Learning Coach



## STUDY GUIDE

- Know what is meant by ancient sunlight.
- Hartmann's thinking of slavery, that its decline coincided with...what?
- Ponzi Scheme; also known as? (hint: geometric shape)
- Know what the following terms mean in regards to the text: chipping, MDRTB, genocide, aquifer, the Commons, hot spot, phenology, desertification, diversity, Great Conveyor Belt, robots (as a symbol of something).
- Know what slaves were considered to be by Aristotle and the author.
- What does a hot spot represent?
- Be familiar with Shoshone, & how they viewed: leadership, social standing, warfare, & rituals.
- Know the following people, or groups of people: Taino, Kayapo, San, Kogi, Inca Empire, Francisco Pizarro, Christopher Columbus, Gilgamesh, Benito Mussolini.
- Be prepared to write a lot about one of the following, not forgetting the key word I'm looking for for each: trees problem, water problem, or species extinction problem.
- Be familiar with China's plans to survive the coming "winter", including its baby policy (yes, this policy is relaxing a bit recently, but overall it is still in play).
- Know the relationship between oil and alternative energy; can we simply wait until the oil is gone and then, AT THAT TIME, easily make and use alternative energy? Why or why not?
- In the 1930s, who came up with the idea of corporatism? What was it later renamed?
- The author agrees that we are indeed living in the information age, but he says that, even so, we are suffering from...what?
- What does the author claim is the number one drug today?
- YC & OC traits (I also use the term characteristics); there are three each; do not confuse these with what group five talks about (tribes vs. city-states).
- Be familiar with what depleted uranium is and what it has recently been (and continues to be) used for.
- As I said in class, be familiar with whom Pizarro and Columbus interacted, what became of these people, what P & C obtained, and, finally, what culture each of the four entities belong to (YC or OC). Be prepared to draw a detailed table.
- What were they Kayapo noted for (they had a special way of using the land so as not to destroy the forests).

- If you recall the story about the San people and their run-in with Europeans, they were thought to be rude because they failed to do something that the Europeans considered to be basic etiquette. What did the San people not do and why didn't they do it?
- The Kogi of Colombia have a special view of the land, the ocean, the river, trees, and sky. What is their view?
- Know the five theories (and remember that they're just theories; we don't know which, if any, are correct) of how tribes control their populations; if you count them up in the text, understand that the fourth one is actually two ideas together (not sure why the author does it that way, but he does, so don't forget either one). Be prepared to draw a detailed table, including how some apply to fertility.
- Know the five key differences between tribes and city-states (these are from group five and are DIFFERENT FROM group four's "YC/OC characteristics"); be prepared to draw a detailed table.
- The robots from our text: Who are they a symbol of? What did they begin to acquire human rights in America? What is another word for "human rights"? What are the robots taking over in order to claim human rights? Why is this process not beneficial (unhealthy) for humans?