

Certification Exam Test Taking Tips

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One of the most popular questions I get asked when I teach a class that maps into some type of industry certification is what do I need to know to pass the exam. That is why you are in the class, to learn the objectives. But don't forget to prepare yourself mentally for the exam as well...

The obvious stuff:

- Get a good night sleep the night before.
- Go to the exam well nourished.
- Arrive early to the exam testing location. Give yourself time to relax before you go in.

If possible find a location near the testing center that you can go to for an hour or so - like a coffee shop. Bring along notes that you can quickly review. Try to keep the list of notes to the areas that you have the most difficulty in. No need to review information that you are solid on.

Be positive going into the exam. Focus on all of the things you know and not the things that you don't know.

Test Taking Strategies

Focus on the question. What are they really looking for. It is common for a test question to contain irrelevant pieces of information. Try to eliminate these out before they confuse you.

Evaluate the Answers

- Don't just take the first answer that looks right.
- Justify why the other answers are wrong.
- You may change your mind after you review the other answers.
- Evaluate answers for correctness without look at the question if possible - answers that are not factually correct or have bad syntax will never be right no matter that the question is.
- Try to eliminate as many invalid answers as possible before you really start to answer the questions.
- Use your scratch paper to keep track of which answers you have eliminated for each question. Do not waste time re-reading answers that you have eliminated previously. It is tough to keep try of 6 answers in your head.

If the exam you are taking contains simulations (Like the CCNA exam) - make sure you check the vendor site for a simulation demo so you can get a feel for what the simulation will be like.

It will be natural for you to feel like you are bombing the exam while you are taking the test. Just relax and keep trying your best. If you have a bad question, forget about it and move on. Many people end up passing the exam even though it felt like they were failing.

Remember, you do not have to ace a certification exam to pass it. All you need is the score that is required to pass. Most certification certificates do not print your score on them.

Question: What do you call a person who just barley passed their medical exams? Answer:A Doctor.

What do do if you fail:

Immediately after you leave the testing center, find a quiet place that you can reflect. Try to jot down the subject areas that you know you had a problem with. If you do not do it immediately after the exam, you will quickly forget as all of the questions will begin to run together.

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