

Test notes.

Students ask questions about tests, and the same questions keep coming up. So here are some common issues. Some of these are most important on take home tests, where it is more difficult to ask a question during the test.

All tests are similar. Use your experience with previous tests (including the sample test) to guide you in what to expect, and in how to interpret new questions.

The final exam is also similar to earlier tests, except that it may be a little longer. The final emphasizes recent material, but may include some review, especially of major issues. Anyway, much of the material is inherently cumulative, so there is some review aspect to the final even without questions that are explicitly review.

If you need more space, you may attach extra pages (or use the back, if practical). Put your name and the question number on any extra pages. Please refer to the attachment on the main page -- so I'll see it at the right time. (In general, the space available for each question should be enough. But sometimes it's simpler to just X-out a first try and redo it on a fresh page.)

Be sure to X-out what you don't want me to read. You don't need to obliterate it; just make it clear what I am supposed to read.

In general, we want to emphasize reasons, not answers. In that spirit...

- On all problems involving calculations, show clear work with clear units. Use dimensional analysis when appropriate.
- Some questions require an explanation. For example, a question may be phrased as a yes/no question, with explanation requested. It's the explanation that matters. Typically, I would give no credit for an answer without any requested explanation.
- I discourage you from leaving questions blank. Some questions are intended to be difficult, to stretch your understanding. Try to "think something, for some reason." You may "know" more than you think you do, or you may at least get some partial credit. Further, you will get some response to what you thought, rather than a plain zero. And I learn what people are thinking, whether correct or not.
- More generally, most test questions are intended to involve reasoning, not guessing.

I would prefer that you not use red ink as your main color. I mark with red, and would like my notes to be easily seen. This does not preclude occasional red in multi-color diagrams.

Course grade. This is a good time to remind you about course grading. See the information about grading and grade options in the Quick Reference section of the General Information handout. Auditors are welcome to take the tests, for the feedback. I encourage everyone to take the tests, if for no other reason than to leave your options open.