Preparing for Online Open-Book Tests

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Open-book tests often require short, written responses that demonstrate meaningful understanding of course concepts, instead of memorizing facts. You still have to study for open-book tests as there won't be time to look up every answer. To do well, you need to understand the main ideas and definitions AND organize your materials so you can easily find information during the test to support your answers. Here are some tips:

IN THE WEEKS BEFORE THE TEST
- Find out what chapters, concepts or learning objectives are on the test.
- Find out what resources you're allowed to use during your test.
- Create your own formula sheet if needed. Make sure you understand each equation.
- Create reference notes: table of concepts *with page numbers*; add sticky notes or colour-coded labels to notes/text; use online bookmarks; annotate your e-text. Mind maps or flow charts can help relate ideas.
- If you need to cite sources in your answers, create your bibliography.
- Find out: Is there a specific start time? Time limit? Can you leave the test and return later? Can you go back to skipped questions? Are full sentences required?
- **Practice like the test**. Practice with questions at the same level as the test. Can you find the information you need and write a clear answer in a realistic amount of time?

ON THE DAY OF THE TEST
- Choose a quiet place with space for your computer and materials.
- Gather notes, summaries, textbook, paper, pen, headphones, calculator, water, etc.
- Turn off notifications on your phone; make sure housemates won't disturb you
- Check your internet connection.
- Set an alarm to go off 15-30 minute before the test ends to give yourself time to review your answers and submit before the deadline.

DURING THE TEST
- Contact your instructor immediately if any technology issues occur.
- Stay on the testing website; use other tabs/windows/phone to look things up if allowed.
- Keep track of time.
- Read the question carefully: does it ask you to *define, compare, contrast, etc.*?
- **Write answers in your own words**. Don't copy from your textbook or instructor's notes. Cite your sources if needed. Follow academic integrity guidelines.
- If allowed by instructor, write your answers in a word processing program and copy/paste into the test when done.
- Create a backup copy of your answers in case you have unexpected technical issues. Copy them to a Word document or take a screenshot if your instructor allows.
- Take a screenshot of the "submission" screen as proof in case any issues arise.

Sources: Adjusting to online learning and taking online exams, University of Toronto, Scarborough
            Covid-19 Response Take-Home and Online Exams, University of Toronto
            Tips for Open Book Tests, Janice Galloway, Sheridan, 2020