

Hints for doing well on the APES Exam

1. DO NOT STAY UP LATE STUDYING THE NIGHT BEFORE THE EXAM! Have your favorite snack and go to bed early. A clear, rested mind is the most important thing you can take to the AP Exam.
2. Dress comfortably and make sure to bring plenty of sharpened pencils and good erasers.
3. Think before you bubble. Read questions completely before answering. Eliminate careless mistakes.
4. Do not waste time on multiple-choice questions that are extremely difficult. Skip them; then return to them after you get warmed up.
5. Use leftover time to double check your answers.
6. On the free-response section, distribute the 90 minutes equally on the four essay questions (22 minutes each). Do not make the mistake of wasting a large percent of your time on one question, and then not having enough time to answer the other three.
7. Devote time to answering all the sections (a, b, c, d, etc.) for each essay question.
8. Take a few moments to think and organize your thoughts before you start to answer each essay question.
9. Write very clearly and large enough for the reader to read your words.
10. If you use diagrams, label and explain them. A diagram without an explanation gets zero points.
11. Eliminate “fluff.” You do not need fancy introductions or conclusions on your essays. Get right to the point.
12. Be a point sponge! Write down what you know best, first. Think broadly when you are answering the essay questions; you have more information in your head than you realize. Don't forget to add detail and examples. Don't fabricate information that you don't know is true, it is a waste of time and will not earn any points.
13. Use underlining, especially if you are a poor writer, but be sure to give a full explanation. Just listing things will earn zero points.
14. If you are going to write down several points, write down the best ones first. Graders may be instructed to just grade the first one or two things you write, ignoring the rest.
15. When answering the essay questions, stay on the topics that are being asked. Do not add extraneous information that does not pertain to the question being asked.
16. Go in with a positive attitude—you have the knowledge to do a great job on this test!

More Hints for doing well on the APES Exam

1. YOU MUST SHOW YOUR WORK, be certain to write out all the steps clearly so the reader/grader can easily see and understand your work. Many students lose points because they do their math calculations in their heads or on a sheet of paper other than the answer sheet, and then fail to transfer the information onto the answer sheet.
2. No points are taken off for wrong or incorrect information, but simply writing a lot will not necessarily earn points—you must answer the question being asked. It is not uncommon for answers that fill two or three pages to earn no points.
3. Students will not receive points for restating the question. Embellishing and embroidering the question and then writing it down as an answer will receive no credit. Students must demonstrate knowledge and understanding.
4. Be careful when you interpret charts and graphs. Many students draw erroneous conclusions because they have misinterpreted a graph or chart.
5. Practice your math! Every AP Environmental Science student should be comfortable working with percentages, decimals, rounding, fractions, algebra, exponents, and scientific notation.
6. Outline form and bullets are not acceptable, answers must be written in prose style.
7. Students must demonstrate a deep understanding of the subject whether it's a biogeochemical cycle or a solar panel. Just throwing out terms, vocabulary and factoids is not enough.
8. Do not be fragmentary in your explanations, everything should fit together logically into a complete answer. Make sure you tie all the “pieces” of your answer together.
9. Make sure, whenever possible, to support your statements with examples. Good examples will let the reader/grader know that you understand what you are talking about. Often, examples are required to earn some of the points available on a question.