

Taking a Test or Quiz on Blackboard? Here are some Good Practices

- 1. Do not wait until the last minute!** If you run into trouble while taking or submitting the test, you want to leave yourself ample time to get the problem resolved. Immediately notify your instructor and call GWIT at (202) 994-4948 to troubleshoot any technical issues. It may also be helpful to take screenshots to share with your instructor and technical staff. Do this by clicking the PrntScr (print screen) button on your keyboard (Cmd-Shift-4 on Macs), then open Word and paste.
- 2. Limit the applications you have running in the background.** You want to make sure you are not using up bandwidth and or resources that may slow down your interaction with the test in Blackboard.
- 3. Be aware of time!** Blackboard has a three-hour time out. Your Internet Service Provider may have something even shorter. This means that if your browser is idling on a Blackboard test page for greater than this amount of time and then you try to Submit the test, it is possible that you will lose data and have to login to Blackboard again.
- 4. Use Word or Notepad...or another text editor to author your essay and or short answer responses.** Particularly for longer essays, you want to ensure your words live locally until you copy/paste them into the Blackboard test. You don't want to spend time typing directly into the test form and lose your work if something unexpected occurs (like a power outage or a dog running away with your laptop). Yes, test answers are periodically auto-saved, but don't you want your brilliant answers living on your local drive, anyway?
- 5. Use single clicks and internal navigation!** One of the quickest ways to inadvertently leave the test page or receive undesired results is to hit your browser's Back button or double click on an action button or link on the test page. Blackboard is meant to be navigated using the interface so be sure to make use of the internal navigation. If you need to open a different web page during the test, open a new browser window first.
- 6. Make sure to Save your answers.** Next to each answer and at the top and bottom of the test page is a Save button. Even though Blackboard will periodically auto-save your answers, do use the Save buttons frequently. This does a few things for you: It keeps your interaction with the server active, so the time-out issue from #3 above goes away, and it also causes a great calm to surround you during a challenging time.
- 7. Submit. Submit. Submit.** You may be inclined to get to the end of a test, click *Save all Answers* at the bottom of the page and then close your browser. However, if you are done, do click *Save and Submit*, not simply *Save all Answers*. If you mistakenly choose the latter, your test will not be submitted.
- 8. Auto-Submit is a thing!** When you first click on a Test link in Blackboard, you are directed to an interim page that gives you instructions for taking the test. Two very important elements on this page are whether there's a Timer for the test as well as if the test will be *Auto-Submitted* once the timer reaches a certain limit. If Auto-Submit is turned OFF, you can go overtime and this is reported to the instructor. If it is turned on, everything you have saved will be submitted when the timer hits its limit.

9. **Consider a hardline.** If you have access to an internet connection over a hardline, rather than WiFi, we suggest you take your test using it. WiFi can be unreliable, particularly if you move from one location to another during the test. You may not acknowledge whether or not you're connected when you go to hit Submit.
10. **Disable pop-up blockers.** Yep, disable pop-up blockers.
11. **Keep randomness in mind.** Instructors can control the randomness of question order as well as answer order on each students test. This means that your multiple choice possibility "A" may be someone else's "B," "C," "D," etc. For that reason, when the test results come back, be sure to pay more attention to the content of the answers rather than the number/letter associated with them.