

The following test anxiety diagnostic is best used as an “ice breaker” to get students thinking about the impact of test anxiety on performance. This is an excellent device for beginning a dialog between the learning skills professional or a college counselor and the student. It is a logical progression then to open a dialog about strategies, techniques, practices, and the skills for college level learning that will help get test anxiety under control.

MEASURE YOUR TEST ANXIETY

Some test anxiety can actually sharpen the senses and speed recall. However, when test anxiety rises above a certain level, it can have the opposite effect. The following diagnostic test can give you an idea of how much test anxiety you experience and what to do about it if it has become an impediment.

How much test anxiety do you have? Circle “True” or “False” according to your response to each statement.

1. **True False** While taking an important exam, I find myself thinking of how much brighter the other students are than I am.
2. **True False** If I were to take an intelligence test, I would worry a great deal before taking it.
3. **True False** If I knew I was going to take an intelligence test, I would feel less confident and anxious.
4. **True False** While taking an important exam, I perspire a great deal.
5. **True False** During class examinations, I find myself thinking of things unrelated to the actual course material.
6. **True False** I get to feeling very panicky when I have to take a surprise exam.
7. **True False** During a test, I find myself thinking of the consequences of failing.
8. **True False** After important tests, I am frequently so tense my stomach gets upset.
9. **True False** I freeze up on things like intelligence tests and final exams.
10. **True False** Getting good grades on one test doesn't seem to increase my confidence on the second.
11. **True False** I sometimes feel my heart beating very fast during important exams.
12. **True False** After taking a test, I always feel I could have done better than I actually did.
13. **True False** I usually get depressed after taking a test.
14. **True False** I have an uneasy, upset feeling before taking a final examination.
15. **True False** When taking a test, my emotional feelings interfere with my performance.
16. **True False** During a course examination, I frequently get so nervous that I forget facts I really know.
17. **True False** I seem to defeat myself while working on important tests.
18. **True False** The harder I work at taking a test or studying for one, the more confused I get.
19. **True False** As soon as an exam is over, I try to stop worrying about it, but I just can't.
20. **True False** During exams, I sometimes wonder if I'll ever get through school.
21. **True False** I would rather write a paper than take an examination for my grade in a course.
22. **True False** I wish examinations did not bother me so much.
23. **True False** I think I could do much better on tests if I could take them alone and not feel pressured by time limits.

24. **True False** Thinking about the grade I may get in a course interferes with my studying and performance on tests.
25. **True False** If examinations could be done away with, I think I would actually learn more.
26. **True False** On exams I am fearful I will forget something if I don't write fast and answer quickly.
27. **True False** I really can see why some people get so anxiety ridden about tests.
28. **True False** Thoughts of doing poorly interfere with my performance on tests.
29. **True False** I don't study any harder for final exams than for the rest of my coursework.
30. **True False** Even when I'm well prepared for a test, I feel very anxious about it.
31. **True False** I don't enjoy eating before an important test.
32. **True False** Before an important examination, I find my hands or arms trembling.
33. **True False** I feel the need for "cramming" before an exam.
34. **True False** The university should recognize that some students are more nervous than others about tests and that this affects their performance.
35. **True False** I feel very uneasy just before getting a test paper back.
36. **True False** I dread courses where the instructor has the habit of giving "pop"quizzes.

Scoring

The total number of "True "responses is your test anxiety score. Count and place that number in the box.

A score of 11 or below suggests low test anxiety.

A score of 12 to 20 suggests medium test anxiety.

A score above 20 indicates high test anxiety.

In general, a score of 15 or higher suggests that you have enough discomfort when taking tests that it could impede your performance. A high test anxiety score is not necessarily a cause for alarm. Scoring in the medium to high range simply means that you could benefit from meetings with a learning skills specialist or campus counselor. Excess test anxiety interferes with learning and recall and can be overcome.

Some of the anxiety reducing techniques can produce dramatic results in a fairly short period of time. Permanent changes in how you handle test anxiety very rarely happen immediately. They can happen in a reasonable amount of time with help from a professional in the field.

One *major cause* of test anxiety is going into a test not knowing whether you've learned the material or not. It is normal for humans to experience anxiety when facing situations involving the unknown. Using a study technique such as the Notecard Question and Answer Technique or the Cornell System can go a long way to help identify what you have and have not learned BEFORE you take a test when something can still be done about it.

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