Help, I’m Stuck!

This activity will help you learn some strategies for when you are writing an exam and you get stuck.

Scenario:
It’s your final exam, and it’s worth 50% or your final grade. You’ve worked hard all year. You’ve studied. Now you’re writing the exam, but you’ve gotten stuck!

Question Time:
Question 1: You’re stuck because you’ve reached a question that you don’t understand. What are your best options?
   a) Pick an option at random.
   b) Ask for clarification.
   c) Read the question again.
   d) B and C
Correct: B and C are both good strategies. Reading the question again might make it clearer. If you still don’t understand the question, you can ask your instructor to explain it.

Question 2: You’re stuck on a short answer or essay question because you don’t know the answer. What are your best options?
   a) Write anything you know about the topic.
   b) Skip the question and come back to it.
   c) Look for clues in other questions.
   d) All of the above
Correct: A, B, and C are all good options. If you write what you know about the topic, you might cover some of the points and get partial marks. Other questions in the test might cover the same topic, and offer clues to the answer. Skipping the question for now frees up time that can be better used on questions that you do know.

Question 3: You’re stuck on a multiple choice question because you don’t know the answer. What are your best options?
   a) Skip the question and come back to it.
   b) Eliminate answers you know to be incorrect.
   c) Look for clues in other questions.
   d) All of the above
Correct: A, B, and C are all good options. Eliminating incorrect answers narrows your choices. Other questions in the test might cover the same topic, and offer clues to the
answer. Skipping the question for now frees up time that can be better used on questions that you do know.

Question 4: You’re stuck on a short answer or essay question because you don’t know where to start. What are your best options?
   a) Create an outline for essay questions.
   b) Just start writing.
   c) A and B.
   d) None of the above.
Correct: A and B are both good options. An outline plans your answer and helps you cover all the important points. Once you have an outline, just start writing. Once you’ve started writing, you can push past the writer’s block.

Question 5: You’re stuck because you think you know the answer to a question, but you can’t remember it. What are your best options?
   a) Pick an option at random.
   b) Visualize the answer’s location in your notes or readings.
   c) Think of your mnemonic devices.
   d) B and C
Correct: B and C are both good strategies. Remembering what you wrote in your notes might jog your memory of the information. Mnemonic devices are useful memory triggers, especially if you are trying to remember a list.

Congratulations! You now know what to do if you are writing a test and you get stuck.