

Tips for Using Tests in Blackboard – For Students

Before Taking a Blackboard Test

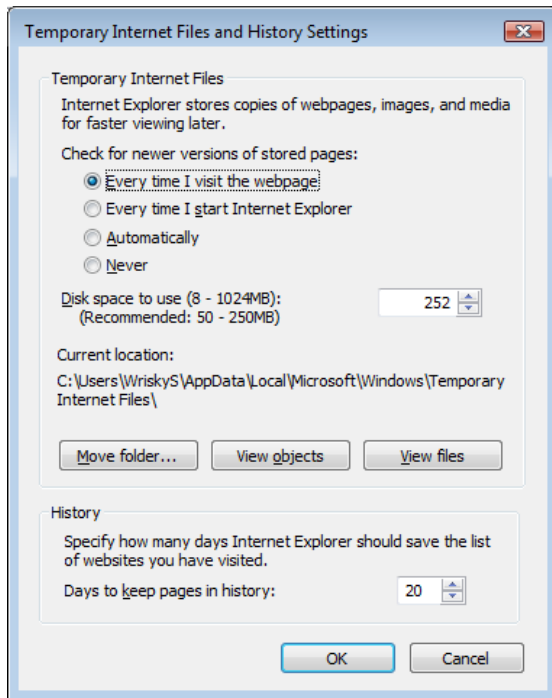
Your computer should meet the following minimum specifications:

Browser and Operating Systems:

- **Windows** - Use **Microsoft Internet Explorer 7** or **Mozilla Firefox 2.0**; these can be downloaded from <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=9AE91EBE-3385-447C-8A30-081805B2F90B&displaylang=en> and <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/all-older.html> respectively.
- **Mac OS** – Use Mozilla Firefox 2.0; this can be downloaded from <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/all.html>

Tips:

- If your test is timed, enable your browser's status bar (View > Status Bar. It shows up at the bottom of your page) so that you can see the timer.
- Avoid using a wireless internet connection if possible.
- Disable pop-up blocker software. (Firefox automatically blocks pop-ups. You NEED to disable pop-ups for the Blackboard site. See your browser's documentation for details on allowing pop ups. Also, be sure you are not running 3rd party pop up blockers, such as those provided by Yahoo!
- Remove spyware. Run anti-virus software compatible with your computer.
- Check firewall settings (if applicable) to make sure settings aren't blocking Blackboard or CUOnline sites. Depending on your access location, this could be on your computer, on a network or through your ISP.
- Your browser may need to be set to check for newer versions of stored pages every visit. In Internet Explorer 7, go to the Tools menu and choose Internet Options. Under Browsing history, choose Settings. Under Check for newer versions of stored pages, check Every time I visit the webpage. Click OK. Click OK again.



- Make sure your Java Virtual Machine version is current (Version 6 Update 13). This can be updated at <http://www.java.com/en/>
- It is recommended that you **CLOSE** all other programs running on your computer prior to starting a Blackboard exam. If you have multiple programs running at one time, it may cause problems.
- Take your test as soon as you are ready. **DO NOT** wait until the last day to take a test in Blackboard. If you have technical difficulties or lose your connection, there may not be enough time for you to resolve the issue, and you may not be permitted to complete or re-take your exam.
- **DO NOT** enter any test or exam until you are ready to take it! Once you click **OK** to enter a test, Blackboard counts this as an attempt at the test, even if you only look at the test and do not answer any questions. Your instructor is the only one who can clear an incomplete attempt from your record.

While You Are Taking a Blackboard Test

It is recommended that you:

- **DO** wait until the test has loaded fully before you start answering questions.
- **DO NOT** resize or refresh the window during a test. Make sure to set the window size the way you want it *before* you start your assessment. Most browsers refresh the page when you resize the screen; this means Blackboard will try to reload your exam. This may bar you from taking/finishing the exam.

- **DO NOT** click anywhere *outside* the test area during an exam. This includes Blackboard navigation buttons, like Announcements, for example. Clicking outside the test area will cause Blackboard to kick you out of the test before you have completed it.
- **DO NOT** click the **back** arrow on your web browser while you're taking a test. Navigate using only the arrow keys **within** the Blackboard exam. Using the back button can kick you out of the exam before you are finished.
- **DO NOT** click the Submit, Next or Arrow keys more than once. It may take a few moments for you to receive confirmation or move to the next question, but be patient. Clicking more than once doesn't make things happen more quickly; it actually slows down the system and causes test errors.

Saving Answers and Submitting Your Test

It is recommended that you:

- **DO NOT** save every question on exams that show all of the questions on one page at the same time: Instead, Click the **SAVE** button after answering every 3 or 4 questions. This will automatically save the question you are working on and all of the answers above it. For example, if you click **SAVE** to the right of question #4, Blackboard will save the answers to questions #1, 2, 3 and 4.
- For exams that display only one question at a time: Clicking the arrow to move to the next question and then clicking on **OK** will save the response to the question.
- For exams that allow multiple attempts: Remember that every time you click the **OK** button to re-take the exam, your previous exam will be deleted – and the questions may be different the next time around.
- **DO** click on the **Submit** button at the end of any test when you are finished, otherwise the test will not be recorded to the Grade Center.
- If you go over the allocated time limit, you will not receive an automatic score. Instead, you will see an exclamation point under My Grades. This means that the instructor needs to go into the Grade Center and hand grade the test. Blackboard will NOT force a submission at the end of a timed test, but will warn the student when they have 1 minute left to submit the test themselves.

Dial-up Internet Connections

Taking a test is not considered to be internet activity for most dial-up Internet Service Providers (ISPs). After a certain amount of “inactivity,” your ISP will disconnect your session. To lower your risk of being disconnected, we **recommend** the following preventative measures:

- **ONLY** use the scroll bar to move around in your test. **DO NOT** use the Back button, as that can cause Blackboard to kick you out of the test.
- **TURN OFF** Instant Messenger, email notification and/or call waiting while taking a test. These processes may interrupt your internet connection.
- **DOT NOT** listen to internet radio. The streaming audio from internet radio is seen as activity. Please note, this solution will only work on a newer computer with a lot of RAM.
- **DO SAVE** your answers approximately every five minutes, using the SAVE button at the bottom of the page.

Reference:

Florida Community College <http://acid.fccj.edu/newlbsite/>