

“Test-Time” Strategies for Students, Parents, and Teachers



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STUDENTS' TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

Preparing for Tests

- Maintain good study habits: Do your class work.
 - Have a clear understanding of homework assignments before leaving class.
 - Keep a record of assignments received and completed.
 - Make a study schedule and follow it.
 - Tell your parents about schoolwork and homework.
 - Turn in homework on time.
 - Get make-up assignments when returning from an absence.
 - See teachers for additional help.
- Seek and use past homework assignments, class notes, and available review materials.
- Follow directions.
- Find out when tests will be given out.
- Get a good night's rest and eat a normal breakfast before testing.

During Tests

- Read and pay careful attention to all directions.
- Read each passage and accompanying questions.
- Read every possible answer—the best one could be last.
- Read and respond to items one at a time rather than thinking about the whole test.
- Reread, when necessary, the parts of a passage needed for selecting the correct answer.
- Don't expect to find a pattern in the positions of the correct answers.
- Don't make uneducated guesses. Try to get the correct answer by reasoning and eliminating wrong answers.
- Decide exactly what the question is asking; one response is clearly best.
- Don't spend too much time on any one question.
- Skip difficult questions until all other questions have been answered. On scrap paper, keep a record of the unanswered items to return to, if time permits.
- Make sure to record the answer in the correct place on the answer sheet.
- Only change an answer if you are sure the first one you picked was wrong. Be sure to completely erase changed answers.
- Work as rapidly as possible with accuracy.
- After completion of the test, use any remaining time to check your answers.
- Keep a good attitude. Think positively!

STUDENTS' TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES CONTINUED

After Tests

- Examine your test scores; ask the teacher to explain your test scores if needed.
- Congratulate yourself on identified areas of strength.
- Identify areas of weakness which you will want to improve for a better performance next time.
- Ask your teacher to suggest areas of study that will help you perform better on the next test.

TEST ANXIETY

Students may experience anxiety about tests and may experience heightened anxiety before a testing situation. A certain degree of test anxiety is normal and may help students prepare more effectively, work more efficiently, and remain focused during testing. Too much anxiety, however, can negatively affect performance. The following strategies may assist students, parents, and teachers in reducing test anxiety.

Student Strategies for Reducing Test Anxiety

- Share your feelings of anxiety with parents and teachers.
- Think of the test as an opportunity to show what you know.
- Review homework and materials which pertain to the test topics.
- Relax, breathe deeply and stay focused on the test.
- Remember the test is only one way your academic performance is measured.

PARENT TEST-SUPPORT STRATEGIES

Preparing for Testing

- Note test dates on your home calendar; schedule appointments on non-testing days.
- Encourage your child to take responsibility for homework and class study.
- Help you child learn how to find information independently.
- Praise your child for work done well.
- Encourage your child to ask questions at home and in class.
- Get to know your child's teachers.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences.
- Confer with teachers on a regular basis for progress reports.
- Gather available test preparation materials.
- Assure your child knows that you value a good education.

Testing Day

- See that your child is rested and eats breakfast.
- See that your child arrives at school on time and is relaxed.
- Encourage your child to do the best work possible.
- Do not send your child to school if illness is apparent.
- Do not remove your child from school on test days for appointments.

After Testing

- Examine all test reports sent home.
- Determine areas of strengths and weaknesses.
- Praise your child's testing strengths and make a plan to address identified weaknesses.
- See your child's principal, counselor or teacher if additional information is required.

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Parent Strategies for Reducing Test Anxiety

- Discuss the test openly and in a positive way.
- Have realistic expectations of your child's performance while encouraging his/her best efforts.
- Emphasize that the test is only one measure of academic performance.
- Emphasize that test scores do not determine a person's worth.

TEACHER ADMINISTRATION STRATEGIES

Before Test Administration

- Notify students of the test dates in advance.
- Explain the purposes for testing.
- Create an uncluttered testing environment.
- Use a variety of test formats during the school year.
- Become familiar with the materials and procedures to be used with the tests.
- Identify which students may need and/or be eligible for test accommodations.
- Read the Test Administration Manual carefully for instructions and information.
- When pre-coding student-specific data on the answer documents, be sure to read and follow coding instructions completely and carefully.
- Encourage all students to be present on test dates.

During Test Administration

- Adhere to time limits specified for tests.
- Read carefully the directions to the students.
- Expect every student to read all test content material without assistance unless otherwise noted in the Test Administration Manual.
- Do not read the test, unless specially instructed to do so in State manuals or for student test accommodations.
- Monitor to ensure that students begin marking answers in the proper area of the answer sheet.
- Anticipate and eliminate test disruptions.
- Make sure students work independently.

After Test Administration

- Collect and account for all test materials.
- Assure student demographic information on the answer documents is marked accurately.
- Document any absent students and arranged for them to make-up tests, if possible.
- Adhere to all test return instructions.
- Analyze test reports for instructional strengths and weaknesses.
- Develop a plan to modify instructional strategies to address any identified test weaknesses.

TEACHER ADMINISTRATION STRATEGIES CONTINUED

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Teacher Strategies for Reducing Test Anxiety

- Discuss the purpose of the test and how it can help students progress academically.
- Have realistic expectations of students' performance while encouraging students to do their best.
- Allow students to express their anxiety verbally or in writing.
- Be careful not to over emphasize the importance of the test.