

Part III: General Test-Taking Tips

Teaching Teachers and Parents Ways
to help our students become
TEST-WISE

1.) Before the Test

PLAN AHEAD: During class, always be thinking of what is going to be on an exam. What problems or notes will you need to study to do well?

PRACTICE REGULARLY: Develop a set of review questions (or problems) and answers to use for practice before the exam. Make copies of blank maps, charts, diagrams, etc. for practice. Keep one filled out (of each kind) correctly for feedback. For history dates, science definitions, language vocabulary, and other single answer information create flash cards and drill regularly.

STUDY ACTIVELY: Prepare by writing definitions, summaries, or outlines. This is more effective than simply reading over your notes. You learn more when you get actively engaged. Get a "study buddy" or make up games, anything that will help you learn is worth the extra effort.

TEST YOURSELF: Practice for the test by testing yourself.

SLEEP: Get plenty of rest before a test.

EXAM DAY WARM-UP: Study the night before. In the morning, solve a few problems or answer a few questions for a quick review. Just like a warm-up, it helps your brain to get "in gear".

FOOD: The food you eat on test days should give you plenty of constant energy. Carbohydrates are easy to digest and give fairly steady energy. Eat carbohydrates like fruit, fruit juice, cereals, and bread. Limit heavy foods that may make you sleepy. These include meat and oily or fried foods. Be careful of coffee and other caffeine drinks since your natural nervousness will supply plenty of adrenaline to your system. Sugar also tends to rev you up, then let you down; use it in moderation.

2.) During the Test

RELAX! It is normal to be nervous before a test. Don't worry.

KEEP A POSITIVE ATTITUDE ABOUT YOUR ABILITY TO DO WELL ON THE TEST. There is always another chance.

IF YOU ARE NOT SURE HOW TO ANSWER A QUESTION, ELIMINATE ANSWER CHOICES THAT YOU KNOW ARE INCORRECT AND CHOOSE FROM AMONG THE REMAINING OPTIONS. Do not guess blindly.

TAKE A GOOD WRITING UTENSIL TO CLASS. (Teachers appreciate dark lead or ink they can see. Avoid colored inks and pencils.) Watch your handwriting, spelling, and writing mechanics during the test.

BE SURE YOU CAN HEAR THE DIRECTIONS. Raise your hand if you cannot hear or do not understand the directions.

IF YOU ARE MARKING YOUR ANSWERS ON A SEPARATE SHEET, BE SURE THE CIRCLES ARE FILLED IN NEATLY AND COMPLETELY. Make sure they match the item numbers in the test book. If you realize that you have been marking your answers in the wrong place, let the proctor or teacher know immediately.

READ QUICKLY THROUGH ALL THE QUESTIONS BEFORE BEGINNING. Estimate the time you can allow for each question.

PLAN TO ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS YOU KNOW FIRST. Go through the entire test and answer everything you know. Then go back and start to work on the questions that were skipped.

READ THE GENERAL TEST INSTRUCTIONS. You may have options as to how many questions you must answer. You may also have to do different things for different parts of the test, read all directions carefully.

BE SURE TO READ EACH QUESTION CAREFULLY TO DETERMINE WHAT IS REALLY BEING ASKED. Before responding to a question, be sure you know what is being asked. For example, an item might say, "Which of these is *not* an even number?" If you read the item too quickly, you may miss the word *not* and respond incorrectly. Sketch an outline in the margin or on scrap paper making sure that all the important points are included in your answer and that they follow a logical order.

AVOID ANSWERS THAT BEGIN: "It is when..." and "It is because..." Who knows what "it" is referring to?

WHEN WRITING YOUR ESSAY ANSWERS, START A SEPARATE PARAGRAPH FOR EACH OF THE MAIN IDEAS OR STATEMENTS WITHIN

ONE ESSAY ANSWER. Put your details and examples under their respective main ideas. This aids organization and writing mechanics.

READ OVER YOUR PAPER BEFORE YOU TURN IT IN. Check for completeness in expression and ideas and for mechanical errors. Also make sure you have answered all the questions.

USE ALL OF YOUR TEST TIME. Check and recheck and only stop when you are directed to.

MARK YOUR ANSWERS CORRECTLY. Read the directions carefully to see answers are to be marked. Are answers to be checked, circled, underlined, x'ed, lines, drawn to connect answers, etc...