

Test Taking Skills

Often you will hear students telling each other that they get “butterflies” at the thought of taking a test. Others talk about the feeling of having “knots” inside their stomachs. No matter how one describes this condition, all agree that the fear of taking tests brings on these sensations. You can eliminate this anxiety if you will put your sharpened study skills to work.

Test Preparation

Organize a successful plan of attack for taking tests. Allow time to prepare. Thumbing quickly through your notes the last fifteen minutes before a test may only confuse you.

Be prepared by doing the following:

1. Find out what type of test will be given (i.e., essay, true/false, fill in the blank, etc.)
2. Begin reviewing the material several days before the test.
3. Make a list of short summary notes; study them.
4. See your teacher for help if you do not understand certain parts of the material.
5. Get plenty of sleep and eat breakfast. You will need all of your energy for the test.

During the Tests

1. Pay attention to all oral instructions.
2. If you do not understand, ask questions.
3. Keep track of your time.
4. Don't dwell on questions that you don't know how to answer.
5. Relax and think of what you DO know.

REMEMBER that tests help you. They show you how much you know and what you still need to learn. They help your teacher know your strengths and weaknesses. They also give you practice for the next test.

Types of Tests

Essay Questions

The term “essay” should not be a signal to begin writing but to begin organizing your thoughts.

1. Read the question. Look for key words such as “explain,” “compare,” “list,” “describe,” and “give the reasons.”
2. Make an informal outline of key points that you will cover.
3. Try to say the most in the fewest words. Your answers should be clear and to the point. However, be careful to write enough to answer the question fully.
4. Proofread what you have written.

Multiple Choice Questions

A multiple choice test is one where you are given four or more answers and are expected to choose the one correct answer.

1. Read the questions and all four answers first.
2. Choose the answer that you think is correct and test it by reading the statement it completes.
3. Be careful of statements which are partly true and/or partly false.
4. Eliminate those statements that you know are not correct. This usually leaves two choices.
5. Use reasoning and carefully think out the correct answer.

True/False Questions

True/false questions are usually short statements that seem fairly easy to answer. Read them with care; watch out for these word traps: ALL, NEVER, ALWAYS, EVERYONE, NO ONE.

Is guessing good or bad? That depends on the directions given and how your teacher marks tests. If there is no penalty for guessing, then answer all questions.

Matching Questions

In matching questions you are usually given two columns, each having its own set of ideas or terms. Your job is to match the items from one group to the items in the other group.

1. Read the directions carefully.
2. Read both columns. Note: You may have more items in one group than another.
3. Work the easy ones first.
4. BE NEAT. Mark through choices as they are used. It is very easy to get mixed up.

Fill in the Blank Questions

Usually fill in the blank questions require one or two words to complete a statement or answer a question. This type of question requires specific word answers.

1. Don't rush.
2. Read each question carefully.
3. Think out your answers.