

TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES



There are many test-taking strategies that are commonly recommended for students. Below are a variety of test-taking strategies that we feel are particularly noteworthy.

General Strategies:

Make a study schedule and follow it.

Remember, you can write in most test booklets. Whatever marks or scribbles help you figure out answers, do them.

As you work through the test, mark questions that you answered, but weren't sure about. This way you know which ones to come back to later and think out some more.

Only change an answer if you are SURE the first one you picked was wrong.

Multiple-Choice Questions:

Read every possible answer and choose the BEST one. The best one could be the last one.

Don't spend too much time on any one question.

Don't make uneducated guesses. Try to reason things out.

Always make use of the good old process of elimination. Check off the choices that don't sound right. Then choose your answer from the choices that remain. Even with guessing, this improves your odds of being correct.

Choices are often incorrect when:

- *they contain terms totally unfamiliar to you*
- *they contain absolute words like “always, never, all, none”, etc. (Correct choices more often contain qualifying words like “frequently, often, rarely, typically”, etc.)*

Correct choices are often longer and contain more information.

For the “All of the above” choice: If two choices already seem correct, then “All of the above” is probably the correct choice.



“When can I stop making wild guesses and start making educated guesses?”

True-False Questions:

Words like “No, never, none, always, every, entirely, only” usually indicate “false” answers.

Every part of a true sentence must be true to be “true”. If any one part of the sentence is false, it’s “false”.

If you’re not sure of the answer at all, guess “true”. There are usually more “true” choices than “false”.

Matching:

Go through the matching list twice. The first time through, do the ones you're most sure about. Then go back to match the remaining more difficult ones. Don't scribble out used choices. You won't be able to read what they said when you go back over them.

Usually one column has short terms, and the other one has longer-sentence choices. Read down the column of longer-sentenced choices to match with the shorter terms instead of the other way around, even if this means not going in numerical order.

Math Questions:

For educated guesses with "number" choices, toss out the high and low choices and consider the middle range numbers.

For word problems, check to see if your answer makes sense for the kind of question it is. (You shouldn't get something like .44937 for a friend's age.) Also, whenever you can, make drawings of what the word problem is talking about.

If your answer doesn't seem correct or doesn't match a choice:

- *make sure you copied the problem correctly.*
- *double-check calculator work. (It's real easy to have punched something in incorrectly.)*

Thematic Essay Questions:

First, outline a plan of what you're going to say.

After each paragraph you write, go back and reread the essay directions to make sure you're writing about what they're asking you to do. This will help you from drifting off the task.

Plan to answer this list of questions in your essay: Who? What? When? Where? Why?

Write like you're explaining the information to someone who knows nothing about the topic. Don't think that you don't have to explain things clearly because "the teacher knows what I mean".

Passage / Document Selections:

Before you read the passage, read over the questions that follow it. This way you'll have a better idea of what specific information you're looking for as you read. Then as you read, mark or highlight the places in your reading that seem to answer the questions.

Helpful Links:

<http://jc-schools.net/tutorials/test-strategies.ppt>

<http://www.studygs.net/index.htm>

<http://ccc.byu.edu/learning/strategy.php>

<http://www.ozarkcityschools.net/public/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=D%2BDLwl0066c%3D&tabid=385&mid=929>

<http://www.testtakingtips.com/>

