

Strategies for Academic Success, Test Taking, & Overcoming Test Anxiety

Strategies for Academic Success

- Study! Find a quiet space where you can focus – at home, at school, at a library, at a coffee shop.
- Prioritize your time efficiently so you are able to get all homework and studying done.
- Turn in homework assignments on time.
- Attend class!
- Attend a tutoring session.
- Schedule a time to get extra help from a teacher.
- Make sure you know what you missed after an absence and make up the work.
- Make up any quizzes or tests that you missed or that you are able to retake.

Test Taking

- Preparing for a test
 - Study! Review the material thoroughly. Allow plenty of time. Find a comfortable location.
 - Get a good night's sleep.
 - Eat a healthy, well-balanced breakfast. Take a small, nourishing snack with you as well.
 - Be on-time for school/class.
 - Listen carefully to test directions. Ask questions if you are unsure what to do.
 - Stay calm.
 - Do your best, have a positive attitude, and expect good results.
 - Anticipate and deal with test anxiety.
- Test Taking Strategies
 - Read the directions carefully.
 - Budget time appropriately. Start with the easiest questions first. Skip those that you are not sure about and come back to them later.
 - Check work carefully.
 - Read the entire item and all answers.
 - On essay exams, organize your thoughts in a brief outline or graphic organizer, start with a short summary or topic sentence, and then make your points.
 - On multiple-choice exams, eliminate clearly wrong answers and make an educated guess.
- Reading
 - Read questions to passage first and then read passage.
 - Look for key words (such as who, what, where, why, and how) that tell you what to look for when you read the passage.
 - When you come to a word you do not know, look for context clues.
 - For fill-in sentences, always read the entire sentence before you choose an answer. Once answer is chosen, reread the sentence.

- Math
 - When answering questions about maps, charts, graphs, or reference sources, always look back at the diagram to answer the questions. Don't rely on memory.
 - Look for key words such as less than, greatest, between, nearest, least, closest, and so on.
 - Always reduce fractions.
 - Remember an equation must stay balanced.
 - Check subtraction by adding; check division by multiplying; check multiplication by dividing.
 - Draw graphs, pictures, or visual aids to help you visualize the problem.

Tips for Overcoming Test Anxiety

- Take time to prepare for a test...don't try to cram everything into your head at the last minute.
- Read, then repeat. Go over material again and again.
- Close your eyes and visualize material such as dates and facts. Then during the test, you can close your eyes and visualize the same information.
- Build up your confidence. Do something you are really good at prior to the exam...it builds up your confidence before an exam.
- Ask your teacher for advice or to go over any concerns you have about an upcoming test.
- Don't make too much out of a test.
- Relaxation (deep breathing, muscle tensing/relaxing), visualization (guided imagery...a peaceful, natural, relaxing scene), and positive self-talk ("I can do this", "I will do my best", etc.) can be used to replace any negative feelings associated with taking tests.
- Aerobic exercise can help reduce your stress and extra energy, thus reducing the tension in your body.
- Want more ideas? Many college websites have information about test anxiety. You can also work with a doctor or counselor.