

Test Taking Strategies

How to raise your scores on tests with simple knowledge of
how to play the game.

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(You will need ADOBE Reader to access vital resources from this presentation – if you do not have it already
– you may download it here on the ADOBE web site – you will need internet access:

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>



What will be covered?

- ▶ The most essential skills for test-taking.
- ▶ Traps and tricks you need to know.
- ▶ What types of questions are on every test?
- ▶ Navigating your way through the test by area.
- ▶ How to prepare the night before and the morning of testing.
- ▶ Acknowledgements

The most essential skills for test-taking.



- ▶ Do NOT spend more than a minute with each question the first time around.
- ▶ Even though you are told not to write on the testing booklet – it is ok to put a question mark on questions you need to come back to.
- ▶ Go through each section of a test with a “first pass” and go back to questions that you are not sure on.
- ▶ When you go back for a second run – use a process of elimination to wipe out answers that you know are not correct.
- ▶ Do NOT second guess yourself – if your instincts say one thing –it is most likely the right choice.
- ▶ Be careful not to bubble in answers to questions that you will return to – this can throw your whole answer sheet off.
- ▶ It may help you to circle all your answers on the test booklet and fill in the answer sheet last- just make sure you give yourself enough time to do this at the end.

Traps and tricks you need to know.

- ▶ Don't get lured into a charming answer – it is important to read the entire question because test makers like to trick you with (A) – as a likely answer when there may be one that is more appropriate to the question.
- ▶ EXAMPLE: What is the amount of an American coin that is greater in value than a nickel (\$.05) ?
(A) \$.06 (B) \$.07 (C) \$.08 (D) \$.09 (E) \$.10

The answer is (E), but it is easy to get tricked by (A) if you do not read the entire piece and pay close attention to what the question is asking.

More tricks and traps.

- ▶ Don't leave answers blank on the answer sheet – solidly and clearly fill in all blanks in the end – even if you are guessing.
- ▶ If you have unanswered questions in the end that you will have to guess on – make educated guesses by using a process of elimination – mark out answers that are obviously wrong and narrow your guessing field.
- ▶ Usually you are told when you have about 10 minutes left – this is the time to go over your answer sheet and fill in ALL blanks.

What types of questions are on every test?

► Verbal Strategies

- Analogies
- Vocabulary
- Sentence Completion
- Reading Comprehension
- Writing Ability



► Math Strategies

- Basic math Strategies
- Quantitative Comparison
- Math Refresher/Review

Navigating your way through the test by area : Analogies

► Example: CHILD:ADULT

(A) man:boy (B) servant:master (C) Kitten:cat (D) actor:director

- The key to the answer is to logically pose the correct question – The question asks the following: CHILD is related to ADULT in which way? In the same way as A,B,C or D. Then use logic:

A- Does a man grow to be a boy like a child grows into an adult? No.

B- Does a servant grow into a master as a child into an adult? No.

C- Does a kitten grow into a cat Yes, but always read through.

D- Does an actor grow into a director? – This could be, but it is not the best fit like (C) is. The correct answer in this case is (C).

GET THE LOGIC?

Vocabulary

► Learn a short list of prefixes and roots

- Print out this list of 29 prefixes and 25 roots and, if you learn them, you will be able to construct the meanings of over 125,000 words. Not bad for learning 54 items.

[test taking - prefix and roots.pdf](#)

- Another way to increase your vocabulary is READ, READ, READ!
- You can also print out this essential word list - these are words that are commonly used on standardized tests.

[test taking - 6-9 word list.pdf](#)

Sentence Completion – finding the best fit.

- ▶ Example: He is not convinced that you can do the job on time. Convinced means?
(A) Interested (B) daring (C) persuaded (D) rushed

Take each answer choice and insert it into the position of the original word in question:

- ▶ He is not interested? – Possible, but not good.
- ▶ He is not daring? – This doesn't make sense.
- ▶ He is not persuaded? – This sounds good, but read through.
- ▶ He is not rushed? - This doesn't make since.

The answer that makes the most sense is (C) – and that is correct.

If two seem to fit – then trust your instincts – choose what sounds the best.

Sentence completion- The missing word - Looking for clues.

► Example: She is really _____ in public, but she is hated at home.

(A) Smart (B) silly (C) likable (D) despised

- Take the critical thinking approach – the word but gives you a clue that while one thing is happening in one part of the sentence, the *opposite* thing is happening in the other.

In this case (C) is the *opposite*.

Other common clues that indicate *opposites* are: in spite of; regardless of; despite.

Reading Comprehension – What is being tested

▶ **Formulating the main idea of a passage:**

- Selecting the main idea
- Judging the general message from the author
- Selecting the most fitting title for the piece

▶ **Spotting the details:**

- Understanding the references or sections in the passage
- Identifying specific things about the passage.

▶ **Drawing inferences:**

- Weaving together the ideas to see relationships within the passage
- Implying things about the passage even though it is not directly stated.

▶ **Identifying the tone or mood of the passage:**

- * Identifying if the passage serious, sad, funny, etc.

Reading Comprehension – the strategies.

- ▶ **Strategy I** – Be aware of the abilities tested on the previous slide as you read each passage. This way you already know what they will look for.
- ▶ **Strategy II** – Using strategy I, underline key parts, sentences, or words in the passage so that you will be able to spot things quickly in the passage when answering the questions – it also may help to look at the questions prior to reading the passage.

Writing Ability – Things to know if your test includes a writing component:

- ▶ Here are the five things that are measured when you are asked to write an essay reacting to a prompt.

1- spelling, 2- punctuation and capitalization, 3- grammar and usage, 4- diction, style, and sentence structure, 5- logic and organization

- Print out this list of the one thousand most commonly misspelled words. [Test taking - 1000 misspelled.pdf](#)
- Print out this list of 15 spelling rules that will assist you in becoming a master speller. [test taking - spelling rules.pdf](#)

Writing Ability- Formatting and composition

- ▶ First dissect the prompt that you will write to, and numerically list what it is requesting that you do. Doing a quick outline is always helpful.
- ▶ Then fill the prescription- writing a clear introduction explaining what you will address in the order you will address it. The Body -which goes into detail in each area addressed, and finally, a conclusion that shows your reader "See - this is what I said, and this is why I have said it" – restating your intro in a conclusive manner.

Basic Math Strategies

- ▶ Brush up on your math word problems
- ▶ Know your formulas
- ▶ Know your math symbols – Print up this list of math symbol word equivalents. [test taking - math symbols.pdf](#)
- ▶ Know when and how to approximate by using a process of elimination.
- ▶ Reduce and simplify prior to calculating
- ▶ Do use scratch paper and draw out visual representation when you can.

Math Refresher/review – the essential math skills:

► Math Words, Concepts and Rules:

- **TRIANGLE** – Any three sided figure
- **RECTANGLE** – Four-sided figure w/opposite sides equal and parallel. Sides must meet at right angles.
- **SQUARE**- Four sided figure – all four sides equal; opposite sides parallel. Sides meet at right angles
- **PARALLELOGRAM** – Four-sided figure w/opposite sides equal and parallel. Sides do not have to meet at right angles as the rectangle.
- **CIRCLE**- A closed curve whose distance from a central point to any point on the curve is always the same. This distance is called the *radius*. The distance around the curve itself is known as the *circumference*. The *diameter* is twice the radius.

- **PERIMETER**- Perimeter means the length around a figure.
- **AREA OF RECTANGLE** - The area of a rectangle equals its length times its width.
- **AREA OF SQUARE** - The area of a square equals its length times its width.
- **VOLUME OF RECTANGULAR BOX** - The volume of a rectangular box equals its length times its width.
- **AREA OF PARALELOGRAM** - The area of a parallelogram equals its base times its height.
- **AREA OF TRIANGLE** – The area of a triangle equals one half of its base times its height.
- **AREA OF CIRCLE** – The area of a circle equals the square of its radius times pi.
- **PERIMETER OF CIRCLE** (Circumference) – The perimeter of a circle equals its radius times pi times 2.
- **NUMBER LINES** – A number line is a line showing increasing or decreasing numbers.
- **GREATER THAN, LESS THAN, AND EQUAL TO SYMBOLS** – ($<$ Less than) ($>$ greater than) ($=$ equal to).

Fractions

► A fraction has a *numerator* and a *denominator*.

- Example: $\frac{3}{4}$ 3 – numerator, 4- denominator, and the lines that is between is the division sign.

Rules for adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing fractions:

- 1- Equals added to equals are equal.
- 2- equals subtracted from equals are equal.
- 3- you can multiply equals by equals to get equals.
- 4- You can divide equals by equals to get equals

Rules for -Even and Odd Integers

- 1- An even integer is a whole number exactly divisible by 2 (2,4,6,8,10). An Odd integer is a whole number not exactly divisible by 2 (1,3,5,7,9,11).
- 2- An even integer plus or minus another even integer always equals an even integer: $4 + 6 = 10$; $6 - 4 = 2$.
- 3- An even integer plus or minus an odd integer always equals an odd integer: $4 + 1 = 5$; $4 - 3 = 1$.
- 4- An odd integer plus or minus another odd integer always equals an even integer: $3 + 5 = 8$; $9 - 5 = 4$.
- 5- An even integer multiplied by an even integer always equals an even integer: $2 \times 4 = 8$; $4 \times 4 = 16$.
- 6- An even integer multiplied by an odd integer always equals an even integer: $2 \times 3 = 6$.
- 7- An odd integer multiplied by an odd integer always equals an odd integer: $3 \times 3 = 9$; $5 \times 7 = 35$.

8 – An even integer divided by an even integer is sometimes even and sometimes odd – and sometimes not an integer: $4 / 2 = 2$; $12 / 4 = 3$; $10 / 4 = 2.5$; $4 / 8 = .5$.

9 – An even integer divided by an odd integer is sometimes even – never odd – or not an integer: $2 / 1 = 2$; $12 / 3 = 4$; $12 / 11 = 12/11$.

11 - An odd integer divided by an odd integer is never even, sometimes odd, or not an integer: $9 / 3 = 3$; $11 / 9 = 11/9$.

12 – An odd integer divided by an even integer is never an integer: $3 / 2 = 3/2$; $5 / 4 = 5/4$.

AVERAGES

Average means the total number of one group of items divided by the number of another group of items. Example: There are 200 students in a school with 10 classes. What is the average number of student in each class?

$$\text{Average} = \frac{\text{Total number of students}}{\text{Number of classes}} = \frac{200}{10} = 20 \text{ student per class}$$

PARTS

Example: $1/4/$ means 1 in 4 or 1 part in 4 parts.

- Remember to review things like FACTORING, SQUARE ROOTS, and SQUARES - and other formulas that you may need to brush up on.
- Print this list of the 32 most common math problems.
[test taking - 32 common math problems.pdf](#)

THESE ARE THE MATH CONCEPTS THAT ARE MOST COMMONLY FOUND ON STANDARDIZED TESTS – REMEMBER TO READ ALL OF THE ANSWERS BEFORE CHOOSING THE BEST FIT.

How to prepare the night before testing.



- ▶ In our busy lives - It is easy to forget that we are taking a test the next day – you need to break your routines the night before and morning of testing.
- ▶ Prepare a snack for the next day – something light.
- ▶ It is OK to review a bit just before you go to bed (No TV or Video Games) – But – Don't try to study that morning. You will get confused.
- ▶ Get at least 7-8 hours of peaceful sleep.
- ▶ Eat a high carb. – balanced breakfast in the morning.
- ▶ When testing time arrives – Just breath deep and do your best.

Acknowledgments:

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