

HAVE A TEST COMING UP? MAKE SURE YOU ARE PREPARED!

"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." -Benjamin Franklin

The best thing you can do to prepare for a test is to start studying early! If you think you can cram all the information into your head the night before and actually retain it, well, you're wrong! Follow these steps to ensure success on tests and quizzes.

4-5 Days before the quiz/test

- Make sure you have all of the notes/materials needed to study
- If you find you are missing something, ask the teacher or a classmate for the information.
- Look over the study guide (if there is one) so you know exactly what you will be expected to know
- Using this sheet as a guideline, make a study plan and schedule specific study tasks in your planner

2-3 days before test or quiz

- Employ active study strategies (rewrite your notes, make flashcards, highlight and write questions on notes and power points, summarize the main ideas from the textbook, etc.) to ensure that you are not just aimlessly looking at your notes
- Spend at least 30 minutes each study session
- If there is a concept you don't understand, make sure you ask your teacher for clarification

1 day before the test

- Test yourself. Put yourself into an environment as similar to the testing environment as possible – that means no notes or text books in front of you - (unless it's an open-book or open-note test) and answer questions that will be similar to questions on the test. If your teacher has provided a study guide for you – use those questions. If you have created your own study guide – use those questions. Extra questions/problems can be found in homework questions that you weren't required to answer (if your teacher assigned odds you can go back and do the evens), at the end of most textbooks or by asking your teacher for extra practice problems.
- This is your chance to solidify what you have been studying, spend 30-45 minutes (1 hour or longer if it is a big test or final) studying the night before.
- Check your study guide again; make sure you have covered anything.
- Go to bed at a decent hour; no one can perform well when they are sleep deprived.

Day of test/quiz

- Eat breakfast! Bring water and snacks to school.
- Wear comfortable clothes.
- Relax! If you have followed the steps above, you are well prepared and should do fine. Stress will only make you do worse.
- Review your notes when you have the chance before the test/quiz.
- Come to class early and with all the materials you need.

Taking the test/quiz

- Go through and answer all the questions you know first. This will boost your confidence on the test and ensure you have time to answer all the ones you now.
- Go back and work on the rest that you need to work out or think about a little more.
- Finally, go back and guess if you have to on the ones that are left.
- If you find yourself getting nervous, take some deep breaths, picture a relaxing place, or do something else that calms you.
- Never turn a test or quiz in early. Use all of your time to check your answers and make sure you didn't make any silly mistakes. (Don't worry if others are turning their tests in early – it's not a race.)

Test -Taking Techniques

GENERAL

Pencil Pushing

Mark your answer carefully.

Not too hard not too soft. Fill the shape completely.

Clock Watching

Pace yourself, pay attention to the clock!

Half the time left... more than half way done.

Leave no blanks - 2 minute warning

Fill in any pure guesses with either B or C (the middle answers).

Fill every pure guess in the same slot B or C.

Negative #1 Watch out for negative words such as NOT or OPPOSITE

Be clear on the answer you are looking for!

Such words often appear in bold, *italics*, or all CAPTIALS.

Negative #2 Watch out for negative words such as NOT or OPPOSITE

Circle these words the minute you read them (if you can write in the test booklet).

Skip over a question that completely stumps you

Clearly mark it (in the booklet if possible) on scratch paper.

Remember to skip the space on your answer sheet.

Eliminate obviously wrong answers first

Draw a line through them if you can mark in your booklet.

Recheck Bubbling if time permits

Check the beginning and end of each column to make sure answers are bubbled correctly, check the middle of the column for long columns.

Recheck Answers if time permits

Start at the end to recheck all answers.

Exercise your body every 15 minutes or whenever you feel tense or stuck .

Neck roll, Arm stretch, shoulder roll, Toe-heel roll

Be sure not to disturb other test takers

MATH

Write down any formulas or mnemonics you are going to need before you start.

Use scratch paper, Practice this ahead of time, Mnemonics, Geometric

Look for key words such as: less than, least, sum, product

Clue to what type of computation is needed

Circle them if you can mark in the test booklet

Know what you are solving for in each problem.

Do they want the number of apples or the number of oranges (x or y)

Go back and make sure place a star beside it

Reduce fractions to their simplest form

Correct answer is the reduced answer

Extra Math Hints

Don't get hung up on the names and places when reading a word problem.

Do the easy ones first.

If your calculation is not one of the answer choices, but there is a very close choice, choose the close one.

Check subtraction problems by adding, check multiplication problems by dividing, etc.

READING & LANGUAGE ARTS

Read the questions first before you read the passage.

Then you'll know what you are looking for.

Scan any charts, diagrams, or pictures that are included with the text first.

Can be a faster way to find answers.

Can help focus the information in the text.

Look back at the passage to find/confirm the answer.

Don't just rely on memory.

Applies to anything longer than a couple of sentences.

In order of event questions look for keywords in the passage.

Keywords such as: first, next, then, last, finally, etc.

Vocabulary

In longer passages with an unknown word use the context clues.

Vocabulary

Synonym, means the same as

Antonym, means the opposite

Fill-in Blank

Try each answer in the sentence to eliminate obviously wrong answers.

Trust your ear verbs not for pronouns.

Punctuation and capitalization questions can be tricky.

Answer choices may look very similar

HOW TO STUDY BETTER

1. **TWART THE FORGETTING CURVE BY REVIEWING.** The first time you hear a lecture or study something new, you can make sure to retain at least 80% of what you learned by reviewing your notes/the material **within 24 hours** of first learning it. Review it a few more times for five minutes within the first week of learning it to retain 100% of the info.
2. **DITCH CRAMMING AND REPLACE IT WITH INTERVAL STUDYING.** Scientists have found that it is more effective to study the materials closer to the day you learned it than closer to the day of the test. They put the optimal time at 10% of the time between learning and testing. So, if you learn something on Monday and the quiz is the following Monday, study no later than Wednesday.
3. **USE ACTIVE RECALL.** In 2009, a professor of psychology advised students against simply rereading their textbooks – simply rereading causes students to think they know the materials better than they do because everything is right in front of them. The professor advised that students should instead use **active recall**: closing the book and reciting and writing everything you can remember to cement long-term memory.
4. **USE THE LEITNER SYSTEM.** Flashcards are an example of active recall, and the Leitner System is the best way to use flashcards. Named for scientist Sebastian Leitner, the system involves moving the cards with correctly answered questions further down a line of boxes (or just to the bottom of your pile) and incorrectly answered cards to the first box (or just a few cards in from the top of your pile). The cards in the first box (or nearest to the top) are studied most frequently and the cards in the boxes further down the row (or the pile) are studied less frequently. This forces you to review the material you know least well over and over until you learn it.
5. **DON'T OVERLEARN.** Once you have been able to cycle through all your flashcards without making a single mistake, continuing to study is known as “overlearning.” Traditional thinking held that if a little studying is good, then a lot of studying must be even better. However, researchers from top colleges found that there is a sharp onset of diminishing returns that quickly sets in during overlearning. Since you have a limited amount of time to study for each class, to their word for it that you're better served moving on to something else. (Also, over studying can result in test anxiety.)
6. **LISTEN TO MUSIC.** And no, we don't mean Jay Z. According to researchers at Stanford's School of Medicine, if you listen to classical music while you study you will engage the parts of your brain that help you pay attention and make predictions. Listening to music can also put you in a better mood about studying and could even change your perception of studying.

7. STOP MULTITASKING. You may think you are killing two birds with one stone by texting or SnapChatting while studying, but really you're just killing your studying efficiency. An Indiana University study recently showed multitasking inhibits studying by interrupting the absorption and processing of information

8. RELAX. Here is another reason not to wait until the last minute to study: stress hinders learning. UC Irvine researchers found that even stress that lasts as briefly as a couple of hours can engage corticotropin-releasing hormones that disrupt the process of creating and storing memories. So, taking regular (not too long) study breaks to exercise or take a few deep breaths will help your studying if they lower your stress.

9. GET SOME REST. All-nighters are no-nos. The best way to recall information is to sleep after learning it. At the University of Notre Dame, students were split into two groups: those who studied at 9:00am and then went about their day, and those who studied at 9:00pm then went to sleep. Both at 12 hours and 24 hours later, when both groups had had a full night's sleep, the ones who slept shortly after studying scored higher when tested.

10. TAKE THE PRACTICE TESTS. Some teachers provide their students practice tests. While the benefit of a preview of your instructor's testing style is obvious, a recent study showed students who tested themselves after learning something retained an amazing 50% more of the materials a week later than their peers who did not take a test. When taking a practice test, try and simulate your testing environment as much as possible – don't look at your notes, textbooks, etc. Even if your teacher doesn't provide you with practice tests, you can still find o make your own.

11. MAKE CONNECTIONS. Studies say that the difference between slow learners and quick learners is (in large part) the way that they study: instead of memorizing, quick learners make connections between ideas. Known as "contextual learning," the process entails an individual student putting information into a form that makes sense to him or her. Try putting all of the information you are trying to learn onto one sheet of paper to get a full picture and then try and make connections.

12. THINK ABOUT YOUR THINKING. An important way to improve your learning is to employ metacognition, or thinking about your thinking. It may sound silly, but numerous studies have shown its effectiveness. Students need to be able to assess their level of learning and skills in order to determine whether they need to continue studying and to gauge their emotions and their ability to learn and prevent negative thoughts from creeping in.

13. EXERCISE FIRST. Your brain benefits from exercise. You can also give your studying a boost by breaking a sweat shortly before you study. Exercise gets blood flowing to your brain more evenly and makes you more alert and able to learn.

MULTIPLE CHOICE TEST TAKING TIPS

- Read every passage thoroughly and closely.
- Read the question before you look at the answer.
- Come up with the answer in your head before looking at the possible answers, this way the choices given on the test won't throw you off or trick you.
- Eliminate answers you know aren't right.
- Read all the choices before choosing your answer.
- Be sure to read EVERY answer choice completely – even if you know for certain that B is right.
- Don't leave any answers blank. At least eliminate the answers you know are incorrect and make an educated guess from there if you must.
- Don't keep changing your answer; usually your first choice is the right one, unless you misread the question.
- In "All of the above" and "None of the above" choices, if you are certain one of the statements is true don't choose "None of the above" or one of the statements are false don't choose "All of the above."
- In a question with an "All of the above" choice, if you see that at least two correct statements, then "All of the above" is probably the answer.
- Usually the correct answer is the choice with the most information.
- Resist the urge to finish as fast as possible. Take your time.
- Review your test to make sure that you have answered all questions, did not mismark answers, or did not make simple mistakes.

TRUE/FALSE TEST TIPS

1. Read SLOWLY and CAREFULLY

- A single word can make a true sentence false. If you read too quickly you may miss the word that changes the statement

Example: The novel *Romeo and Juliet* was written by William Shakespeare.

T F

Explanation – The word **novel** is a false detail that makes the entire statement false because *Romeo and Juliet* is a play not a novel.

2. Never Say Never

- Questions that make **broad, general, or absolute statements are usually false** (Even though the statement is *usually* true it doesn't mean that it's *always* true)
- If even one exception can be found, the statement is false
- Watch out for words like:
 - All
 - Only
 - Always
 - Never
 - None
 - Everyone
 - Every

These words turn general statements into limiting statements, often making them false

Example: All Monte Vista students always dress up for spirit days.

T F

Explanation – The words **All** and **always** make this a limiting, false statement

3. **Statement with General Qualifiers Are *Usually* True**

- Look for words like:
 - Often
 - Usually
 - Rarely
 - Sometimes
 - Generally

Example: Most Monte Vista students generally dress up for spirit days.

T F

Explanation – The words **Most** and **generally** show there is room for some students not to dress up therefore making this a true statement.

4. **Double Negatives**

- Look out for Double Negatives in text questions
- When you find a double negative – cross both negative statements out and read the question again.
 - Example: He was not unfaithful.
He was ~~not~~ unfaithful.

Example: Romeo doesn't dislike Juliet.

T F

Explanation – Romeo ~~doesn't~~ dislikes(s) Juliet. Crossing out the double negative shows us that the answer is true.

5. **If Any Part of the Statement is untrue, the answer is False.**

Example: Both boys and girls take History, but only girls take English.

T F

Explanation – Even though the first part of the statement is true, the second part is false. Therefore, the correct answer is false.

6. **If you have absolutely no clue, guess True.**

- Statistics show that the correct answer is true more of the time

Use Your Phone for Good... **AND NOT EVIL**

Camera/Video Camera

- ✓ Miss class or want to compare your notes with a friend? Have him/her take a picture of his/her notes and text or email them to you.
- ✓ Have to do a presentation? Video yourself, watch it, and make improvements based on what you see.
- ✓ Take a picture of anything important written on the white board.

Apps

- ✓ Utilize flashcard apps (search your app store for flashcards and you'll find both free and paid apps).
- ✓ Get a dictionary app – when you come across a word you don't know: use this app to look it up.
- ✓ Use a To-Do list app to ensure that you don't forget what you need/want to do.
- ✓ Use a calendar app to both remember important events and manage your time each day.
- ✓ Get a Google Drive App so you can easily access Google Drive/Docs.

Voice Recorder

- ✓ Record your thoughts when brainstorming ideas for an essay.
- ✓ Record yourself reading an essay and then listen back – keep the essay in front of you and stop and revise anything that sounds weird.
- ✓ Record anything that you need to memorize and listen to it over, and over, and over, and over again.
- ✓ For oral exams: Record yourself and then listen to see where your trouble spots are.

Music

- ✓ Listening to music does help some students study more productively. If that is you, create a playlist of songs that will help you focus.

Other Good Stuff

- ✓ Is reading difficult for you (or boring)? Get the audiobook and listen to it as you read.
- ✓ Alarms – set alarms as a reminder for when you need to start your homework.
- ✓ Timer – Estimate how long an assignment should take you to complete, set a time for that amount of time, and then make it a goal to do it in that amount of time (don't rush, but be as focused and efficient as possible).
- ✓ Use Facetime or Skype to study with a buddy.
- ✓ Email your teachers if you have a question.

EVIL USES...

- ✓ After each song finishes taking the time to select a new song
- ✓ Listening to music while reading
- ✓ Texting and/or playing games during homework/study sessions
- ✓ Constantly checking Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, etc.
- ✓ Constantly checking for texts/calls
- ✓ Staring at your grades on School Loop instead of doing work to improve them

WORK SMARTER: UTILIZING ACTIVE STUDY STRATEGIES

If you are going to take the time to study for tests and quizzes, you might as well use that time as wisely as possible. Students who perform better on exams often don't spend more time studying than other students, but they are likely to study differently by utilizing these active strategies.

Material to study	Passive study strategy	Active study strategy
Lecture notes	Re-read notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify main points and explain in your own words Re-write and summarize Cross reference your notes with the text or a friend's notes to make sure they are accurate and complete
Textbooks and articles	Read, re-read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take notes on sticky notes as you read to summarize, identify main points and define key terms When reading, read aloud (saying it and hearing it will help you remember) Change chapter headings into questions and look for the answers as you read
Assigned problems and exercises	Try to solve while, looking at class examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to solve problems on your own first, then look at class examples Once you have finish the assigned problems, do the rest of the set (if you are assigned evens, now do the odds)
PowerPoint slides	Print out and read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Print out the slides (in handout form) and write possible test questions in the margin and quiz yourself on the info Write information from your notes and the text book on the print outs
Lab reports	Re-read the answers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight, summarize and add extra notes in the margins.
Novels	Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take notes on sticky notes as you read to summarize, identify main characters, themes, literary devices, etc. Utilize online summaries and analyses to reinforce what you read Read, highlight, summarize all discussion notes and questions
Vocabulary lists	Read the definitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write original sentences for the words (think about using your friends' names, funny situations, etc. –this will help you remember the words) Make up a story that uses the words Make flashcards (put definition, a sentence, a symbol or picture)
Terms, dates, and names	Looking over your notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flashcards (commit 5 to memory, then add 5 more, etc.) Turn your notes into quiz questions (i.e. Who is Thomas Jefferson? Or What happened on Sept. 17, 1787?)
Study guides	Re-read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If study guides are already in question form, write and say the answers out loud. If they are in topic form, write a question for each topic and then write and say the answer. Make and use flashcards using the information

