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On Multiple Choice Tests

1. *Look it over.* Start by scanning the whole test to see what kinds of and how many questions you will need to answer.
2. *Watch your time.* Try to manage your time. Keep track of it as you work, try to get half the answers in half the time, and so on.
3. *Follow directions.* Read directions carefully before answering any questions.
4. *Take a deep breath.* If you feel tense at any time during the test, taking a slow, deep breath or two will calm you down.
5. *Answer ALL questions.* On a multiple choice test, it's best to answer all of the questions, so don't let the hard ones prevent you from getting through to the end.
6. *Do the easy ones, and then guess at the hard ones.* If you hit a tough question, move on. Once you've answered all of the easy ones, go back. By eliminating answers that are obviously wrong and then guessing which remaining answer is right, you'll improve your score.
7. *Mark answers clearly.* Finding the correct answer is one thing. *Marking* it correctly is something else. Fill in circles fully with a dark pencil mark and, if you erase, erase completely.
8. *If you finish early, go back.* If you have any time left, check your answers or go back to any of the questions that you skipped.

On Multiple Choice Reading Tests:

- Scan for key words that relate to the question.

- In reading passages, always be on the lookout for the main idea and for answers to "who, what, where, when, why and how."
- When asked to fill in words, read the whole sentence and try out all of the answers.
- Don't be fooled by trick answers or directions.

On Multiple Choice Language Arts Tests

- When answering questions about reading passages, read the questions first so you know what to look for in the paragraph.
- Quickly eliminate known misspellings.
- When answering questions about maps, charts or reference sources, refer back to those sources, while keeping in mind the key words from the questions.
- For fill-in sentences, read the entire sentence first and look for context clues, then try each possible answer to see if it makes sense.

On Multiple Choice Math Tests:

- Use scratch paper to write down number sentences, equations and numbers needed to solve problems.
- Check answers by reversing – adding to check subtraction, dividing to check multiplication, and so on.
- Keep equations balanced – what you do to one side, you must do to the other.
- Rename fractions so they all have the same denominators.
- Try all answer choices to find which is correct. If none are correct, follow the directions for marking it as "Not Given."

On Open-Ended Task Tests

Many of the tips for multiple choice tests apply here as well. Also:

1. With open-ended tasks, you often have to write out your answer, so you *must write clearly!* Even if your answer is right, if the grader can't read it, you won't get credit.
2. Do the easy questions first. If you get stuck, move on and come back later if you have time left. A tough question may seem easier when you come back to it, and you might feel less pressure after finishing most of the test.

On Open-Ended Reading Questions

- When you're asked to write an answer that draws a conclusion, use details from the passage to support your idea.
- If you use exact words from a passage, remember to put quotation marks around them.
- Look for signal words that tell you the sequence of events – such as, “first,” “then,” “next” or “after” – or that define cause and effect – like “because” or “therefore.”
- Remember that a character's problems are usually introduced near the beginning of a reading passage, solutions are attempted in the middle and the problem is solved near the end.
- Don't be fooled by details that don't support the main idea in a reading passage, or by sentences that don't belong there at all.

On Open-Ended Language Arts Questions

- When you're writing your own paragraph, proofread it carefully to ensure your spelling, punctuation and capitalization is correct. Mistakes will lower your score.
- To fill out a form, convert each item into a question. For example, if it says “Person's Name,” ask yourself, “What is the person's name?”
- When alphabetizing, start with the first letter of each word, then for each group of words

starting with the same letter, move to the second letter, and so on.

- When doing research, think first about what information you need, and then about where you might find it.
- Remember that a table of contents tells you which chapter discusses a topic and an index tells you exactly which pages contain specific information.

On Open-Ended Math Questions

- After reading a word problem, jotting down what you know or even drawing a picture can help you solve it.
- Try estimating an answer before working on the problem. Then check your answer against the estimate.
- Make sure your answers make sense. For example, if a question asks how many miles a person walks to school, make sure the answer is in miles, not feet or meters. Also, ensure it's not an impossibly high number.
- Write your answer in the simplest form, such as, by reducing fractions.
- When adding or subtracting, remember to line up the decimal points and be sure to put the decimal point in the right place in your answer.

On Open-Ended Writing Questions

- Read the prompt – which explains a writing assignment – *twice*. Read it once to see what's wanted and then a second time to underline key words. Key words, such as, “explain” or “tell” can indicate what to write about or give suggestions.
- When writing a story, figure out what your *high point* is and then, rather than putting it near the beginning, build up to it to increase excitement.
- To get the reader's attention when writing an essay, start out with a *hook*– such as, providing a surprising fact, telling an interesting little story, asking a question, or using a quote or saying.

TEST TAKING TIPS FOR STUDENTS

- As you write, read each sentence to yourself. Places where you pause probably need a punctuation mark.
- To pick an idea for an essay eliminate ideas on subjects you know less about, ideas that are weak or less serious, and ideas that your audience won't understand without a great deal of explanation.

During The Test

- Use relaxation techniques, such as, taking five deep breaths or counting down from 10 if you find yourself becoming tense or having a "brain freeze."
- Say to yourself, "I am a good test taker." Confidence is half the battle

Test taking tips courtesy of Sylvan Learning Center. For more information, visit www.educate.com or contact (Insert name) at (Insert phone number).