

Test Taking Strategies

The following suggestions are predominantly student generated. These suggestions are what they view as the most helpful testing strategies.

Pre-Test

1. Study in an environment free from external distractions. These include: T.V., cell phone, ipod/music, and unnecessary internet (including “social” Facebook use) accessibility. Certainly the internet can be a resource, but students need to be discerning in its use. There may be practice quizzes/tests that are available for certain subject areas. Students should access these resources and determine if they are useful.
2. Create a study group. It can provide quick access to help beyond class hours. Have regularly scheduled meeting times. Make each group member responsible for leading the session or re-teaching a unit. There are several internet-type study groups available in most subject areas. Surf them to success
3. Review material for a short period of time on a daily basis. This distributive learning is more effective than “cramming” for a test.
4. Supplement and merge class notes with your own book notes. If necessary, clarify material with information from the book. Be sure to focus on the *significance* of the fact. When taking notes from an overhead in class, be certain to write down major points and answers to questions that the notes generate.
5. Do the required reading, and be “active” with your reading.
6. Highlight your notes. Review your notes. What is the “big picture,” or overriding theme?
7. Use the study guide, or create one if one was not provided to you. Think about key vocabulary terms and major concepts. Flashcards may be helpful. Be sure to review handouts and homework.
8. Remember that you need to be able to “manipulate” the material you know. Facts are important, but reflect on the *significance* and *analysis* of the material.
9. Do not re-read the entire textbook. Be a strategic reader and re-read small sections that you don’t understand or remember.
10. Study what you don’t know. Determine what you need to study and what you already know.
11. Be active when studying. Simply re-reading notes or re-reading text will not necessarily guarantee that you remember content. Try creating graphic organizers to help you see the big picture or make connections; draw pictures or create acronyms that will help you remember; and highlight and/or summarize your notes to see main ideas.

Test Day

1. Read questions carefully. All parts of the question should be read thoroughly. Be sure to determine what the question is asking.
2. Use context clues for unfamiliar vocabulary, or ask for your teacher’s help in defining unfamiliar words. If possible, your teacher will help define words.

3. If the test is on a scantron, make sure circles are filled in completely and that erasure marks are erased thoroughly.
4. Manage your time during the test. You must work quickly and efficiently.
5. Know your strengths and weaknesses, and work to them while testing. Complete the parts of the test that are easiest for you before moving on to the parts that are more difficult.
6. Leave yourself time at the end of the test to recheck that you completed each question, and that you answered each question to the fullest extent of your ability.
7. If the question includes “all of the above” statement, and if you are positive two are correct, regardless of the third, choose “all of the above”.
8. Excluding AP Exams, if debating an answer, B and C are the most commonly used answers.
9. When a question demands a general, a broad, or a universal answer, choose the broadest Answer. When a question demands a specific detail, give a specific answer.
10. If one answer causes a second answer choice, and the first is incorrect, the second is also; eliminate both.
11. If one answer choice causes a second answer choice, and both are correct, choose the cause.
12. If the question demands the “cause” of an event or concept, watch to eliminate “effects” as an answer choice. Likewise, if the question asks for an “effect”, do not give a “cause”.
13. Before looking at the choices, read the question stem and determine *your* own answer, then match your answer to the closest choice.
14. Avoid Distractors:
 - Choice misstates or distorts the passage
 - Choice includes a word not in the passage (only, all)
 - Choice takes words/ phrases out of context
 - Choice substitutes one subject for another
 - Choice changes the meaning of the question
 - A true answer, but one that does not apply to the question