

Test Strategies for Students and Parents From the Guidance Department

Midterms are just around the corner. Hopefully, you've all been preparing for them and keeping up with the class work. Here are some tips to help you ace them. Good luck!

GENERAL TEST TAKING SKILLS

Time-Using Strategies

- Work as rapidly as possible with reasonable accuracy.
- Don't spend too much time on any one question.
- On scrap paper, keep a record of the unanswered items which you may go back to if time permits.
- Use time remaining after completion of the test to go back and check your answers.

Error-Avoidance Strategies

- Pay careful attention to directions.
- Decide exactly what the question is asking; one response is clearly best.
- Ask the examiner for clarification of directions before the test begins.
- If you are using a separate answer sheet, make sure to record the answer in the correct position on the sheet.
- Be sure to completely erase incorrect answers.

Miscellaneous Tips

- Don't make wild guesses. Many times you can get the correct answer by reasoning and eliminating wrong answers.
- Only change an answer if you are sure the first one you picked was wrong.
- Tackle items one at a time rather than thinking about the whole test.
- Do not expect to find a pattern in the positions of the correct choices.

STUDENTS: TEST TAKING STRATEGIES

Before the Test

- Do your class work.
- Have a clear understanding of homework assignments before leaving class.
- Keep a record of assignments received and completed.
- Make a study schedule and follow it.
- Tell your parents about schoolwork and homework.
- Follow directions.
- Return homework when it is due.
- Get make-up assignments when returning from an absence.
- See teachers for additional help.
- Find out when tests will be given.
- Become familiar with a multiple-choice format.
- Get a good night's rest and eat a normal breakfast before testing.

During the Test

- Read all directions carefully.
- Completely read each passage and accompanying questions.
- Read every possible answer--the best one could be last.
- Reread, when necessary, the parts of a passage needed for selecting the correct answer.
- Eliminate answer choices that are clearly wrong.
- Skip very difficult questions until all other questions have been answered.
- Keep a good attitude. Think positively!

After the Test

- Ask the teacher to explain your test scores.
- Ask your teacher to suggest areas of study that will help you do even better on the next test.

PARENTS: TEST SUPPORT STRATEGIES**Before Testing**

- Encourage your child to take responsibility for homework.
- Set aside a specific time for study each day.
- Provide a well lighted, quiet setting for study.
- Ask to see homework assignments every day.
- Help your child learn to find information independently.
- Use homework to keep up with what your child is learning in school.
- Praise your child for work done well.
- Encourage your child to ask questions at home and in class.
- Know how long your child watches TV.
- Know what your child watches on TV. Discuss programs together.
- Show interest in your child's daily activities. Ask what happened at school today.
- Talk with and listen to your child. Ask each other questions and share experiences.
- Get to know your child's teachers. Attend parent-teacher conferences.
- Confer with teachers on a regular basis.
- Let your child know that you think a good education is important.
- Note test dates on your home calendar.

On the Day of Testing

- See that your child is rested and has time for breakfast.
- See that your child arrives at school on time and is relaxed.
- Encourage your child to do the best work possible.
- Don't send your child to school if illness is apparent.

After Testing

- Examine all test reports sent home.
- See your child's teacher, counselor, or principal if additional information is required.

DEALING WITH TEST ANXIETY

Many students will experience anxiety before a testing situation. This may result from feeling excessive pressure to do well, being afraid of failure, etc. A certain degree of test anxiety is normal and may help students prepare more effectively, work more efficiently, and remain focused during testing. Too much anxiety, however, can negatively affect performance. The following strategies may assist students and parents in reducing test anxiety.

Student Strategies

- Share your feelings with parents and teachers.
- Relax and breathe deeply.
- Think of the test as an opportunity to show what you know.
- Remember that the test is only a small part of your academic life.

Parent Strategies

- Discuss the test openly and in a positive way.
- Have realistic expectations of your student's performance while encouraging him/her to do their best.
- Emphasize that the test is only one measure of overall ability.
- Emphasize that test scores do not determine a person's worth.