

# TEST TAKING TIPS AND STRATEGIES

Use these simple tips and strategies to take control of ALL the tests you face.

NATIONAL GUARD  
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## ALL TESTS

- > **Read or listen carefully to all directions and ask questions about anything that isn't clear.**
- > **Find out what will count and what won't count when a test is graded.** For example, will spelling count on a social studies test? Do you have to show your work on a math test?
- > **Answer the questions that you know first and skip over the ones you don't—you can go back to them later.**
- > **Eliminate any negative thoughts.** Thinking things like, "I'm failing, I didn't study enough for this, and the test is too hard for me" are sure ways to kill your confidence.
- > **Ignore how other students are doing.** Everyone handles tests differently, so don't pay attention to the progress of your classmates.
- > **Before handing in your test, review it for simple mistakes like missing a question or filling in the wrong answer on your Scantron sheet.** And always proofread your responses for spelling, grammar, and content accuracy.

## ESSAY TESTS

- > **Create an outline so that your answer includes an introduction, middle, and conclusion.**
- > **Use details.** If you aren't sure of an exact detail, it's better to generalize than guess. For example, it's better to write "approximately 300 people" than "283 people" if the right number is 298.
- > **Watch for key words.** Essay questions often contain key words that can seriously impact the structure and tone of your answer. Some of these key words include:
  - > Compare
  - > Describe
  - > Evaluate
  - > Interpret
  - > Contrast
  - > Diagram
  - > Explain
  - > List
  - > Criticize
  - > Discuss
  - > Illustrate
  - > Outline
  - > Define
  - > Enumerate

## MULTIPLE CHOICE TESTS

- > **Don't look for patterns.** Your teacher or the company that made your test doesn't spend time making sure that there's an equal number of A, B, and C right answers on your exam—so neither should you.
- > **Select the BEST answer.** Sometimes there's more than one right answer, so it's important to figure out which one you feel is the BEST.
- > **Look for language clues like verb tenses and grammatically incorrect options.**

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## TRUE/FALSE TESTS

- >) **Read each statement two or three times to get a handle on its exact meaning.** If any part of the statement is false, the entire statement is false.
- >) **Never skip questions, because you have a 50 percent chance of guessing the right answer; if you just leave it blank, it'll be 100 percent wrong.**
- >) **Watch out for tricky words! Certain words can make a true statement false or a false statement true. These tricky words include:**
  - >) All
  - >) Never
  - >) Often
  - >) Always
  - >) Sometimes
  - >) Every
  - >) Rarely

## FILL IN THE BLANK AND SHORT ANSWER TESTS

- >) **Look for clues in a question or statement's phrasing—it may contain some hints about the anticipated answer.**
- >) **Submit a related answer or explanation if you can't remember the exact answer.**
- >) **Read through your answers to make sure that they sound right in the sentence and respond accurately to the question.**

## MATCHING TESTS

- >) **Jog your memory by trying to remember what the answers are BEFORE reviewing the possible answers.**
- >) **Narrow down the field of possible correct answers by completing the answers you KNOW are correct.**
- >) **Trust your instincts. Your first instinct is usually the right one, so avoid changing answers.**