

Test Taking Strategies

Once you begin a test, follow these steps to better test taking:

- As soon as you receive your test, write down the information you think you might forget.
- Preview the test and put your name on the test.
- Read and attack each question carefully,
 - Underline or highlight key words
 - Underline or highlight what the question is asking you to find.
 - Examine all answers and mark out incorrect answers.
 - Circle correct answers.
 - Do not read into questions what is not there-Do not assume!!
 - Work backwards by plugging the answers into the problem.
 - Show work on every problem.
 - Draw and label diagrams.
 - Use graph paper for all graphing problems.
- Answer the easiest problems first and review answers to see if they make sense.
- If you do not know how to do a problem skip it and go on the next problem.
- Return to the skipped problems at the end of the test. Try to do as much as you can on each problem to eliminate as many choices as possible. Guess if you have to- you are not penalized for guessing.
- Review the test for careless mistakes. Students usually lose two to five points on careless mistakes. That could mean the difference between an A or B or a D or F.
- Use all allowed test time.
 - Check your answers.
 - Rework the problems on a separate sheet of paper-especially the problems you were unsure of or those where it would be easy to make a careless mistake.

Six Types of Test-Taking Errors

To do better on tests in the future, look at some of the tests you have taken in the past. Look for the following kinds of errors:

Misread direction errors occur when you do not read the directions or you do not understand the directions.

- ◇ Example: The question asked for an angle measure and you found x and stopped working.
- ✓ To Correct: While reading the question highlight what the question is asking for.

Careless errors are mistakes made which you should catch easily as you review the test.

- ◇ Example: You made a simple addition error or you simplified incorrectly.
- ✓ To Correct: Start recognizing what your most common careless mistake is and review your test for these mistakes.

Fundamental errors are mistakes made when you do not understand the properties or principles needed to work the problem.

- ◇ Example: You didn't memorize the theorems and definitions for the chapter.
- ✓ To correct: Study your definitions and theorems every night. Make note cards to "test yourself". Put the definition on one side and the term on the other.

Application errors occur when you know the fundamental principle, but you cannot apply it to the problem.

- ◇ Example: You know that the diagonals of a rectangle are congruent, but when the picture showed the measurements for the diagonals you didn't set them equal and solve.
- ✓ To correct: work all homework problems until they are correct. Put a star by the "tough" problems. Put hard problems on a note card.
- ✓ To study for the test go back and re-work any starred or "tough" homework problems. YES, you can study math!!!

Examination errors apply to the specific way you take tests. Examples are:

- ◇ You miss more questions in the last third than the first third.
- ◇ You did not complete the problem to the last step-you stopped in the middle.
- ◇ Changing correct answers to incorrect.
- ◇ Getting stuck on one problem and spending too much time on it.
- ◇ Rushing through the test.
- ◇ Miscopying an answer.
- ◇ Leaving answers blank.
- ◇ Misalignment on multiple choice tests.

Study errors occur when you study the wrong material or when you do not spend enough time studying.

- ◇ Example: Your teacher tells you that indirect proofs will be on the test, but you fail to make a note of that and do not go over that concept before the test.
- ✓ To correct: Star any problems or concepts that the teacher says will be on the test and go back over them while studying.