

Top Ten Test-Taking Tips

1. Do the easy questions first.

This increases your confidence by allowing you to get the maximum number of correct answers in a short period of time. By the time you get to the more difficult questions, you'll feel more relaxed.

2. Bring a watch and plan your time.

Note the starting and ending time on a piece of scrap paper. See how much time you have left after your first run through the easy questions. Use the remaining time to go back to the more difficult questions.

3. Write in the test booklet if you are allowed.

On most standardized tests, you can write notes to yourself on the booklet. Use this as an opportunity to:

- Put a check mark next to the difficult questions that you want to come back to.
- Circle important points in the directions.
- Underline key phrases.
- Strike through the answer choices that you know are wrong.

4. Unless you are told not to guess, mark an answer for every question.

A blank answer cannot be right. If you think you may not have time for a second go-round, mark something in every space the first time, and mark the test book so you'll know which questions to review later. Try to eliminate at least some of the answer choices and then, if you really have no idea, make a guess from the ones that are left. You can often use the process of elimination to increase your chances of making a correct guess.

5. Mark your answers very slowly and carefully.

Read and follow the instructions about where and how to mark your answers. Use the right kind of pencil, put your answer in the right place, and fill in the marks or bubbles completely. If you leave questions blank to come back to, be sure that your questions and answers line up.

6. Concentrate on what you can do.

Create a bubble of concentration around yourself and don't let anyone else's noise or actions distract you. Don't fret over any one question. Do the best you can, and then move on.

7. Don't be afraid to select the "No error" or "Correct as is" answer.

On some standardized tests, this may be the correct choice for a few questions.

8. Skim the questions that follow a reading passage BEFORE you read the passage.

Reading the questions first helps you know what to watch for as you read the passage.

9. Trust yourself. Choose the best answer and then leave it.

Changing your mind about the answer is usually a sign of test anxiety. Remember to breathe and relax. Change an answer only when you are sure of what you are doing. Sometimes you may move on and then realize something that clarifies a previous question. In that case, one careful change is probably a good idea. Be sure to erase your old answer completely.

10. Relax! It's only a test!

A standardized test does not judge or measure you as a person. It measures certain knowledge and test-taking skills. A standardized test cannot measure your thinking or your creativity.