



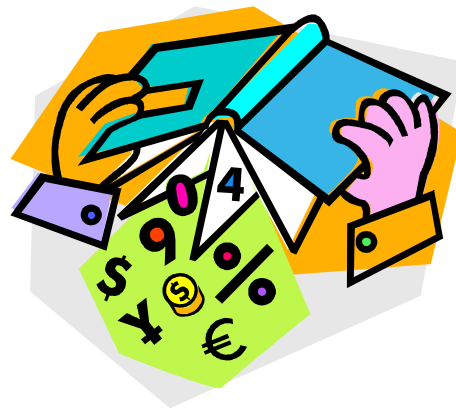
Douglas High School

Math Test Taking Strategies 2011

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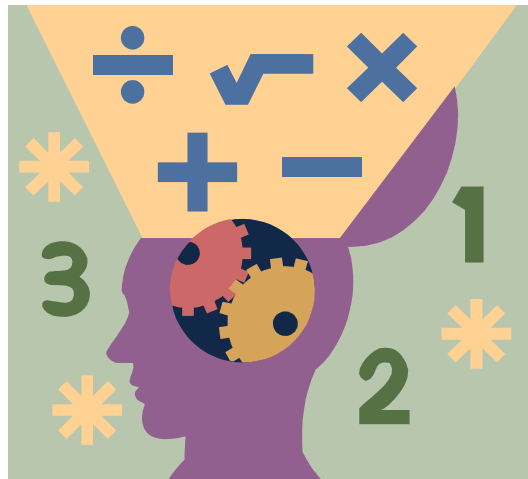
General Test Taking Strategies

1. Bring in at least two pencils with erasers, and any other materials that you are allowed to bring (calculator, highlighter, etc.).
2. Keep a positive attitude throughout the whole test and try to stay relaxed. If you start to feel nervous, take a few deep breaths to try to relax.
3. Keep your eyes on your own paper. You don't want to appear to be cheating and cause unnecessary trouble for yourself.
4. Don't rush, but pace yourself. **Read the entire question and highlight key words.**
5. **Write legibly**; if the grader can't read what you wrote they'll most likely mark it wrong.
6. Always **read the whole question** carefully. Don't make assumptions about what the question might be.
7. If you don't know an answer, skip it, and go on with the rest of the test and come back to it later. You may find something on another question that may help you.
8. Don't worry if others finish before you. Focus on the test in front of you.
9. When you are finished, **make sure you have answered all of the questions.** Only change an answer if you misread or misinterpreted the question because the first answer that you put is usually the correct one.
10. Watch out for careless mistakes. **Proofread your Open Response** and short answer questions.



Strategies for Multiple Choice Questions

1. **Read the question** before you look at the answers.
2. **Come up with the answer in your head** before you look at the possible answers. This way the choices on the test are less likely to throw you off or trick you.
3. **Eliminate the answers** you know are not correct.
4. **Read all of the choices** before you answer.
5. On MCAS there is no penalty for guessing, so **always take an educated guess and select an answer**.
6. In “All of the above” or “None of the above” choices, if you are certain one of the statements is true, don’t choose “None of the above”; likewise if one of the statements is false, don’t choose “All of the above”.
7. In a question with “All of the above” choice, if you see at least two correct statements, then “All of the above” is probably the correct answer.
8. Usually the correct choice is the one with the most information.



Strategies for Open Response and Short Answer Questions

1. **Read the question** and make sure you **answer all parts** of the question.
2. Make estimates for your answer. If you are asked to answer $48 \times 12 = ?$, you could expect the number to be around 500. If you get an answer that is 5000, you know you did something wrong.
3. Show all of your work and write as legibly as possible. **LABEL EACH PART CLEARLY.**
4. Even if you know your final answer is wrong, don't erase your entire work because you may get partial credit for using the correct procedure.
5. When you see a graph on the test, **focus on reading the visual information correctly.** Pay special attention to how the vertical and horizontal axes are labeled.
6. On chart questions that require you to make a bar graph, make sure you **clearly label the horizontal and vertical axes.**
7. Many geometry questions that involve angles are drawn close to scale. Use your eyes to help you estimate the given distances and to eliminate any answer choices that appear too small or too great.
8. You may have to convert one unit of measurement into another (for example: feet to inches). Be sure to include the correct unit on your answer.
9. When you see a probability question, think multiplication.
10. **Check over your test** when you are done with it. If you have time, redo the problem on a separate sheet of paper and see if you came up with the same answer the second time around. Look for careless mistakes such as making sure the decimal is in the right place, that you read the directions correctly, that you put a negative sign if it is needed, that your arithmetic is correct, etc.



Ten Ways to Reduce Math Anxiety

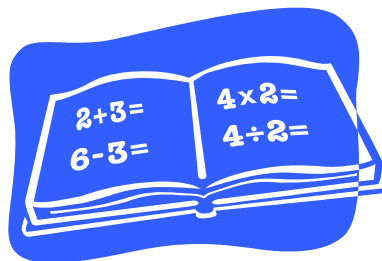
(from Mathpower.com)

1. Overcome negative self-talk.
2. Ask questions.
3. Consider math a foreign language—it must be practiced.
4. Don't rely on memorization to study mathematics.
5. READ your math text.
6. Study math according to your learning style.
7. Get help the same day you don't understand.
8. Be relaxed and comfortable while studying math.
9. "TALK" mathematics.
10. Develop responsibility for your own successes and failures.

Effective Study Habits for Math Students

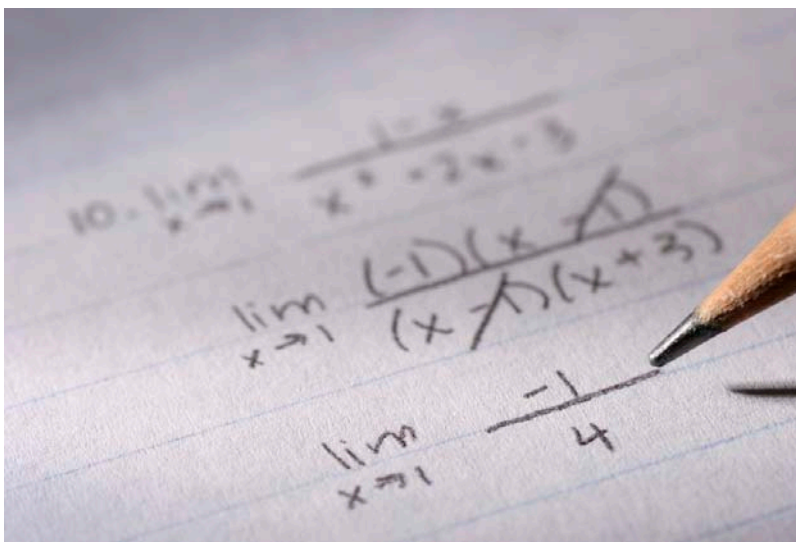
(from Mathpower.com)

1. Know how to distinguish between the various types of problems. This is the hardest part.
2. Most math texts have chapter tests at the end of each chapter. Try one problem from each section. Make a note of their differences. Write down the first step to each problem—this is usually the hardest part to remember.
3. Go back to the section in the text where you are having difficulty. Follow the examples making sure you understand each step. This takes time.
4. Reading a math book is not like reading a novel. It goes slowly. It may take you 20 minutes to go through one example problem.
5. Don't leave preparing for a test to the last minute. Make sure you leave time to ask questions in class AFTER you have studied and before the test.
6. Do as many problems as you can until you feel comfortable with the material.
7. In the class session a day or so BEFORE the test, ask the teacher to please point out any major similarities or differences among the various types of problems you will encounter on the test.
8. Get the phone number of someone in your class who won't mind if you call them with questions.
9. If possible, form a small study group with members from your class and meet periodically during the semester.
10. Math is a cumulative subject. You REALLY need to understand today's material to understand the material the next day. Ask questions immediately in class as soon as you don't understand anything. Don't just "let it go".



Note Taking Tips
(from Mathpower.com)

1. Write down the “**title**” of the lesson. If you don’t know, ask your teacher.
2. Write down the **math problem and each step** in the solution using math symbols. Next to each step write down, in your own words, exactly what you are doing.
3. **Write down a question mark next to anything you don’t understand.** Ask the teacher to explain the parts where you have written your question marks. *Don’t just “let it go”* thinking you will figure it out later. Many times, it doesn’t happen.
4. When you get home, before you start your homework, **highlight in color the titles** you have written in your notes. The highlighted information will give you the “big picture” of what you are doing.
5. Remember, do all of the homework problems, not just some of them.



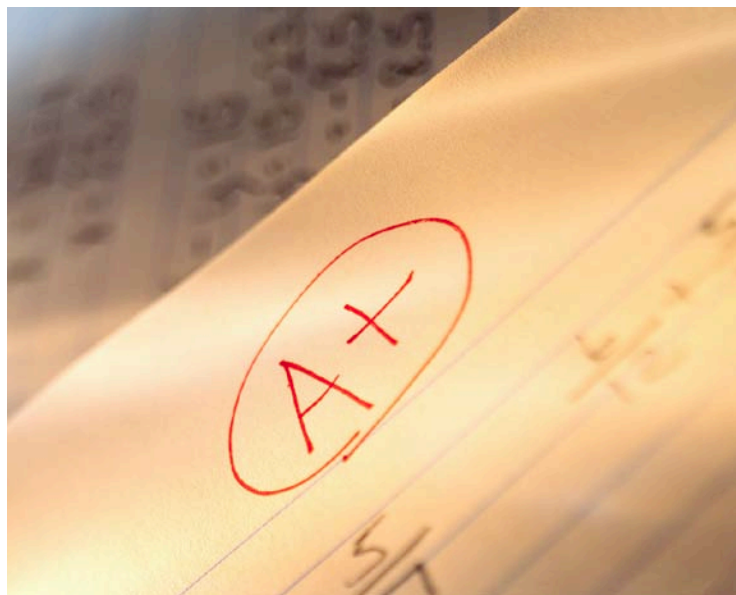
Test Taking Tips for Parents

(from TestTakingTips.com)

1. Make sure that your child does all their homework and reading assignments (**EVERYDAY!**), which will help make sure your child is prepared for the test. Ask your child about homework that is due tomorrow and next week, and make sure this homework is completed.
2. Ask your child to explain what he or she is studying. These conversations help you follow your child's progress, and help your child to remember what he or she has learned.
3. Encourage your child to space out their studying and homework assignments so that they won't be forced to cram on the night before the test.
4. If you are anxious about your child's test it's ok, but try to keep cool around your child. You don't want them to get anxious about their tests too.
5. Encourage your child to do well, but don't pressure him/her. You may stress him/her out and it is important for your child to stay relaxed on the test.
6. Keep a positive attitude about tests.
7. Provide a quiet, well lighted area with little distraction to help your child study efficiently.



8. Mark down test days on your calendar so you and your child are both aware of testing dates.
9. Make sure that your child gets enough sleep on the night before a test.
10. Ensure that your child eats a healthy breakfast. Avoid heavy foods that may make him/her groggy and high sugar foods that may make him/her hyper.
11. Make sure your child gets up early enough so that he/she will be on time to school.
12. Let your child relax for a few hours before bedtime; it can be stressful for a child to study all night.
13. Talking about the test with your child can relieve stress about test taking.
14. If your child is struggling on their tests, talk to them about it and meet with their teacher to find out the best way to help your child.
15. Praise/reward your child when they do well on a test or for their hard work preparing for a test.
16. Encourage them to do better if they don't do well.
17. Review the test with your child after they have taken it and go over any mistakes they have made. Make sure that they understand what they did wrong and how they can improve for the next test.



Bibliography

Johnson, Cynthia and Drew. **No-Stress Guide to the 8th Grade MCAS**. Kaplan, Simon & Schuster, New York, New York: 2000.

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www.TestTakingTips.com

www.MathPower.com