

# TAKING TESTS

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## AGENDA

- Starter
- Get Ready
- Study!
- During the Test
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

### Objectives

Students will review organizational skills.

Students will identify ways to study and prepare for tests.

Students will apply organizational skills to test taking.

Students will identify test-taking strategies.

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**Starter (3 minutes)**

Prompt students to think about the importance of preparation. Ask, “If you were going to run a marathon, what things might you do to get ready for it?” Have students focus on such things as running every day to get in shape, eating well, and getting plenty of sleep the night before the marathon.

Point out that preparation is often the key to success. This is true for taking tests, as well. Explain to students that in this lesson they will learn strategies that will make taking tests less intimidating.

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**Part I Get Ready (10 minutes)**

Purpose: Students review organizational skills.

**1. Students recall how to plan ahead.**

Ask students if they would prefer taking a surprise quiz or knowing about the quiz in advance. Have them explain their answers.

Discuss with students how to plan ahead, and the advantages of doing so. Ask questions such as the following:

- If one of your teachers told you that you would have a quiz or a test next week, what would you do with this information? (Students might respond: make a note of it in the notebook for that class, schedule time to study, read the material, look over homework assignments.)
- Would you do all of this the night before the test? Why or why not? (Students might respond: doing this the night before is stressful; there wouldn't be enough time to get it all done.)

Emphasize that students should never wait until the last minute to study. Tell them that they should begin organizing and reviewing material several days before a test. Explain that doing this will give them time to finish assignments, read material, review notes, and get any information or help that they may need.

**2. Students recall the importance of reviewing notes.**

Prompt students to recall what they have learned about taking notes. Ask questions such as the following:

- Why is it important to review notes? (Students should mention that reviewing notes will allow them time to fill in missing information while they still remember it or to ask questions about things they don't understand.)
- What could you do if you are missing notes or information you need? (Students might respond: borrow notes from a classmate, get missing assignments or information from the teacher or a classmate.)

Tell students that when reviewing notes for a test, they should underline important terms, facts, or points that they need to remember. When reading material from a textbook, they should take notes on important information. Explain that doing this will help them learn the material and organize it for a final review.

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## Part II Study! (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify ways to study and prepare for tests.

### 1. Students identify ways to prepare for tests.

Explain that before leaving school the day prior to test day, students should make sure they have everything they need for studying. Write this checklist of questions on the board:

- Do I know what material will be covered on the test?
- Do I have the notes I need?
- Do I have the books I need?

### 2. Students identify strategies for studying.

List the following study steps on the board and discuss them:

- Review notes and homework from classes and books.
- Make a master list of important information on a sheet of paper or on index cards. Include terms and definitions, names of people and places, and descriptions of events. Include information that your teacher has pointed out as important to remember, or has indicated will be on the test.
- Use your master list to quiz yourself.
- If you need extra practice, have someone else quiz you.

Elicit and write other strategies that students have successfully used. Remind students to devise systems that work best for them. Suggest that those who have difficulty remembering numbers may have a master list full of dates and figures, but someone else's list may be full of terms and definitions. Assure students that they know their strengths and skills best.

### 3. Students learn strategies for memorization.

Point out that it is often necessary to memorize something in order to do well on a test. Ask students to give examples of items that may need to be memorized. (Students might respond: events and dates, spelling, meanings of words, formulas or procedures.)

Explain that people can often memorize something just by reviewing it. Other times, people need to use tricks to help them remember. Ask if anyone can share strategies for memorization. To prompt suggestions, offer strategies such as the following:

- A rhyme can help you remember who and when: “in fourteen hundred ninety-two, Columbus sailed the ocean blue.”
- A slogan can help you remember how to spell words: “‘i’ before ‘e’ except after ‘c.’”
- Mnemonics can help you remember sequences, such as the order of the planets (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune): “my very energetic mother just served us nachos.”

### 4. Students review the relationship between health and performance.

Recall that when students discussed the preparations for running a marathon at the beginning of class, they discussed food and sleep. Ask how these factors could affect someone’s performance on a test.

Affirm responses that point out that getting enough sleep the night before a test and eating well the day of the test are important. Emphasize that students who have slept and eaten well will perform their best.

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## Part III During the Test (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students apply organizational skills to test taking and identify strategies to use when taking tests.

### 1. Students apply their skills to test taking.

Begin a list of test-taking strategies on the board:

- Follow instructions.
- Plan ahead.

Remind students that they have already covered these topics. Ask students to explain how they could apply these skills to taking tests. (Students might respond: reading or listening to instructions carefully, understanding them, and following them; planning how to use the time allotted during the test.)

## 2. Students identify strategies for taking tests.

Ask students to share strategies they know for planning ahead and completing tests on time. Offer the following tips:

- Quickly look over the test to see what kinds of questions are asked. Explain that this will enable students to identify parts of a test that may take more time.
- Check the clock and your progress every so often.
- If you finish before time is up, use the remaining time to check your answers.

Continue the list of test-taking strategies on the board:

- Read through the test and answer the easy questions first. (Point out that an easy question is one that students know the answer to.)
- Answer the questions you are not sure of next. (Point out that if students have a choice of answers, they should eliminate the ones they know to be wrong, and then select the best answer.)
- Answer the most difficult questions last. (Point out that if students spend most of their time thinking about one or two questions, they may not have time to answer questions they know.)

Tell students that taking tests will not seem nearly as difficult if they have a plan of action. Point out that the most difficult tests they will ever take are the ones they are not prepared for.

## 3. Students reflect on learning from their mistakes.

Point out that if a student does not do well on a test, they can do something about it. Ask students to describe what they can do in this situation. (Students might respond: they can review what went wrong, learn from their mistakes, and make changes before the next test.) Suggest that students could ask themselves questions such as the following:

- Was I tired? If so, I will get more sleep next time.
- Did I study? If I didn't, I will study next time.
- Did I have all of the information I needed?
- Do I need to go over the test with the teacher to find out what happened?

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## Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to explain why preparing for tests is important. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- To prepare for a test, plan ahead and review your notes and homework.
- To study for a test, make a master list of important information from your notes and test yourself.
- During a test, follow instructions, plan ahead, and answer the easiest questions first.

### Student Assessment

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1. List three strategies for studying for a test.
2. List three mnemonic devices that work for you.
3. List three things you can do to help you while you are taking a test.

## LESSON EXTENSIONS

### Using Quotations

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“Worry is like a rocking chair: it gives you something to do but it doesn’t get you anywhere.”

Have students brainstorm alternatives to worrying that will help them pass tests.

### Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

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Have students use the information they learned in this lesson to tutor other students on test-taking strategies.

Have students design an evaluation form for feedback from their pupils on the strategies they found helpful.

### Writing in Your Journal

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Have students make a plan for improving their test performances in one subject. Have students evaluate their efforts to figure out whether their plans were helpful.

Have them write about their results and get feedback from a classmate.

### Homework

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Have students design and conduct a poll on study habits in other classes and grades. The polls might focus on how far in advance students prepare for a test, how they prepare, and whether or not they get nervous before a test. Have students decide on a uniform set of questions and how results will be reported.

Have students create a different bar graph for each question in their polls. Have them report their findings to the class.

## Additional Resources

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Have students read *Too Stressed to Think?* by Annie Fox and Ruth Kirschner.

Have students brainstorm reasons why they might get stressed. Have them make web graphic organizers to show different ways to alleviate or handle stress.