Ten Steps to Better Test taking

Adapted from Paul Nolting’s Math study Skills

1. - Write down everything you’re trying to remember…formulas, reminders, etc. Write it down in the margins, on the back, on scrap paper, but get it down, so you can let it go and focus on the test!
2. - How many pages are there? How many questions are there? What are the point values? Where will you get the biggest bang for your buck? How many story problems are there?
3. - Were you reminded of something as you previewed? Do you need to add anything to your data dump?
4. - Do everything you know first and get warmed up. If you get to something you don’t know, *read it twice*, circle it, skip it and move on. Do not waste time on problems you don’t know - do everything you’re sure of first!
5. - Something you’ve done may remind you of what to do with the one you’re stuck on.
6. - When all else fails, try something! Rewrite the question; sometimes that’s enough to remind you of what you need to do. Trying something, and you may get a point or two.
7. - Worst case scenario…guess and *leave no blanks*. No answer gets 0 points, if you guess and/or try you may get a point or two.
8. - Make sure you have an answer for every problem- *leave no blanks*!
9. - Don’t rush. Don’t be flustered by students finishing before you; some of them are turning in blank tests.

10. - You will be using the skills from your last test, again, and again, and again!

**6 Types of Test-Taking Errors**

1. **Misreading the directions**

Ex: Misunderstanding the directions - you knew what to do, but read them wrong.

**If you made this type of error:** *SLOW DOWN* • Always read the directions carefully for each question. • Re-read as needed for clarity.

1. **Careless Errors**

Ex: Moving so quickly that 2x3=5 • *Not* reading the directions • Losing a negative.

**If you made this type of error:**  *SLOW DOWN* • Always read the directions carefully for each question. • If you don’t understand the directions, ask for clarification. • Say the problem aloud to avoid losing negatives or multiplying/adding/etc wrong.

1. **Concept Errors**

Ex: Not knowing what you are doing – not understanding the properties, principles and rules needed.

**If you made this type of error:**  These are critical errors • Spend the extra time you need to relearn the material • Reteach yourself via professor’s office hours, books, videos, tutoring, etc.

1. **Study Errors**

Ex: Studying the wrong material. • Not studying. • Not doing homework every day. • Cramming • Missing class • Not answering the question completely.

**If you made this type of error:** • Stop the study behaviors that are causing you problems • Go to class everyday • Do homework everyday • Learn and use good math study skills (see Math study skill inventory)

1. **Test Taking Errors**

Ex: Changing answers • Wasting time • Skipping questions and not going back • Not knowing good relaxation techniques

**If you made type of error:** • Learn to be a better math test taker • Book • Internet • Your Prof • Terri! Come see me in the LAC for more test taking tips and relaxation techniques!

1. **Application Errors**

Ex: You know the math, but can’t apply it to story problems.

**If you made this type of error:** • Learn to predict which problems will be on the test. \*hint: look at your notes • Ask your teacher which story problems will be on the test • Think of a simpler example • Practice, practice, practice!

Test and Error Analysis

Identifying where test material comes from can help you study more effectively for your next test. Classify each question on the test according to its original source. Write the problem number in the appropriate box; then find the total for each type of question.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Text,  reading, definition,  vocabulary | Classroom lecture,  notes and examples | Homework  and practice | Supplemental or  unknown Sources |
|  |  |  |  |

Write the numbers of the questions you missed in the appropriate box below to indicate most closely the type of error made.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Misread  Directions | Careless Errors | Concept Errors | Study Errors | Test Taking  Errors | Application Errors |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

To avoid making these same errors again, don’t wait for the next test to start practicing the workshop strategies discussed. Start now with test corrections and then use daily reinforcement during your homework and study time.

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