15 Test Taking Strategies Every Test Taker Should Know
Test Taking Strategy #1—
Get ready before testing

• **Get plenty of rest the night before each testing day**
  You need 8-10 hours of sleep, so go to bed by 10pm.

• **Eat a good nutritious breakfast the morning of each testing day**
  (Milk w/cereal, eggs, fruits; no *Hot Cheetos* and candy.)

• **Avoid the morning rush.** Set out clothes the night before. Get to school a few minutes earlier than you usually do.
Can You Follow Directions?
Get Out a Sheet of Paper and Take This Test.

Can You Follow Directions?

This is a timed test—you have 3 minutes only!

1. Read everything carefully before doing anything.
2. Put your name in the upper right-hand corner of this paper.
3. Loudly call out your first name.
4. Circle your name.
5. If you have followed directions carefully to this point, call out "I have."
6. Draw five small squares in the upper left-hand corner.
7. Put an "X" in each square.
8. In your normal speaking voice, count from ten to one backwards.
9. Now that you have finished reading everything carefully, do only sentences one and two.
Test Taking Strategy #2

Always **listen** to the directions given by teacher.

- **Read** the directions written on the test.
- **Read** the question and **ALL** answer choices before marking anything.

Follow Directions!
1. Don’t spend too much time on any one question.

2. It is important to answer every question even if you are not sure of the answer.

3. Use all your time! There are no extra points for finishing early.

4. Save time at the end to review your test and make sure you haven't left out any answers.

5. Answer the easiest questions first, but be sure to go back to those questions you skipped.
PACE YOURSELF

GED TEST TIMES
Math: 90 minutes.
Reasoning Through Language Arts: 35 minutes.
Social Studies: 90 minutes.
Science: 90 minutes.

Hiset Times
- Language Arts: 65 minutes (Reading) 120 (writing)
- Math: 90 minutes
- Science: 80 minutes
- Social Studies: 70 Minutes

REMEMBER TO DO THE EASIEST PROBLEMS FIRST
AND THEN BE SURE AND GO BACK!
Test Taking Strategy # 4

If you can’t figure out which answer is correct, try to **eliminate (get rid of) the answers that you know are wrong.**

- Eliminate **obviously wrong answer choices**
- Eliminate choices that are **partly correct**
- Eliminate items that are **correct but don’t answer the question**
Test Taking Strategy #5

Educated guessing means using everything you know to attempt to answer the question.

A random guess gives you a 25% chance of getting the right answer. An educated guess gives you chance of answering correctly up to 75%.
ABSOLUTE WORDS

ANSWERS WITH THE FOLLOWING WORDS ARE USUALLY WRONG/FALSE.

ALL        ALWAYS
MUST       NONE
NEVER      EVERY
ENTIRELY   BEST
WORST      ONLY
EVERYONE
Test Taking Strategy #7

ANSWERS WITH THE FOLLOWING WORDS ARE USUALLY CORRECT/TRUE

SOME
SOMETIMES
GENERALLY
USUALLY
FREQUENTLY
PROBABLY
MOST
FEW
MANY
OFTEN
SELDOM
Test Taking Strategy #8

When the answer is not clear, look for clues (context, tense, word type, grammar) in the question and the answer choices.

The context of a word includes all the words and sentences that surround it and the situation in which the word is used.

Look for clues!
Clue words in test questions:

Who? Person  What?  Thing  
Where? Place   When?  Time  Why? 
Reason  Which?  Choice  
How? A way something is done  
How many? Number
Example

Our class will see a **play,** **__________** ends this week.

- Who
- What
- Which
- When

1. Use elimination strategy first...
2. Look for a clue
3. *Play* is a noun in this sentence, so ask yourself what kind of a play it is.
The effect of negatives is to make the sentence the opposite of what it would be without the negative.

Negatives:
- Not
- None
- No one
- Hardly
- Scarcely

Prefixes such as
- Un-
- Non-
- Dis-
- In-

Simplify the question by getting rid of double negatives.

Simplify this statement:
Most people are not unafraid of snakes.
Most people are afraid of snakes.
Without changing the meaning of the sentence, which words can best be used to replace the underlined part?

A. Enjoys  X
B. Tolerates  X
C. Punishes  X
D. Does not like  

Example

Mrs. Smith dislikes when students are being rude to their teachers.
Test Taking Strategy #10

In Math, ESTIMATING is an approximate answer obtained by rounding the numbers BEFORE you add, subtract, multiply, or divide.

Always ask yourself: “Is the answer reasonable?”

For example:

What is 325 + 917 + 796?
A. 56  B. 2038  C. 1038  D. 10,564

Estimate
Examples

What value of \( N \) makes the equation true?

\[ N - 19 = 33 \]

A. 245  
B. 42  
C. 14  
D. 52

Eliminate obviously wrong answers first and then estimate!
Example
An airplane flew 2905 miles in 5 hours. What was the speed of the plane?

A. 12 miles per hour
B. 2324 miles per hour
C. 581 miles per hour
D. 481 miles per hour
Test Taking Strategy #11

1. Read all the titles, labels, and other given information
2. Check the units of measurement
3. Look for a pattern, trend, or comparison in the graph or table

Milton Family's Budget (Title)

- Food 33%
- Rent 25%
- Clothes 15%
- Misc 21%
- Savings 6%

School Attendance and Science Grades (Title)

- Percentage (Label)
- Students (Label)

Questions with graphs, charts, and tables,
Test Taking Strategy #12

1. Read the title of the map
2. Check the map key (legend)
3. Look at the map scale (if you need to find a distance)
4. Re-read the question again
Other Math Tips

• Use Scratch Paper.
• Double Check To Make Sure You've copied the problem correctly.
• Line Up Place Values (thousands, hundreds, tens, ones) Neatly To Avoid Careless Mistakes.
• Pace Yourself.

MOVE ON AND GO BACK!

\[
\begin{array}{c}
343 \\
x 423
\end{array}
\]
Test Taking Strategy # 13

• Answers about where and when the story takes place are found at the beginning.

• Answers about a problem of the story are usually found in the middle.

• Answers about how the problem was resolved are usually found at the end.
When Reading a Passage Remember To:

READ THE QUESTIONS FIRST to determine what you are looking for as you read the selection.
Test Taking Strategy #14

Finding the BIG IDEA

What’s the Big Idea?

- Events and characters that make up the story
- The purpose of the story
- The point the author is trying to make

Tip: Look for the Big idea in the first two paragraphs of the story!
Know The Meaning

*Trace-outline, list in steps, or follow the path
*Analyze-break into parts, tell about the parts
*Infer-read between the lines, what is the hidden meaning
*Evaluate-judge it, tell the good and the bad
*Formulate*-create, put together

*Describe*-tell about, paint a picture with words

*Support*-back it up or prove it with details

*Explain*-teach me or show me the steps
*Summarize-tell the main idea, tell the beginning, middle, and end

*Compare-tell the all the ways they are the same

*Contrast-tell all the ways that they are different

*Predict-What will happen next?
Final Tip Reminders

☑ If the test requires you to read passages and then answer questions about what you read,

**Read the questions first.**

☑ Line up place value correctly on your scratch paper (thousands, hundreds, tens, ones).

☑ **Remember:** Never leave any question on a test blank.
When You Are Done ...

✓ If you finish early, check to make sure you have answered all questions.
✓ Once you have finished, please remain quiet as others will still be working on the test.
Follow these tips to reduce your anxiety!

Remember the strategies! They will help you to feel confident.

• Think positively about doing your best!
• Take a deep breath to relax.
• Answer EVERY question.
• Make intelligent educated guesses.
• Think about one item at a time.
• DO YOUR BEST!

I am scared of the test monster!!!!
Reduce Your Test Anxiety With Practice

• Confidence comes from practice and becoming familiar with the format.

• USATestprep will give you the practice you need to help you stay calm and do your best.
By Using The Test Taking Strategies You Have Learned Today, and With Practice, You Can Improve Your Test Taking Skills and Test Scores. YOU CAN DO THIS!

Sources:
“Preparing Middle School Students for High Stakes Tests,” Tara Musslewhite, Atascocita Middle School, Humble, Texas
“15 Strategies Every Test Taker Should Have,” Vista Middle School, Van Nuys, CA