

Test-Taking Tips from Teachers

Be sure your student...

- Reads the instructions and asks if anything is unclear.
- Fills in bubbles fully, writes neatly, and erases stray marks.
- Works at an average pace of about one minute per question, or maintain an even pace.
- Reads all the answer choices.
- Answers the easiest questions first.
- Takes notes, crosses out incorrect choices, and writes in the answer booklet.
- Double-checks the test number in the booklet against the answer sheet every few questions.
- Uses a good guessing strategy. If there's no penalty for incorrect answers, he should always make a guess. If there is a penalty, he should guess when he can narrow down the answers to three choices.
- Reviews the questions for passages before reading, so she knows what information she's looking for.
- Numbers questions on his scratch paper so that he can easily find his work.
- Remembers it's okay not to know everything — unlike class tests, these are designed so that most students get many questions wrong.
- Saves a few minutes at the end to double check her work.

Your student should try not to...

- Get stuck on a single question — skip it and come back to it later.
- Give up if the questions feel too difficult — an easy section may be just ahead.
- Spend too much time rewriting or obsessing about neatness.
- Change an answer unless he knows it's wrong — statistically, he should trust his first instinct.
- Worry if she is running out of time.

"There can be a thin line between stressing children out over a testing situation and having them not take it seriously. The best advice is to tell the children that this is an important assessment, and they should give it their best effort, but that there may be some questions that they do not understand."