

## **Test Taking Strategy #1: Reading Directions Carefully!!**

If you only followed directions #1 and # 15 on the “Test Taking Skills on the preceding page, congratulations!! You know the number one rule of test taking – READ ALL DIRECTIONS.

If you did some or all of the work before you realized the trick, you now know what good test takers know: **You must read all directions before you begin working!**

Imagine that you are attempting to go to a friend’s house that you’ve never been to before. If you have been given no directions, no map, no GPS, how will you get there?

You may say that you’d stop strangers along the way to ask directions. This strategy could work. But it would certainly make your trip harder and probably more frustrating. You might even feel like giving up before you reach your destination. However, if you get directions before you start out and then follow the direction, you certainly lessen your chances of getting lost and frustrated, and you increase your chances of successfully reaching your goal with ease.

Taking a test is similar to going on a trip. You want to know *before you begin* how to take the shortest and best route to reach your destination. When taking a test, you’ll want to read directions carefully to earn the best grade. Therefore, it makes sense to read and follow directions when you take a test

## **Strategy #2: Taking Matching Tests**

Matching test usually require you to match words in one column with related phrases in another column. Matching is often used for vocabulary, people and events in history, or scientific occurrences. Follow the strategies listed below to make a matching test an easy match for you.

1. **Read all directions.**
2. If one column has more choices than the other, work the column with fewer choices first. You won’t waste your time trying to match an answer that doesn’t have a match. This is a trick on matching tests called a “ringer.” Don’t fall for it.
3. If both columns have the same number, first work the column with the vocabulary word first.
4. When you choose an answer, cross it out so you will not have to read the choice again.

## **Strategy #3: Taking True/False Tests**

True-false questions are really statements that are either ENTIRELY TRUE OR FALSE. Follow these strategies to help you on True & False Tests.

1. **Read all directions.**
2. True/false questions often contain clues to help determine whether they are true or false. Look for these key words to help you:

Since there are few absolutes in this world, words that mean “all” or “never” will USUALLY signal that the statement is FALSE. Examples of these words are:

- ALL
- ALWAYS
- EVERY
- ONLY
- NONE
- NEVER

Some words are more often found in TRUE statements:

- SOME
- USUALLY
- SELDOM
- SOMETIMES
- PROBABLY
- MAINLY
- OFTEN
- EXCEPT
- RARELY

3. Look carefully at the details in the statement.  
**EXAMPLE:** In a calendar year Thanksgiving comes before Easter.  
*You may answer true because you may think of a school year instead of a calendar year*
4. Sometimes a true statement will be reworded so that the positive words replace negative ones or vice versa.

**EXAMPLE:** The textbook might read, “The soldier did not want to return to the frontlines, but the test might read, “The soldier wanted to get back to the frontlines.”

5. If you are unsure of the answer, guess True, since statistically they have found there are more true statements.

### **Strategy #4: Taking Fill-In-The-Blank Tests**

Fill in the blank questions are statements with a key word or phrase missing. Sometimes a word bank is provided, which lists the words or phrases you should choose from. Here are some strategies for these tests:

1. **Read all of the directions carefully.**
2. If there is a word bank, read through the words to be familiar with the possible answers.
3. Read the first statement, if you know the missing information, fill it in. If there is a word bank, cross off the word that you used.
4. If you are unsure of the answer, skip the question and come back to it at the end. You will have fewer choices in your word bank at the end. Be sure to mark or circle the question to remind you to come back to it.
5. If you don't know the answer guess – don't leave it blank!
6. If you are unsure of the answer, use the rest of the test to help you find key words.

### **Strategy #5: Taking Multiple Choice Tests**

Multiple choice questions can be helpful to you because the correct answer is given in one of the choices. Multiple choice questions begin with a statement. You must then choose from one correct answer from a number of choices. Use these strategies to help you:

1. **Read all directions.**
2. Read the first question and attempt to predict the answer BEFORE reading the answer choices.
3. Read all answer choices and eliminate all impossible answers – actually cross them out with a line.
4. Choose the answer that makes the most sense to you.
5. Negative questions, worded such as “which one is NOT a reason” seem difficult because it is easier to recall facts that are included in what you have read, not the other way around.
6. Guess if you are unsure.
7. If you need to bubble in your response on a separate answer sheet, be sure you record the right choice by the right number.
8. If you have no idea what the answer is – guess C. It is statistically more likely to be C.

### **Strategy #6: Taking Essay Tests**

You will have more and more essay questions on tests as you go through school. Your teachers will expect you to write more as time goes on too. Learning to write a good essay will help you get the maximum points on these questions. Become familiar with key words found in essay questions and what they mean

- **ANALYZE:** Present a complete statement of the elements of the idea. Adapt and stick to a single plan of analysis. Give any conclusions which result.
- **COMPARE:** Look for qualities or characteristics that resemble each other. Emphasize similarities among them, but in some cases, also mention differences.
- **CONTRAST:** Stress the differences between things, qualities, events, or problems.
- **CRITICIZE:** Express your judgment about the merit or truth of the factors or views mentioned. Give the results of your analysis of these factors, discussing their limitations and good points.
- **DEFINE:** Give concise, clear, and authoritative meanings. Don't give details, but make sure to give the limits of the definition. Show how the things you are defining differ from things that are similar.
- **DESCRIBE:** Recount, characterize, sketch, or relate in sequence or narrative form.

- **DIAGRAM**: Give a drawing, chart, or graphic answer. Usually you should label a diagram. In some cases, add a brief explanation or description.
- **DISCUSS**: Examine, analyze carefully, and give reasons pro and con. Be complete: give details in an organized manner.
- **ENUMERATE**: Write in list or outline form, giving points concisely one by one. (In some cases, write in paragraph form.)
- **EVALUATE**: Carefully appraise the problem, citing both advantages and limitations. Emphasize judgment based on the appraisal of authorities and/or your own personal evaluation (depending on the demands of the questions).
- **EXPLAIN**: Clarify, interpret, and spell out the material you present. Give reasons for differences of opinion or of results and try to analyze causes.
- **IDENTIFY**: Write a brief note on who or what is to be identified. State distinguishing actions or qualities. Include enough information to separate individuals from others of its group.
- **ILLUSTRATE**: Use a figure, picture, diagram, or concrete example to explain or clarify a principle or problem.
- **INTERPRET**: Translate, give examples of, solve, or comment on a subject, usually giving your judgment of it.
- **JUSTIFY**: Prove or give reasons for decisions or conclusions, taking pains to be convincing.
- **LIST**: As in “enumerate”, write an itemized series of concise statements.
- **OUTLINE**: Organize a description under main points and subordinate points, omitting minor details and stressing the arrangement or classification of things.
- **PROVE**: Establish that something is true by citing factual evidence or giving clear, logical reasons.
- **RELATE**: Show how things are related to, or connected with, each other; or how one causes another, correlates with another, or is like another.
- **REVIEW**: Examine a subject critically, analyzing and commenting on the important statements to be made about it.
- **STATE**: Present in brief, clear sequence, usually omitting details or examples.
- **SUMMARIZE**: Give the main points or facts in condensed form like the summary of a chapter, omitting details and illustrations.
- **TRACE**: In narrative form, describe progress, development, or historical events from some points of origin.

How to begin the Essay:

1. **Read the essay question & the directions!**  
**EXAMPLE – Discuss the various theories, such as a meteorite, disease, or climate change, as a reason why dinosaurs became extinct.**
2. Use a pencil, in case you have to erase.
3. You may want to jot notes down in the margin to help you remember key points you want to include in your answer.
4. Begin the essay by restating the question.  
**EXAMPLE- Experts argue over the different theories of why dinosaurs became extinct. These theories include: a meteorite, disease, or climate change.**
5. The next sentences should back up your lead sentence with facts.  
**EXAMPLE - The experts that support the theory of the meteorite, state that . . .**
6. Conclude the essay with a restatement of your lead sentence and wrap it up.  
**EXAMPLE- All of the theories are possible, but only the dinosaurs would be able to tell us for sure what caused their extinction.**
7. Reread the question to be sure you have answered all parts of it.
8. Check your answer for spelling and grammar errors. Be sure it is legible!