

Top Ten Test-Taking Tips for Students

1. Have a Positive Attitude

Approach the big test as you'd approach a giant jigsaw puzzle. It might be tough, but you can do it! A positive attitude goes a long way toward success. The SBA is a very important test, but there is no reason to stress out about it. It is a “**snapshot**” of what you know on that date. Make your “snapshot” pretty.

2. Make a Plan

The week before the test, begin to prepare yourself for it. Make a list of the most important topics to be covered and use that as a guide when you study. Circle items that you know will require extra time. Be sure to plan extra time to study the most challenging topics. If you are thinking about starting a new routine or diet, wait until after the test.

3. The Night Before

Cramming doesn't work. If you've followed a study plan, the night before the test you should do a quick review and get to bed early. Your brain and body need sleep to function well, so **don't stay up late!**

4. The Morning of the Test

Did you know that you think better when you have a full stomach? So don't skip breakfast the morning of the test. Do not sleep in on test days (even if you're used to sleeping in). Waking up early gets your brain turned on and tuned up. **Peanut butter** and Omega-3 fatty acids found in **fish** help to keep your brain active and awake.

5. Test Time

Read the instructions! You want to make sure you are marking answers correctly. Answer every question and never skip over one. If you do not know the answer, make your best guess and then **circle** the number lightly so you can come back to it later.

6. Manage Your Time

Scan through the test quickly before starting. Figure out how much time you should spend per page. Save a little more time for the hard stuff and the written portions. If you are given a page and a half for writing a story about your favorite place in the world, then your story should be more than one page long with a **beginning, middle, end,** and **supporting details.**

7. I'm Stuck!

Those tricky problems can knock you off balance. Don't get worried or frustrated. Reread the question to make sure you understand it, and then try to solve it the best way you know how. **Take a guess,** then circle it and move on. You can come back to it later.

8. Multiple-Choice Questions

The process of **elimination** can help you choose the correct answer in a multiple-choice question. Start by crossing off the answers that couldn't be right. Then spend your time

focusing on the possible correct choices before selecting your answer.

9. Neatness Counts

If your 4s look like 9s, it could be a problem. Be sure that your writing is legible and that you erase your mistakes. For machine-scored tests, fill in the spaces carefully. Use your best handwriting and make sure that each sentence has **capitalization** and **end punctuation**. If you are not sure how to spell a certain word, use another word that you know how to spell and means the same thing.

10. I'm Done!

Not so fast - when you complete the last item on the test, remember that you're not done yet. Take your time! The first person done is rarely the person with the highest score. If you rush through it, you *will* make mistakes. Check the clock and **go back to review your answers**, making sure that you didn't make any careless mistakes (such as putting the right answer in the wrong place or skipping a question). Do NOT tell your teacher that you are finished until after you have thoroughly reviewed it. Erase any circles that you used to mark hard problems.