

## How to Get Your Best Score on Every Test

*“Success is a journey, not a destination.”*

Anonymous

Taking a test is like running a race. Someone else is there grading your performance, while you work to show your best effort. The runners who do well in races are the ones who practise. Likewise, the people who do well on tests are the ones who put in the hours practising what they’ve been learning.

If you want to do your best on every test, you can’t wait until a day or two before the test to begin to study. You’ve got to put in the hours each night to keep yourself up to speed with your classes. Good test performance is dependent on good study habits.

Study Habits that are Essential to Good Test Performance:

- ▶ Organization
- ▶ Time management
- ▶ Reading for comprehension
- ▶ Note-taking
- ▶ Memory development
- ▶ Ability to express newly learned information in your own words
- ▶ Ability to cope with test stress

Tips for How to Spend Your Time Leading up to a Test

Before You Even Look at the Material

Ask your teacher what information/knowledge they are testing...this can give many clues into what will actually be on the test. You may be surprised at the information your teachers are willing to share about upcoming tests if they see you preparing ahead of time.

For every test, be sure that you know all of the details. When is the test? How long will the test be? What is the

format for the test (will it be multiple choice, essay, short answer, true/false)? How much is the test worth?

Set a goal for yourself for the test. Picture yourself getting your marks, looking at your test, and seeing the score you wanted. Keep your goal in mind and know that you can achieve it.

Set a schedule for your time leading up to the test. Include time for continued study of your other subjects/homework, time for eating, sleeping, exercise, and fun. It is important to maintain a healthy routine. Exhausting yourself in the last few days before a test with too much study or worry will only drain your energy.

Looking at the Material

Gather all the information pertinent to your test – textbooks, notes, hand outs, past tests (if relevant), feedback from past assignments or tests (feedback is great for helping to fine-tune your approach).

Create a “table of contents” for all of the information that is going to be covered in the test. Use as many pages as you need to make a list of all the key points that will be covered. Note any specific areas of concern – either that you know you are weak on or that the teacher suggested may be central to the test. This should take you about 30 to 60 minutes.

Flesh out your table of contents with details. This should take 2-3 hours depending on how comprehensive the test is. What you are doing is creating a “summary sheet” of all of the information that is potentially going to appear on the test.

## News & Announcements

### Website Update

Look for our new website sometime this month. It has even more ideas to support students in learning.

### Math Mania

PIMS, The Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences, hosted a Math Mania evening at Frank Hobbs Elementary School Tuesday, October 28th. The event was well attended by students and parents from around Victoria. There were lots of hands-on activities and games demonstrating fun methods for teaching math and computer science concepts to children.

PIMS will host at least one more free Math Mania evening this school year. Check their website for details of upcoming events: [www.pims.math.ca](http://www.pims.math.ca)

### Education Fair & Career Fair

This annual information fair features seminars and exhibits from Canadian and international universities, private institutions, and corporations.

Where: Victoria Conference Centre

When: December 4, 2003  
9am-7pm

Cost: \$7 at the door

## About Us

### Our Mission Is:

- ▶ To provide top quality, flexible learning support and service to students and parents through:

*In-home private tutoring  
matched specifically to  
each student's needs.*

*Stimulating workshops  
building skills in a practical  
and creative way.*

- ▶ To enhance students' skills and increase learning confidence through one-on-one support that is truly individualized, recognizing each student's unique abilities.
- ▶ To improve the quality of life, in individuals and communities through education.

**Our tutors** are certified teachers and professionals. They are carefully screened and chosen specially to match the needs and learning styles of each student.

*We support families in education.*

For more information and resources, visit us on-line at:

[www.SmartTutorReferrals.com](http://www.SmartTutorReferrals.com)

Review. Check items off of your summary sheet as you review them. Spend more time on points that are more difficult for you, but pay attention not to get bogged down in one section. The idea is to make it all the way through all of the topics before the test. If you work for 30-50 minutes with 10 minute breaks, you'll help to boost your memory retention since our brains find beginnings and endings easiest to remember.

Practice. To beat test stress, you need to get comfortable with producing information under pressure. Practise in a timed setting. Knowing how long your test will be and how many questions will be on it, you can try to reproduce the actual timing of the test.

Practise output (especially written output). Make up questions and answer them, fill in practice worksheets, talk with someone about what you know, make flash cards, write stories or poems about the information, mind map, write practice essays or paragraphs.

### Tips to Remember at the Test

- ▶ Your test is your performance. Maintain a positive, self-confident attitude. Focus on yourself; remember your goals; ignore what everyone else is doing.

- ▶ Review the entire test when it is first handed out.

- ▶ Budget your time. How long is the test? How many questions are there? Which ones are worth the most? Which ones are the easiest? Take a minute after your first read through of the test to orient yourself, make a quick plan, note the time, and begin.

- ▶ Begin with the easiest questions first. This will boost your confidence and get you some easy marks at the same time.

- ▶ Be sure to read all questions and directions carefully! Read them twice. Read them five times if you need to! You must understand what is being asked before you can give the best answer!

- ▶ While you're writing the test, focus your attention on answering the questions well.

- ▶ Even if you finish early, stay to the end of the test. Kick back and relax. Feeling relaxed in a test setting can help reduce stress in future tests. And, if you're lucky, an answer that had earlier escaped you might bubble up.

- ▶ One last quick trick that used to help me to get through those grueling batteries of university tests: plan something to do after the test. Life goes on, and a plan for fun can help to take the pressure off.

## Contact Us

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## Learning Styles

Each person has a preferred means of receiving information. Some people like to see things (Visual Learners), some like to hear things (Auditory Learners), and some like to move things around (Kinesthetic Learners). Actually, most people are a combination of these three with one or more sense being dominant.

Your learning style is your unique approach to learning. Understanding your learning style is understanding how you like to learn and express yourself. Knowing yourself as a learner, you can optimize your learning in the classroom and in life.

If you'd like more information on learning styles, please contact us or check out our website: [www.SmartTutorReferrals.com](http://www.SmartTutorReferrals.com)