

## MATH STUDY TIPS / TEST TAKING TIPS

- Repetition is important in math. You learn how to solve problems by doing them, so keep on practicing problems, but don't do it blindly, make sure you learn how to recognize when/why you should use a specific method to solve a problem.
- Mix up the order of the questions from various topics when you are reviewing so you'll learn when to use a specific method/formula.
- Work on practice problems for each topic ranging in levels of difficulty.
- Avoid "cramming" the night before. Review concepts for about 30 minutes each day for multiple days leading up to a big test.
- When studying for long periods of time, take breaks. Get up & walk around, listen to a song or two, have a snack, etc.
- When practicing, try to solve the problem on your own first then look at the answer or seek help if you are having trouble.
- Experiment using different methods to see what works best for you. Examples include making note cards, redoing homework / quiz problems, working on IXL or Khan Academy, talking yourself through a problem out loud, explaining the problem to a parent, sibling, friend, etc.
- Make up a sheet with all the formulas you need to know and memorize all the formulas on the sheet. Even if you will be provided a formula sheet, this will help familiarize you with the concepts.
- When you get your exam, write down all the key formulas on the margin of your paper so if you forget them when you're in the middle of the test you can look back at the formula.
- Read the directions carefully and don't forget to answer all parts of the question.
- Make estimates for your answers... i.e. if you are asked to answer  $48 \times 12 = ?$ , you could expect a number around 500, but if you end up with an answer around 5000, you'll know you did something wrong.
- Show all your work (especially when partial credit is awarded) and write as legibly as possible.
- Even if you know the final answer is wrong, don't erase your entire work because you may get partial credit for using the correct procedure.

- Check over your test after you are done with it. If you have time, redo the problem on a separate piece of paper and see if you come up with the same answer the second time around. Look for careless mistakes such as making sure the decimal is in the right place, that you read the directions correctly, that you copied the numbers correctly, that you put a negative sign if it is needed, that your arithmetic is correct and so on.

## **CALMING STRATEGIES TO PREPARE FOR TESTS**

- The best way to combat anxiety about an exam is to be prepared! Put in the effort when studying so you feel confident and prepared for the exam.
- Learn to avoid bad study habits, such as procrastination, distractions, laziness, etc.
- Positive self-talk.
- Avoid other students who have not prepared, express negativity, or are distractions before the exam.
- Get a good night's rest the day before an exam.
- Adopt an exercise program (it has been proven to help sharpen the mind!).
- Avoid thinking you need to cram just before the exam.
- Eat healthy before an exam.
  - ◆ Fresh fruits and vegetables are often recommended to reduce stress.
  - ◆ Avoid processed foods and foods high in sugar or heavy spices.
- Take a small snack to the test to help take your mind off your anxiety.
- Learn from past experiences (avoid making similar mistakes over and over...if something isn't working, try something else).

## **CALMING STRATEGIES DURING A TEST**

- Read directions carefully.
- Budget your time.
- Don't panic when students start handing in tests...there is no reward for finishing early.

- Try to relax.
  - ◆ Take deep breaths, get a drink of water.
  - ◆ When you start to worry, pause, refocus: think about the current question you are answering and the next step.
- Acknowledge that you have done & are doing your best.
- Remember, some anxiety is normal!
  - ◆ Realize that anxiety can become a 'habit' and it takes practice to use it as a tool to succeed.

### **AFTER THE TEST**

- How did it go? List what seemed to work well and try to build upon those next time.
- Review what did not go well and brainstorm ways to improve on these things.
- Celebrate that you are on the road to overcoming this obstacle!

### **MULTIPLE CHOICE TIPS**

- Read the question before you look at the answer.
- If it is a math question, see if you can use the provided answers to work backwards to discover the correct answer.
- Remember that in math, the given answers are often ones that you will get if you make a common mistake, so you should always check your answer even if the first answer you think of is one of the choices.
- Eliminate answers you know aren't right.
- Read all the choices before choosing your answer.
- If there is no guessing penalty, always take an educated guess and select an answer.
- Don't keep on changing your answer, usually your first choice is the right one, unless you miss-read the question.

## **TRUE / FALSE TIPS**

- Every part of a true sentence must be "true." If any one part of the sentence is false, the whole sentence is false despite many other true statements.
- Qualifiers are words that restrict or open up general statements. Words like "sometimes, often, frequently, ordinarily, generally" open up the possibilities of making accurate statements. They make more modest claims, are more likely to reflect reality, and usually indicate "true" answers.
- Absolute words restrict possibilities. "No, never, none, always, every, entirely, only" imply the statement must be true 100% of the time and usually indicate "false" answers.