

# Test Taking Tips

## Reading Strategies

1. Practice BEFORE reading strategies. Read for a purpose. Skim the captions, questions, pictures, etc. before reading the passage to figure out what the passage is about. Ask yourself what you already know about the subject.
2. Be familiar with various types of reading questions on state tests such as: main idea, author's purpose, author's point of view, author's message, fact/opinion, plot & setting, similes & metaphors, vocabulary using context clues, figurative language, synonyms/ homonyms, and analogies.
3. Practice reading a broad array of materials, such as: text books, editorials, biographies/autobiographies, consumer materials, how-to articles, primary sources (i.e. Bill of Rights), short stories, literary essays (i.e. critiques, personal narratives), excerpts, historical fiction, plays, fables and folk tales.
4. Practice DURING reading strategies. Highlight or using post-it notes to mark important text. Decide on a note-taking strategy that works for you ( i.e. two-column notes with main idea in left column and supporting details in right column). Make webs or bubble charts to organize information ( i.e. start with the main idea and construct a web linking supporting details to the main idea).
5. Practice AFTER reading strategies. Summarize the key ideas in one sentence. Use a reflection log to record the main points of the reading. Build a pyramid to organize the cause & effect or the turning point & decision.

## Math Strategies

Math test items assess students in:

- Number Sense
- Patterns, Functions, and Algebra
- Data Analysis, Statistics, and Probability
- Spatial Sense, Geometry, and Measurement

## Math Tips

1. Make word problems a priority. Have your son/daughter write their own word problems based on situations in the environment, literature, or current events.
2. Stress Number Sense. Take time to help your son/daughter find where, how, and in what context numbers are reported in the newspaper. Compare the area of a hockey rink or tennis court to help quantify their world and see the usefulness of numbers.
3. Focus on estimation. Give your son/daughter “flash quizzes” ( i.e. estimate the sum of  $422+599$  in their heads).
4. Emphasize mental math. This involves tapping into students’ natural way of doing math ( i.e. have your son/daughter share how they arrived at an answer).
5. Practice basic facts. Quiz your son/daughter on addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts regularly.

## Before the Test

- Eat a nutritious breakfast on the morning of the test.
- Bring the right supplies. Check with your teacher regarding what to bring. (sharpened no. 2 pencils, highlighters, calculator).
- Get adequate sleep the night before the test.
- Wear comfortable clothing on test day.

## During the Test

- Read all parts of a question and the answer choices carefully before you choose an answer.
- Cross out obvious wrong answers.
- Skip any items you don’t know, lightly mark the item you skipped, and come back to it later.
- If you are unsure of an answer, go with your first choice.
- Notice how words are emphasized (i.e. Underlined, Bolded, Italicized, or CAPITALIZED).
- Fill in the ovals on the answer sheet completely.
- Erase carefully and completely.
- Answer EVERY question.
- Review your answers.
- If time permits, go back over the test as though it’s your first time (with a “new set of eyes”). You’ll be surprised by the mistakes you might find.