

Tools For Success on Tests, Quizzes and Quizzettes

Every student has learning strengths. You may be an exceptional writer, oral speaker, project or group worker, test-taker, or any combination of these. Some students are naturally gifted in the area of quiz and test preparation. For these students, studying for a quiz or test is easy. Other students have a harder time preparing for quizzes and tests but have developed **tools** and **strategies** that help them to succeed on tests. There is a third group of students who have trouble preparing for quizzes and tests and are still searching for tools and strategies to help them improve their test and quiz performance.

Here is a list of tools that some students are using to prepare for quizzes and tests. It is not likely that all of these tools will work for every learner. Each student must, through trial and error, choose tools that fit his/her particular style of learning. Also, particular tools may work best for certain types of tests. Whether you are a superior test taker or frustrated and searching for tools, this list can help you to develop the test preparation skills that are needed to be a successful student from middle school right through college. Try these strategies. One or more of these could be your ticket to improved test and quiz performance!

I. Make sure that you have all of the information that you need, and that you understand it.

1. Attend class regularly. Do not miss school or class without a good reason.
2. Do not leave class unless it is an emergency.
3. Pay attention during class. Concentrate!
4. If you miss class/school, borrow another student's notes and copy them as soon as possible. Choose someone reliable.
5. If you do not understand something, ask your teacher during SSR.
6. Ask your parents to help if you do not understand.
7. Read difficult items carefully, several times if necessary.
8. When you think you understand something, try to explain it to someone else.
9. Look up information in reference books/computer to solidify or expand your understanding.
10. Create a study guide.
11. Save prior homework, class work, quizzes, etc.
12. Be aware of practice and review worksheets that teachers provide. Don't lose them! Hole punch them and put them in your binder.

II. Memorize, internalize, and otherwise prepare for the test.

1. Work in a quiet place that is free from distractions.
2. Focus on the task at hand.
3. Read notes silently.
4. Read notes aloud.
5. Recopy notes neatly.
6. Create flashcards and use them to test yourself.
7. Write an outline or web of your notes.
8. Highlight or underline your notes.
9. Outline, web, or take power notes on the chapter/section.
10. Carefully survey the chapter/section for questions; be able to answer them.
11. Use teacher-provided study guides or practice worksheets to study.
12. Quiz yourself.
13. Have others quiz you.
14. Study a little each night; don't procrastinate! Come to class prepared with questions.
15. Use learning tricks and memory devices such as poems, songs, acronyms, word associations, etc.
16. Record notes on tape and listen to them.
17. Brainstorm possible test/quiz questions alone or in groups.
18. Take a mental inventory. Go over notes in your head. Visualize your notes as a picture.
19. Draw pictures to represent concepts or vocabulary words from your notes.
20. Use labeled diagrams from the text or web.
21. Use the text's online components.

III. New Learning Theory Research

1. Research suggests that students learn better when they study in different learning environments. **Consider changing rooms once or twice during a study session.**
2. Research suggests that students learn better with "mixed practice" than they do by studying all the same kinds of content or problem together. For example, students learn math better when they perform mixed problem sets than they do when they get the same types of problems grouped together. **Consider studying different types of content, questions, and problems mixed in,** not grouped with similar problems.
3. Research suggests that students learn better when they **space their study sessions out.** Consider studying every other day or every third day to challenge your ability to recall information. Late-night studying and all-nighters are also bad ideas, as the effects of sleep deprivation make students perform poorly.
4. Research suggests students who avoid distractions and multi-tasking while studying score better.
5. Research suggests that repeated practice testing and **self testing** are very valuable learning tools for students.
6. Test anxiety reduces test performance. If you feel anxious, imagine something that makes you feel powerful and competent, like scoring a goal for a soccer player. Then, imagine yourself taking the test and having that same powerful and competent feeling.

