

# Top Standardized Test-Taking Tips for Students

1. Practice, practice, practice. The more you practice, the more familiar you will be with the test format, and the less likely you are to panic when you take the test for real.
2. Studying for the test over an extended period is much more effective and lasting than cramming for the test at the last minute.
3. Bring two sharpened, soft-lead number two pencils with you to the test. Make sure they have good erasers.
4. Eat a good breakfast high in protein the morning of the test is a great energy booster.
5. Visit the bathroom 15-30 minutes before the test. Do not drink water or other beverages for an hour before the test, as a full bladder will affect your concentration.
6. Get a full night's sleep before the test. Do not pull an all-nighter cramming before the test. A lack of sleep will affect your performance.
7. Wear comfortable clothing.
8. Don't panic. If you start getting anxious, take slow deep breaths. Don't worry about other people finishing early. Smart people know to use all available time to double-check their work.
9. Pace yourself. Calculate the amount of time you have to answer each question and avoid getting bogged down on any one question.
10. Answer the easiest questions first. Most tests arrange the questions in order of difficulty, but sometimes you'll find that later questions are easier for you. If you're stuck on a question, move on to the next question (but be sure you skip it on the answer sheet). You can always return to the question later.
11. If you have time left over at the end of the test, review your answers. Don't second-guess an answer unless you are certain that you misread or misinterpreted the question. Watch out for careless errors. Also double-check that you wrote all of the answers in the correct locations. (If you skipped a question, make sure you didn't misalign the answer to the next question.)
12. Read the question in full before trying to answer it. At least some of the answer choices will be designed to trap students who don't read the question fully. Also identify the answer first before looking at the answer choices, since some of the choices will be designed to prime you into misinterpreting the question.
13. Eliminate any answers that you know are incorrect, especially on questions where you are having trouble arriving at the answer. Eliminating a few wrong answers can increase the chances of a random guess being correct. Consider all the answer choices before writing down your final answer. If one of the answers is an all-of-the-above choice, make sure there isn't more than one correct answer. If you've identified at least two correct answers, choose the all-of-the-above response. Answers that are positive are more likely to be correct than answers that are negative. Answers that are more informative are more likely to be correct.