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|  |  | |  | | --- | | Preparing for a Math Test Your success on a math test can be maximized by proper preparation. Practice good study techniques throughout the semester.Begin studying for the test at least one week ahead of time.  1. **Work out all practice tests** in the textbook and those given by your instructor.  Review your study lists.Find out from your instructor:  * + on which topics or objectives you will be tested.   + what materials are needed for the test: calculators, rulers, etc.   + what materials are prohibited from the tests: calculators, cell-phones, etc.  Prepare yourself physically  * + Get proper exercise weekly.   + Eat properly prior to the test.     - Avoid overeating just before the test.     - Eat a good breakfast and/or lunch before the test.     - Do not drink too much before the test: you do not want to have to use the restroom during the test.     - Avoid too much caffinated beverages before the test; this may cause nervousness.     - Do not use alcohol or recreational drugs before the test. These will impair your concentration and brain functioning.     - If you are taking prescribed medications, be aware of their effects on your concentration and thinking. Adjust your intellectual activity accordingly.   + Get a good night sleep before the test. Staying up late cramming is not productive and can reduce your mental sharpness.  1. **Read the section** on [doing well on a math test](http://salsa.missioncollege.org/mss/stories/storyReader$31) so you know what to do once the test has started. 2. **Do not study the day of the test.** Relax and be confident that you have done your best to prepare. Additional studying will only make you more nervous and reducde your confidence. Before the test, take a nice walk around the campus and think positive thoughts. | |

**Doing Well On A Math Test**

Being successful in taking a math test is not just a matter of studying. There are many factors that that affect a person's ability to do well on a math test.

Check on the links below to find out more!

* First, prepare for the test properly. Look at [Preparing for a Math Test](http://salsa.missioncollege.org/mss/stories/storyReader$29)for helpful hints.
* In order to minimize mistakes on a test, look at [six types of test-taking errors](http://salsa.missioncollege.org/mss/stories/storyReader$35) to avoid and how to prevent them.
* Bring all necessary materials to the test:
  + At least 2 sharp pencils.
  + Good eraser.
  + Scientific calculator, if allowed.
  + Ruler (or straight edge) and compass, if needed.
  + Turn off cell phones during the exam.
* Look over the test for length and difficulty of problems.
  + Determine the average time to devote to each problem.
  + Manage time during the test
    - Limit the time spent on each problem.
    - Know how much time is left until the end of the test.
  + Work on the easiest problems first.
* Do a "data dump:" Write down all formulas and important ideas when you first get the test, while your memory is fresh and so you can refer to them during the test.
* Read all directions carefully. Follow the directions.
* Show all steps of your work on the test. You can get often get partial credit for solving part of a problem correctly.
* Check your work!
  + Are your answers accurate?
  + Did you complete the problem?
  + Did you answer all the questions?
* Do not leave the test room early! Use the extra time to check your work again if you finish early.
* Relax. If you feel anxious or frustrated during the test:
  + Stop working, put down your pencil, close your eyes.
  + Take slow, deep breaths.
  + Think positively and remove all negative thoughts.
  + Open your eyes and get back to work.

**Test-Taking Errors To Avoid**

Research has shown that there are six types of test-taking errors that are commonly made by students taking math tests. You can improve your test scores by:

* Watching out for these errors before they occur.
* Looking at your graded tests and determining into which category your errors might fall.

1. **Misread the directions.**

Causes:

* + Failure to read directions.
  + Ignoring the directions.
  + Not reading the directions carefully.
  + Not understanding the directions.

To avoid these errors:

* + Read **all** directions on the test carefully.
  + Follow the directions after you have read them.
  + When doing homework and practice tests, note the directions (ie. "solve," "simplify," "evaluate," "factor," etc.) and know the procedures that these directions are asking you to do.

1. **Careless errors.**

Causes:

* + Lack of focus on what you are doing.
  + Becoming tired or distracted.
  + Sloppy handwriting.
  + Disorganized presentation of work.

To avoid these errors:

* + Don't rush through an answer.
  + Look for sign errors.
  + Look for arithmetic errors.
  + Do work in a neat, organized fashion.
  + Check all your work!

1. **Concept errors.**

Causes:

* + Not understanding how to do a problem.
  + Not fully understanding the concepts and principles behind a problem.
  + Lack of practice in working similar problems.
  + Failure to attend class, take notes or do homework regularly.

To avoid these errors:

* + Learn all the material well before the test.
  + Study examples from the textbook, class notes and homework.
  + Take all practice tests in the textbook and from your instructor.
  + Create your own practice test.

1. **Application errors.**

Causes:

* + You know the concept, but cannot fully apply it to a problem.
  + Lack of practice in applying the concepts before the test.

To avoid these errors:

* + Practice all types of application (word) problems before the test.
  + Memorize methods for specific applications (for example, mixture problems).
  + Use your self-confidence and intuiton to apply concepts in a new way.

1. **Test-taking errors.**

Causes:

* + Bad test-taking habits.
  + Inefficient use of time on a test.
  + Not completing a problem to the last step.
  + Doubting yourself and changing correct answers to incorrect answers.
  + Spending too much time on one problem.
  + Rushing through the test.
  + Miscopying the question or steps in your work.
  + Leaving answers blank.
  + Calculator errors.
  + Leaving a test early.

To avoid these errors:

* + Review the test at first decide about how much time to devote to each question.
  + Complete the entire problem and answer the question being asked.
  + Procede through the test in a methodical way, at a steady pace.
  + Check all your work for correctness in copying questions and steps.
  + Work all problems as much as you can.
  + Be careful how you input numbers and operations into your calculator.
  + Stay in the classroom until the end of the test; check your answers again if you have extra time.

1. **Study errors.**

Causes:

* + Uncertainty on what concepts and skills the test will assess.
  + Not spending enough time studying, learning and practicing the material.
  + Not practicing checking your answers.

To avoid these errors:

* + Know on what material you will be tested.
  + Overstudy the material.
  + Do all available practice tests beforehand.