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| Preparing for a Math TestYour 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%2431) 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.
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**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%2429)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%2435) 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.