

## Test Taking Strategies that Boost Student Scores!

Students continually face the challenge of testing during their school years. The stakes are high and while some students are natural test-takers, some struggle to show what they know on a test. Timed, standardized tests pose a significant challenge to students with learning difficulties. Many students have difficulty managing their time on a test and some have difficulty interpreting multiple choice questions. Many students have little skill in preparing for tests. Below, are a dozen strategies that will enhance your students' ability to do well on a test!

1. **Teach Students to Use Positive Self Talk.** If students think that a subject or class is too challenging and expect to fail, they probably will fail. Tell them that it's easy as long as they "practice" their learning.
2. **When Teaching, Break information into small steps.** This makes the information look easier and less overwhelming.
3. **Ensure That Students Understand Test Vocabulary.** Some words include: enumerate, compare, contrast, discuss, illustrate, define, etc. If students are comfortable with these words and able to apply their understanding on a test, their test scores will be higher.
4. **Teach Students Test Taking Tips. Such as:**
  - a. Underline key words (list, discuss, define, etc.).
  - b. Put a checkmark next to blank questions.
5. **Teach Students Time Management Strategies such as:**
  - a. Take the time allotted for the test and divide it by the number of questions.
  - b. Answer multiple choice before essays and budget more time for the essay questions.
  - c. Eliminate the obviously incorrect answers. Make an educated guess. Do **NOT** make random guesses.
6. **Watch Out for Dangerous Words!** The Words: Most, some, usually, often, generally, may, and seldom are **USUALLY** the correct option.
7. **The "Superlative" Words:** Every, all, none, always, and only are **USUALLY** the incorrect option.
8. Another trick, **if students are stuck**, is to pick the answer containing the most information.
9. If a question ends with "an," the answer should begin with a vowel, especially on English tests. So, if the question is, "Snow White bit into an..." the answer is not going to be b. banana, it will be a. apple.
10. An answer that repeats words that are in the question is more likely to be correct. For example, if the question is, "Every year, the Red Cross collects **blood** at their annual..." the answer is probably "**blood** drive."
11. Have students **design a practice test** for review then time themselves when taking it. Have them self-correct and then re-take the test trying to improve their score and their test time.
12. Remind students to review right before they sleep at night.

The above strategies were excerpted with permission from the book, "**Umm Studying... What's That?**" by Susan and Shivahn Fitzell. It's a book about memorization and test strategies for teens co-written by a teen.

## About the Author



Susan Fitzell is a nationally recognized speaker and author of several educational resource books. She has over two decades of experience with differentiated instruction, teaching youth with special needs, students with behavioral and anger management issues, and students who experience bullying. Susan's company, AIMHI Educational Programs, focuses on building caring school communities. <http://aimhieducational.com/>