

Test Taking Tips adapted from Prealgebra – An Integrated Approach by Lial and Hestwood.

1. Do not try to review up until the last minute for the test. Instead, go for a walk, do several minutes of deep breathing, and arrive just in time for the test.
2. Come prepared with a pencil, etc. If you are easily distracted, sit away from the door.
3. Do a “mind dump” as soon as you get the test paper. Write important notes to yourself in a corner of the test: formulas, dates, rules for spelling, common errors, etc.
4. Scan the entire test. Note the point value of different problems, or questions and plan your time accordingly. Allow at least 5 minutes to check your work at the end of the testing time.
5. Usually do not work the problems in order – Pick out an easy question or problem at start with that. It will help build your confidence. If a question builds on a previous question, answers these in order. If you feel your anxiety building, immediately stop for a minute, close your eyes, and take several slow, deep breaths.
6. Read the direction carefully and circle significant words! When you finish, reread the problem to make sure you answered it correctly. Sometimes you may need to read the problem more than once. If you can remember the problem, write down anything you can remember about the problem, circle it and come back to the problem.
7. As you are working the problem or writing the test, you may have negative thoughts going through your head, such as “I can’t do this,” or “I’ll flunk anyway so why try.” In your mind yell “STOP!” and take several deep slow breaths, or replace the negative thought with a positive. Visualize yourself getting an A.
8. Show all your work, or your outlines. Write neatly. You may get partial credit. If you still can’t solve the problem when you come back to it a second time, make a guess, and do not change it. In this situation, your first guess is your best bet. Change your answer only if you find an obvious mistake.
9. Check to make sure your answer seems reasonable, and check for careless errors.
10. Ignore students who finish early. Use the entire test time. You do not get extra credit for finishing early.
11. When you get your test back, figure out what you did wrong, and correct it. If you do this, the concepts will be yours and you will know them for the next test.