

It's the day of the test. You've done all the preparation, but your mind is still saying, "I'll probably get an 'F.'"

STOP IT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

We know that the human mind can be programmed. That's what learning is! So, if you tell yourself you'll do poorly, you will!

Positive thinking here! You studied; you're an intelligent person; you can do this. *Repeat after me...!* YOU CAN DO THIS!!

FIRST! - Read the directions!

Do you know that 60% of all incorrect answers on tests are because the test taker:

Didn't read the directions

Didn't follow the directions

Didn't read the question carefully or completely

Marked the wrong spot on the Scantron sheet

Didn't do all the parts of the essay question

Didn't understand the question and didn't ask the teacher for clarification

Well, this is easy to fix! DON'T DO THESE THINGS!!!!!

So, let's have a plan here. Let's use:

**S
C
O
R
E
R**

SCORER is an acronym for how to approach a test. Let's see if this can work for us.

S - Schedule your time

- First of all, Breathe!! Remember the brain needs oxygen! *No passing out here because you're hyperventilating!*
- Put your name on the test.
- Look it over before you start answering questions.
- How many parts?
- How many points are the various parts worth?
- If there are essay questions, do you have to do them all?
- Are they worth different amount of points? *(If they are, schedule the time you spend on each accordingly.)*
- And remember, there's no law that says you have to go in order. If you want to answer the essay question first and return to the multiple choice, do so!

C - Clue words – watch for them

We get in a hurry and we miss where the teacher “gave away” the answer! *Shh, don't tell them they did this!*

- Watch for clue words, like: *never, only, always, generally, sometimes, major, most important.*
- If the words *never, only, always* are in the answer, it's probably the wrong answer! Few things in life are that black-and-white; there's usually an exception to the rule.

EX.: July is always a summer month. True or False?
The answer is False. South of the equator July is a winter month. But we didn't even need to know that fact. All we needed to know is *always* made the statement False!

- *Generally* and *sometimes* are usually the correct answers. The teacher is trying to qualify the answer, keep it away from that absolute we talked about above. So they use these types of words. Ah-ha! – give-away! It's probably the right answer!
- *Major* and *most important* - catch people all the time! So you're doing a multiple choice question and one of the answers is "All of the above." You know from past experience that these are most of the time the right answer, so you pick it. You just broke rule #1 way back at the beginning! You didn't read carefully! The question said *Major* or *most important*. Then there can only be **1 – One – 1** right answer, not all of them! You can't have more than one major or most important point! (Despite the 4-yr-old who was asked what his most favorite kind of candy was, and said he liked them all!)

~ *Read carefully!!* ~

O - Omit difficult questions

Well, you can't skip them altogether! But if you fuss over one you aren't getting right away, you waste time, increase your stress, and set yourself up to now make some careless mistakes because you're thinking about that question.

- Mark it and move on. Coming back to it later; you may find you do now remember the answer, triggered from something else on the test, or you just have more time to think on it.

~ But don't forget to come back to it!! ~

E - Estimate your answer

- If all else fails, guess! I know that sounds odd, but on most tests, it is better to finally guess and mark some answer than to leave it blank. You have a 33% chance of getting an answer you guessed at correct.

Your whole body learns when you study. I know, that sounds silly. But it's true. We are complete beings. If you are trying to "guess" at an answer, go with your "gut" instinct. Your stomach learned too! And many times, it gives you a truer answer than your head, which can make a case for most any answer!

- Look for some logical answer. Skip the silly ones (even if you really like that answer!):

EX.: On a group project, if one of the students is not doing his/her fair share of the work

a. talk to the teacher

b. forget the whole thing and all go out to breakfast.

(Personally, I like B. too, but we have to mark the right one!)

~ Check if you're still breathing! ~

R - Review

If you have time, go back over your answers:

1. to make sure you answered them all.
2. to make sure on a Scantron form, that you didn't skip a line or put 2 answers in one line. (*If tracking on a Scantron sheet is difficult for you, use an index card to slide down the sheet. Ask the teacher first so she/he doesn't think it has answers on it, though!*)
3. to be sure you answered all the parts to the essay question.
4. to check that you read the question correctly. Don't miss words like *Not*:
EX: Which of the following answers is NOT correct?

But DO NOT, DO NOT second guess yourself and change answers because you're thinking, "Well, maybe this other one is the better answer. Oooohhh, I'm not sure. I think I'll change it." DON'T DO THAT! Research (and personal experience!) tells us that the first answer we picked is more likely to be correct. If you didn't misread the question, don't change your answer.

*So, watch your time, listen to your stomach, breathe,
remember how smart you really are, and be amazed
at how well you do!!!!*

Ah-ha! And look what we got on this test!!!!

“A plus