

General Test Taking Tips - WESTEST

1. If you feel nervous before a test, try this: close your eyes and take several slow, deep breaths. Spend a few minutes relaxing your mind.
2. When you begin a test, quickly scan all of the questions. This will help you see what the test is about and how many questions you will have to answer.
3. It is important to manage time while taking a test
 - Don't spend too much time on any one question.
 - Work rapidly but comfortably.
 - Mark items to return to if time permits.
 - Use remaining time to review answers.
4. Read all DIRECTIONS through twice. Never begin answering questions before you read the directions.
5. Try to answer ALL the test questions. When you come to a hard question, don't spend a lot of time trying to figure it out. Wait until you have finished all the easy questions. Then go back and work on the hard ones.
6. All tests have some hard questions. Don't skip the hard questions. It is much better to guess at the answer. First, find any choices that you *know* are wrong. Then look at the leftover choices and make your best guess. Often you will guess right.
7. Mark your answers by filling in the circle with a dark pencil mark. If you make a mistake, erase thoroughly. Then fill in the circle next to the *correct* answer.
8. Stop when you come to the STOP sign at the end of the test or when your time is up. If you still have time, go back and work any questions you have skipped, or go back and re-check your answers.

Reading Tips - WESTEST

1. When asked to answer questions about a reading passage, read the *questions* first. That way you'll know what to look for when you read the passage.
2. In reading questions, look for key words, such as *who, what, when, where, why, and how* that tell you what to look for when you read the passage.
3. Practice scanning a reading passage to quickly find key words that will help you answer questions about details.
4. When answering questions about a reading passage, look back at the passage to locate the answer. Don't just rely on your memory.
5. In a reading passage, when you come to a word you don't know, look for context clues. These are other words in the sentence or paragraph that help define or explain the unknown word.
6. For fill-in sentences, always read the *entire* sentence before you choose an answer. Use context clues to help you find the answer.
7. When asked to choose a word to complete a sentence, try out all the answer choices in the sentence. Don't rush to fill in the blank: words that are similar but have different meanings might trick you.
8. When looking for word meaning, read all the answer choices carefully. Don't be fooled by words that only *look* or *sound* like the correct answer.
9. When asked to identify the order of events, look for key words that signal time sequence (For example: *first, next, then, after, finally, and at last*).
10. Watch out for negative words in directions, such as *not* or *opposite*. These words tell you exactly what answer to look for. Such words often appear in bold or italic type, or in all capital letters.

Language Arts Tips - WESTEST

1. Read all DIRECTIONS through twice. Directions for language arts items often tell you to look for answer choices that have mistakes or errors.
2. Watch out for negative words in the directions, such as *not* or *opposite*. These words tell you exactly what answer to look for. Such words often appear in bold or italic type, or in all capital letters.
3. When asked to answer questions about a reading passage, read the *questions* first. That way you'll know what to look for as you read the passage. When you finish the passage, go on to answer the questions.
4. In language arts questions, look for key words such as *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how* that will help you answer each question. This is especially important when answering questions about maps, charts, graphs, or reference sources, such as dictionary entries, indexes and tables of contents.
5. When answering questions about maps, charts, graphs, or reference sources, such as dictionary entries, always look back at the diagram or sample reference to answer the questions. Don't just rely on your memory.
6. Questions dealing with capitalization and punctuation can be tricky. The answer choices often look very much alike. Read *all* the answer choices, and then choose your answer carefully.
7. For fill-in sentences try each answer choice in the blank to see which one sounds right or makes the most sense.
8. For fill-in sentences always read the *entire* sentence before you choose an answer. Use context clues, which are other words in the sentence that help define the unknown word, to find the correct answer.
9. When looking for word meanings or definitions, use context clues to help you decide which definition of a word is best.
10. When asked to identify order of events, look for key words that signal time sequence. (For example: *first*, *next*, *then*, *after*, *finally*, and *at last*).

Ten Math Tips - WESTEST

1. Use scratch paper to write down the numbers you need to solve a problem.
2. Look for key words that tell you what kind of computation is needed (For example: *less than*, *greatest*, *between*, *nearest*, *least*, *closest*, and so on).
3. Try all the answer choices until you find the one that is correct. Sometimes the correct answer is not given. Then you should follow the directions for marking the "none of the above" choice.
4. Make sure you know what to solve for in each problem. Write a number sentence or an equation to help you solve it.
5. Write down each piece of information given in a problem, and write down or circle what each problem asks you to find. When you have an answer, go back and make sure it answers the question you wrote down or circled.
6. Rename fractions with different denominators as like fractions (those with the same denominators).
7. Always reduce fractions to their smallest parts. When looking for the correct answer to a problem with fractions, look for the one that has been reduced.
8. For a measurement or geometry problem, first write down the formula you need to solve the problem. Then plug the numbers from the problem into the formula.
9. Remember, an equation must stay balanced. What you do to one side of an equation you must do to the other side.
10. Check subtraction problems by adding. Check division problems by multiplying. Check multiplication problems by dividing.