

Strategies for Taking State Assessments Information for Parents and Students

For Parents

- Supporting your children as they prepare to take tests is very important.
- Show your children you have confidence in their ability to do well on tests. Encourage a positive attitude.
- Visit the ODE Web site to find helpful resources for families. The *Family Report Interpretive Guide* and *Standards Guide for Families* provide detailed tips and hints for each tested subject and grade level. These resources include suggested at-home activities that help promote learning in a specific area of study. Explore the Families section at <http://www.ode.state.oh.us>.
- Visit the Success Web site to find additional resources and information for both parents and students in preparing for the tests. Find practice tests, examples of real test questions from previous years, answer guides and external resources that may help your children. For Ohio Achievement Tests, visit <http://ohio3-8.success-ode-state-oh-us.info/>. For Ohio Graduation Tests, visit <http://ogt.success-ode-state-oh-us.info/>.
- Talk with your children about upcoming tests to help relieve test anxiety. Try not to overemphasize the tests. Help them build self-confidence by making sure they understand you just want them to make their best efforts.
- Encourage your children to take their time in answering the test questions and to answer every question. It is not a race to the finish. Taking time to read the question really well can make a big difference.
- Stick to normal routines. Adequate sleep and proper nutrition are important throughout the school year. A good night's sleep and a healthy breakfast can promote learning every day and are especially important to help start each morning as alert as possible.
- Make sure your children arrive at school on time without the need to rush to the testing location.

For Students

Responding to the Test Questions

- Stay relaxed and confident while taking the test. Breathe evenly and slowly to help you relax and stay focused.
- Read each question carefully, more than once if necessary. Make sure you **understand what is being asked**.
- Answer the questions you positively know first. Then, go back and complete the other test questions.
- If you are unsure of an answer, eliminate the incorrect choices. Draw on your understanding of the concept, skill and given text to select the best answer from the remaining choices.
- Remember, there is only one correct answer for each multiple-choice question.
- If a question requires you to do more than one task, such as “identify and provide support,” make sure you have answered **every part of the question** in the response.
- Do not rush through the test. Take your time and pace yourself. Do not be concerned if other students finish the test before you.
- After you have completed the test, go back and review each test item. Be certain you have correctly marked your answer for each multiple-choice item. Make sure you have answered all parts of short-answer and extended-response questions **properly and completely**.
- **Answer all questions** to the best of your ability. Even if you do not know the full answer, you may know enough about the topic to earn partial credit. **Do not leave any questions blank.**

Responding to Reading Questions

- Read the whole passage and question carefully. It is very important that you do not skip any words.
- Look for specific details in the passage to support a main idea.

- Find out who the important characters are in the fiction story and the details about that character.
- Make sure you know the plot and setting of the story.
- Use information from the passage to support your answers.
- If you encounter unknown words, use context clues, knowledge of word structure and word parts to determine the meaning of the unknown word.
- Use illustrations in the passage to help you comprehend information.
- Reread the passage when a question asks for predictions, conclusions or summaries.

Responding to Writing Questions

- Remember that the writing test contains two writing prompts and 10 multiple-choice questions. The OGT also includes one short-answer question.
- Make sure you understand the topic when you are given a writing prompt. First, come up with as many ideas as you can. Then, keep the ideas that you want to use.
- Take time to organize your thoughts before writing. You may want to do an outline to help put your thoughts in order.
- Be sure to include an introduction, body and conclusion when composing persuasive, informational or expository responses.
- Include a beginning, middle and end when composing narratives.
- Vary your word choice and sentence types when responding to a prompt.
- Proofread what you have written for content, grammar, spelling and punctuation. Proper editing of your work is important.

Responding to Social Studies Questions

- Pay close attention to key words and numbers that may point out how time connects with the answer.
- On questions containing graphs, charts or maps, read the title and labels very carefully. Make sure you understand the information that the graphics provide.
- On a question that has a timeline, read the first and last dates and the time intervals that may show days, weeks, months or years. Count the intervals on the timeline to check your answers.

Responding to Science Questions

- When reading a science passage, always skim it first. Then reread the specific parts that contain the facts and data needed to answer the question.
- Read all of the explanations, titles, diagrams and labels and make sure you understand the symbols.
- Do not skip a question just because you do not recognize a word. Skip over the word and see if you are able to get the meaning of the entire sentence anyway.
- Try to think like a scientist when you answer the question. Outline and organize your thoughts and make sure you have followed all of the directions. Check and recheck your answer to ensure it makes sense.

Responding to Mathematics Questions

- Before test day, make sure you know how to use the permitted equipment for that grade level (such as rulers, protractors, reference sheets or calculator).
- Read the entire mathematics question carefully, before you try to solve it. Determine what steps will be needed.
- Identify all of the facts in a given problem. Estimate the answer and eliminate choices that are farthest from your estimate.
- If asked to "show your work," make sure you write down all of the steps needed to solve the problem. This includes calculations on your calculator, diagrams or drawings, charts, or graphs. You also should provide a written explanation for your solution.
- After solving the problem, reread the question and be sure that your answer responds to the question.
- If there is time left after you finish the test, go back and double check your answers.