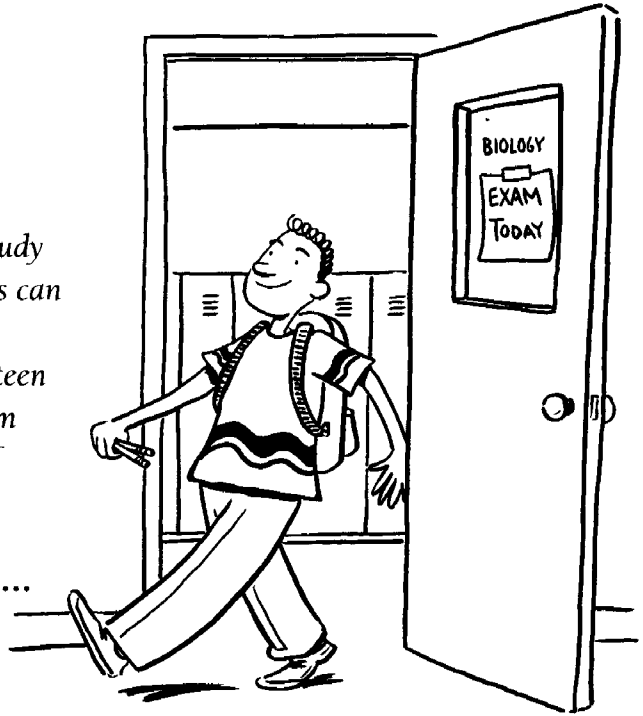


# Testing... Testing...



*Relaxed, confident, and ready for a challenge! With good study skills, careful preparation, and a little stress management, this can be your teenager on test day.*

*Here are answers to the questions you face in helping your teen through test time. You'll encourage him to reach his goals, from earning good grades to getting the college acceptance or job of his dreams.*

**Q:** How should my teen prepare for tests?

**A:** The first order of business is to know what will be on a quiz or an exam. Your high schooler should pay close attention during class reviews and take any practice tests the teacher or textbook offers.

To review notes, your child might e-mail herself highlights from each day's material and save the messages in a folder. Typing her notes will help her remember them better, and she can use the e-mails as a study guide during exam week.

Encourage your teen to pace herself. Cramming is stressful and usually doesn't result in real learning—only a temporary (and often spotty) memory of the material. Instead, she should start preparing for tests as soon as they are announced.

**Q:** Besides studying, what else should my high schooler do before a test?

**A:** Urge him to get ready the night before. He can load up his bag with any necessary test gear, such as a calculator (if permitted), batteries, pencils, glasses, a healthy snack, and a water bottle.

Eating a good breakfast and lunch will give your teen energy and keep him from feeling anxious or shaky. Remind him that caffeine may prevent a good night's sleep and can cause him to feel nervous and jittery during a test.

Suggest that your high schooler get to class early. He'll have a few extra minutes to take out supplies, look over notes one last time, and focus.

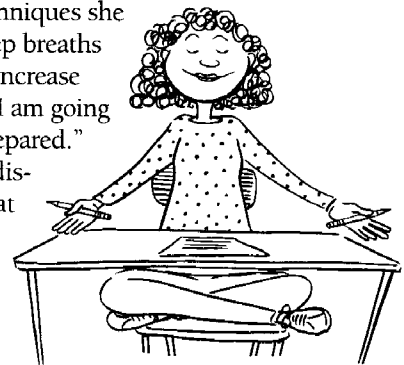


**Q:** How can my child feel confident before and during an exam?

**A:** Encourage your teen to stay active by making time for 30–60 minutes of exercise each day. That will help her have less stress and more energy.

Teach her relaxation techniques she can do during the test. Deep breaths and positive thoughts can increase her confidence. *Example:* "I am going to do well because I am prepared."

Help your child avoid distractions by suggesting that she keep her eyes on her own paper and not worry about students who finish before she does. Remind her that faster doesn't mean better.



**Q:** What test-taking strategies can I share with my teen?

**A:** Help him budget his time. When he receives the test, he should do a quick survey of the entire exam and consider how long he will need for each section. He'll want to allow more time for harder portions or those that are worth the most points.

Suggest that your child read all directions carefully. He should never assume that he knows what the instructions say. For instance, some questions may have more than one correct answer.

*continued*



Your high schooler can use any extra time to go back to skipped questions and look for careless mistakes. He might redo math calculations or check dates on history quizzes.

**Q:** What special advice can I give my child for different test formats?

**A:** For true-false tests, it's helpful to circle key words in the question. If any part of a choice is false, the whole thing is false. Encourage your teen to watch for tip-off words like *never*, *always*, *all*, *none*, or *only*—they often indicate a false answer. Words like *usually*, *sometimes*, and *generally* may be clues that a choice is correct. She should answer every question—there's at least a 50 percent chance she'll get it right.

When taking a multiple-choice exam, your child might read the question and try to answer it before looking at the options. Then she can read the choices, eliminate those that are clearly wrong, and select the one closest to her initial idea. Remind her not to leave any answers blank. Even if she doesn't know the answer, she has a 25 percent chance of success when there are four choices.

For essay questions, suggest that your teen make an outline of main ideas and supporting facts. All of her points should be backed up with examples, and she shouldn't stray from the topic. Encourage her to reread the question halfway through and at the end to make sure she has answered all parts. Finally, she should go back and proofread carefully—spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors can lower her score.



## SAT AND ACT SUCCESS

Are you hoping that your teen will go to college? Here are valuable hints for helping him prepare for college entrance exams.

**Q:** Which test should my teen take?

**A:** Check requirements at the colleges your high schooler may want to attend. Many students take both the SAT and the ACT and send their best scores to the colleges. Your teen can also talk to his guidance counselor for advice.



**Q:** What do the tests include?

**A:** The SAT has three parts: critical reading, math, and writing. It includes essay, multiple-choice, and open-ended questions. The ACT has four multiple-choice sections: English, math, reading, and science. There's also an optional writing portion on the ACT (check at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) to see which colleges require or recommend it).

**Q:** How should my child get ready?

**A:** Start early! As a sophomore and junior, your teen can take the preliminary SAT (PSAT), or the pre-ACT (PLAN). In his junior year, he might take a test-prep course at his high school, library, or community center.

**Q:** What about practice tests?

**A:** Your high schooler should take practice tests as often as possible to familiarize herself with the format and questions. Her school or a local testing service may give free practice exams under true testing conditions. She can also practice with online tests and questions ([www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) for the SAT and [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) for the ACT). Or she can take sample tests in SAT or ACT manuals (available at libraries and bookstores). *Tip:* Suggest that she time herself on each section when practicing at home.

**Q:** How can I help my teen have a positive attitude toward the exam?

**A:** Encourage her to think of the SAT or ACT as a final leg of her high school career. She can look forward to the pride and relief she'll feel when the test is over—and the results that will help get her into the college of her choice.

## High School Years