

## TEST TAKING TIPS

1. The morning of the exam, choose a letter of the day. If the exam is the PSAT or SAT, choose A, B, C, or D. For ACT you will need to choose two letters, one from A, B, C, D, or E and the other from F, G, H, I, or J. For the Regents, you will choose a number for the day 1, 2, 3, or 4.
2. As you take the test, you may skip the problems that are too hard for you. Keep an eye on the time. When there are 5 minutes left of each section or test, take the letter or number of the day and use it to fill in all the problems you skipped. You don't want to leave any problems unanswered.
3. Look at the whole problem before beginning it including the answers. Make sure to read each question carefully and answer what the question asks. Watch out for different units where conversion may be required to obtain the correct answer.
4. Use POE (Process of Elimination) whenever possible to rule out answers that make no sense.
5. If the question is an algebraic equation and all the answers are numbers you can often just PLUG-IN the answers into the equation to get the answer and not do any algebra at all.

6. Skip questions you can't do. Do the ones you can slowly and show all your work. You want to MAXIMIZE your score by focusing on problems you can do successfully. Take your time. Don't rush.
7. SHOW ALL YOUR WORK. Don't do math in your head. If you get stuck, you can quickly look through the work you did and find where you may have made an error. It saves time so you don't have to redo a problem.
8. If you have done all the problems you can, go back and retry the ones you skipped. Use POE to narrow down choices.
9. Sometimes problems are vague and ask for generalizations. In such cases you may come up with numbers to plug in that will help you to answer the question. Avoid using 0 or 1 as they have properties that are unique and troublesome. If a problem only states for example "integers", make sure to use not only positive integers like 2 or 3 but also negative ones like -2 or -3. Don't forget 0 is an integer.
10. Sometimes problems ask about prime numbers. A prime number is divisible by 1 and itself and the factors must be DISTINCT. The SAT uses the word DISTINCT often. It means "unique" or "different". The number one is NOT a prime number because its factors are  $1 \times 1$ . Those factors 1 and 1 are the same. They are NOT different or distinct. This is why Prime numbers begin with 2 which is also the ONLY even prime number. 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, .....