Test-taking Skills: Math Exam Questions

Here are some common aspects of questions on math tests that you should familiarize yourself with:

- Emphasize using problem-solving skills that you acquired through practice and repetition, skills that you cannot memorize or master the night before a test.
- Involve applying prototypes you have learned to new problems of the same type but problems that you have not previously seen or solved.
- Involve understanding and defining mathematical terms and understanding how to express information in mathematical terms, formulas, or algebraic equations.
- Math test questions appear in more than tests for math courses. You will find math questions on test for science courses, health occupation courses, as well as social science courses, or any other courses that involve the use of formulas to solve problems.

Understand Procedural Knowledge - information that involves steps and processes to use to solve a problem or create specific products with accuracy and speed.

- Learning procedural knowledge takes time, so make sure to allow the time for comprehension.
- Effective studying of procedural knowledge requires repeating the original process multiple times over a period of time until it become automatic.
- Rework familiar math problems multiple times so that automatic skill set can be applied to new problem sets and increase problem-solving speed and accuracy.
- To avoid rote memory, explain each step to yourself or to others to demonstrate that you understand the process and are not simply memorizing without attaching meaning to steps.

Familiarize Yourself with terminology for Math Tests

- Algebraic Symbols and expressions
- Equations
- Prototypes
- Read, Select, Think, Use, Verify (RSTUV) - Problem Solving Method
- Word Problems or Story Problems

Strategies for Math Test Questions

1. Learn the terminology
   - Create flashcards with terms and definitions
   - Self quiz
   - Link terms with symbols if applicable

2. Identify and think about the pattern of the problem
   - Recall the prototype
   - Focus on the steps of the prototype
Use RSTUV to read and solve problems

- Read the problem until you understand it.
- Select the unknown that you are determining
- Think of a plan to solve the problem
- Use the techniques you are studying to carry out the plan.
- Verify the answer

Avoid getting stuck on a problem.

Avoid the ten common test-taking errors:

- Missing more questions in the first third or the last third of the test
- Not completing a problem to its last step
- Changing test answers from correct to incorrect
- Getting stuck on one problem and spending too much time on it
- Rushing through the easiest part of the test and making careless errors
- Miscopying the answer from your scratch work to the test
- Leaving answers blank
- Solving only the first step of a two-step problem
- Not understanding all the functions of your calculator
- Leaving the test early without checking your answers