

TIPS ON SUCCESSFUL TEST TAKING

WHY TAKE AN APTITUDE TEST

When you apply for a job, your prospective employer needs to assess whether you can do that job. If a skill or job experience is required, it is relatively easy to measure your knowledge in the field. However, in the case of entry-level jobs, where the employer will **TRAIN** you to do the job at some future time, the employer cannot ask you questions about your job knowledge.

APTITUDE tests are given to see if you can be trained to do this job. It is merely an assessment of your fit to a particular job-training program. It is not an assessment of your total life experiences or skills. The employer is merely trying to determine a fit between you and a specific job group. Keep in mind that if you feel the test is an excessive strain or peculiar in logic, the job may also strain you in a similar way.

WHY READ THIS INFORMATION

Some of you may have been away from the classroom environment for awhile and may feel a little rusty when asked to take a paper-and-pencil test. Some of you may get anxious at the thought of taking a test.

This booklet is designed to make you more comfortable with the standardized testing format and strategies for taking a test. There are also several additional references listed at the end of this booklet which may be helpful.

HOW TO TAKE A TEST

1. **Concentrate and try your best.**

It is perfectly normal to feel a little nervous. Focus your concentration and energy on the test.

2. **Budget your time.**

Work at a steady pace where you do not sacrifice accuracy. Skip the time-consuming or hard questions. You can go back to them at the end. Keep an eye on the time to pace yourself. The goal is to answer as many questions as time allows. If you have extra time at the end, take advantage of it: check your answers, erase stray marks, make sure your handwriting is legible, and for multiple choice questions, make sure the circles are filled in completely.

3. **Listen to the proctor.**

The proctor is reading instructions to you that will help you on your test. Listen carefully. If you don't understand the instructions or the sample items being reviewed, ask questions. This is your opportunity to ask. Do you understand what is expected of you in each section? Be aware that directions may change for each part. Do you know how to mark your answers? Did you write your name and social security number? There may be multiple sections in this test. Are you recording your answers in the correct section and for the appropriate items, i.e., question 1. With answer 1., etc.? Start and stop as instructed; otherwise, you will be disqualified.

4. **Read the test questions carefully.**

You can avoid careless mistakes by reading each question carefully. Choose the best or most correct answer. Even if one answer seems obvious, take a look at the other answers to be sure that your first choice is the best one.

5. Answer even the hard questions.

There will always be difficult questions in a test. Answer each one. Start by trying to reason it out. Look for clues in the question and the answers. Don't look for hidden meanings. Re-read the question and alternatives. Eliminate the most unlikely answers and take your best guess with the remaining alternatives. It is to your advantage to answer each question.

6. Use the scratch paper provided.

The scratch paper is provided to help you. Do your calculations, draw figures and diagrams to help you think through any item.

NOW THAT YOU ARE READY FOR THE REAL THING

The following are some final words and suggestions.

Minimize your discomfort

Take care of details such as locating the testing room and restrooms, so you don't get lost and show up late for the test. Plan to be there early, before the assigned test time. Timed tests require everyone to start and stop at the same time. You will not be allowed in the room once the clock is started.

Get a good night of rest

Relax the day before and avoid things that would cause you stress or distraction or exhaustion. If you are not feeling well or a family emergency beyond your control occurs, discuss options for rescheduling with the company.

Hunger and thirst

Plan on a light meal and beverage before the testing. You don't want to enter a test session hungry or thirsty.

Physical aids

Be sure to bring your glasses, hearing aid, photo identification, and anything else required by you for testing. Use of calculators is subject to company policy. If calculators are allowed, the company will provide the calculators.

IN THE TEST ROOM:

Physical Comfort

Choose a seat that is comfortable for you. If you have problems with your vision, sit in the front; if you want more light, sit under the light fixture; if you want more air, sit near the air conditioning vent.

REFERENCES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The following is a short list of references for those who would like more information about taking tests. These, as well as other similar references, may be found at your local bookstore and college, school, or public library.

For applicants who get nervous or have been out of school for awhile and want additional information about test-taking strategies:

TEST TAKING STRATEGIES, by Judi Kesselman-Turkel and Frandlynn Peterson.

TAKING THE ANXIETY OUT OF TAKING TESTS, by Susan Johnson.

WHAT SMART STUDENTS KNOW: MAXIMUM GRADES, OPTIMUM LEARNING, MINIMUM TIME, by Adam Robinson.

EFFICIENT STUDY STRATEGIES: SKILLS FOR SUCCESSFUL LEARNING, by George Usova.

HOW TO TAKE TESTS, by Sara Gilbert

For those who want general practice taking test items commonly used in standardized tests:

HOW TO TAKE THE SAT, SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST WITH PHILIP SORGEN, by Marcia Lawrence.

SAT SUCCESS: PETERSON'S STUDY GUIDE TO ENGLISH AND MATH SKILLS FOR COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS, SAT, ACT, AND PSAT, by Joan Davenport Carris and Michael Crystal.

Other types of test preparation manuals would include those geared toward the Civil Service exams or Military Service (ASVAB) entrance exams.