



October

Studying For Tests

Throughout high school, students will engage in a number of tests. Whether they be classroom tests or standardized tests (ex. PSAT, SAT, ACT), these tests are intended to measure a student's knowledge and abilities in a variety of subject areas. Below are some general test-taking strategies to help students do their best. Please review these strategies in order to best prepare for the tests that will be taken throughout high school.

Before the Test

1. Be sure to find out ahead of time...
 - o what material the test will cover
 - o what type of test it will be (multiple choice, true/false, short answer, essay)
 - o how the test will be graded
 - o how much the test is worth
2. Study in a place that is free of distractions. Have ready all the things you will need, such as paper, pens, computer, iPad, or a calculator.
3. Study at a time when you are alert and not hungry or sleepy.
4. Don't wait until the last minute to study! Short daily study sessions are better than one long session the night before the test.
5. Set a goal for each study period. If you are being tested on three chapters, set up four study sessions, one for each chapter and one for a review of the main ideas in all three chapters.
6. Repetition is key! Read and reread your class notes and the relevant chapters in the textbook.
7. While you are reviewing your notes, cover them up periodically and summarize them out loud. Pretend that you are explaining the material to someone else.
8. Create your own study aids.
 - o Make an outline from your notes of just the main ideas.
 - o Make a timeline of important dates or the order of events.
 - o Make flashcards for studying vocabulary or events and important dates (there is a great free app for this on students' iPads!).
 - o Make up your own quiz or test based on your notes, and have a friend, parent, or sibling test you.
 - o "Vocabulary sketch" the material. Draw pictures that represent the terms or concept you are trying to learn and remember.
9. Make personal connections to the material.
10. Do any practice exams or study sheets provided by the teacher. These will help you focus your study session and give you confidence.
11. Get help from the teacher if you do not understand something.

Tips for Taking Tests

1. Read the instructions carefully. Never assume you will know what they will say! Ask the teacher if you are unsure about anything.
2. Read the entire test through before starting. Notice the point value of each section. This will help you to pace yourself.
3. Answer the easiest questions first, then the ones with the highest point value. You don't want to spend 20 minutes trying to figure out a two-point problem!

4. Keep busy! If you get stuck on a question, come back to it later. The answer might come to you while you are working on another part of the test.
5. If you aren't sure how to answer a question fully, try to answer at least part of it. You might get partial credit.
6. Need to guess on a multiple-choice test? First, eliminate the answers that you know are wrong. Then take a guess. Because your first guess is most likely to be correct, you shouldn't go back and change an answer later unless you are certain you were wrong.
7. On an essay test, take a moment to plan your writing. First, jot down the important points you want to make. Then number these points in the order you will cover them.
8. Keep it neat! If your teacher can't read your writing, you might lose points.
9. Don't waste time doing things for which you will not receive credit, such as rewriting test questions.
10. Leave time at the end to look over your work. Did you answer every question? Did you proofread for errors? It is easy to make careless mistakes while taking a test.

After the Test

1. When the test is returned, read the teacher's comments carefully and try to learn from your mistakes.
2. Save tests for later review for end-of-term tests.

Standardized Tests

A **standardized test** is a test administered and scored in a consistent manner. The tests are designed in such a way that the "questions, conditions for administering, scoring procedures, and interpretations are consistent" and are "administered and scored in a predetermined, standard manner." (definition from www.collegeprep101.com)

Later in high school students will take the following tests:

- PSAT 9
- PSAT 10
- Michigan Merit Exam (MME) – 11th grade test required by the State of Michigan
- SAT – college entrance exam (included as part of the MME)

More specific information about each of these tests will be included in later newsletters.

Need Help with Homework or Studying for Tests?

Study sessions and homework help will be provided by National Honors Society members for students who need extra support with their school work. This is a great opportunity to receive free assistance!

Tuesdays	7:00 - 7:30 a.m. 2:45 - 3:45 p.m.	Room 116 at East Main Office at West
Wednesdays	2:45 - 3:30 p.m.	Room 116 at East
Thursdays	2:45 - 3:45 p.m.	Main Office at West

Math help is also available from one of our math teachers, Mrs. Wyckoff.

Wednesdays	3:00 - 4:00 p.m.	Room 203
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Learning Strategies

Because students learn differently, one method of studying might not work for all students. Below is a chart that describes some of the various learning styles and study methods that best fit with those learning styles. Students might find that incorporating some of these into their studying regimen may be beneficial.

Type of Learner	In Class	When Studying	During Exams
Visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Use different color pens ❖ Underline/circle ❖ Diagram, create charts, pictures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Redraw pages from memory ❖ Use visual flashcards ❖ Highlight with different colors ❖ Draw ❖ Rewrite vocabulary, important information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Think of the “pictures” ❖ Draw or use diagrams when possible ❖ Practice turning visuals back into words
Auditory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Listen ❖ Discuss ❖ Explain to a partner ❖ Use a tape recorder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Read text out loud ❖ Read notes out loud ❖ Have someone quiz you ❖ Listen to tape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Listen to your voice ❖ Softly read questions/speak your answers
Reading/ Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Use lists ❖ Use handouts ❖ Read ❖ Write extensive notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Write out information several times ❖ Reread notes silently ❖ Organize diagrams into statements ❖ Rewrite notes into other words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Practice with multiple-choice questions ❖ Write out lists ❖ Outline essays
Kinesthetic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Use all of your senses ❖ Apply to real-life examples ❖ Try hands-on activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Put examples in notes ❖ Use pictures and photos to illustrate ❖ Talk about notes with another person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Practice ahead of time what exam situation will be like ❖ Bring a stress ball, etc if possible

College Timetable

Listed below are some basic guidelines for what students should do at each grade level to prepare for college. Counselors will be working with student each year to provide guidance and information concerning how to navigate through the college planning process. As always, please do not hesitate to contact your counselor if you have any questions. The college planning process can be a tedious one, and it is better to ask questions than to not understand something. ☺

Freshman Year

When students are freshmen, everything starts to “count.” All 9th grade courses, grades, and credits are listed in a student’s high school transcript (record of academic progress in high school). Grades determine GPA. The transcript is what colleges require from students upon applying. Freshman activities, honors, and awards can also be listed on college and scholarship applications. As freshmen, students should become involved in activities, establish good study habits, and work hard to get good grades. Freshmen will also take the PSAT 9 standardized test in the spring to practice for college admissions tests they will take in 11th grade.

Sophomore Year

In addition to working hard and being involved in a variety of activities, students should try to identify their abilities and interests, as well as looking for opportunities to further develop their skills and talents. The sophomore year is also a time to start researching colleges. Interested students can attend a college fair and meet with college admission representatives as they visit our campus. Sophomores will also take the PSAT 10 standardized test in the spring to practice for college admissions tests they will take as a junior.

Junior Year

In 11th grade, the “rubber hits the road.” Students should be researching and visiting colleges, preparing for and taking college admission and state required exams (SAT/ACT and MME), taking part in college fairs, investigating financial aid opportunities, exploring college athletic eligibility (if desiring to play sports in college), and making sure they sign up for senior year classes that colleges recommend.

Senior Year

Senior year is when hard work and planning pay off. Students should have college applications completed by the middle of October, at the latest. If desiring to improve standardized test scores (SAT/ACT) for admission or scholarship opportunities, this should be taken care of in the fall as well. Students should apply for scholarships throughout the year. If in search of financial aid, parents will need to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon after October 1 as possible. In the spring, 12th graders will need to decide what college they plan to attend and submit their deposit and final high school transcript.

***Some information adapted from “How to Get the Most out of High School.”*

Tips for Parents of High Schoolers

Your child needs you to be interested and involved in his/her academic progress. He/she must, however, be responsible for his/her grades, attendance, and behavior. Below are some tips for parents to help their child be successful:

1. **Be Interested.** Make sure your child knows that his/her academic progress is important to you. Attend all open house and parent conferences. Know when each grading period ends, and check Parent Portal regularly. If you do not have access to Parent Portal, please contact Donna Lyles at dlyles@zps.org to request access.
2. **Discuss Classes and Set Goals.** Sit down with your son/daughter at the beginning of each grading period and help him/her set realistic academic goals for the term. Your child will better understand what your expectations are, and having goals will give your child something to work towards. Throughout the term, recognize effort and improvement. Acknowledge each academic success, even if it's only a good grade on a quiz or homework assignment.
3. **Be Available to Help.** Be available to help with homework, but don't give more help than is wanted (and most definitely do NOT do your student's homework for him/her). Keep in mind that it is your child's responsibility to be organized, to get homework done, and to prepare for tests.
4. **Listen.** Talk to your child about what is happening in school and be a good listener.
5. **Encourage School Involvement.** Students who are involved in school-related activities enjoy school more and they have greater academic success. Encourage your child to be involved in one or more activities at school.
6. **Monitor Activities and Jobs.** Make sure that your child is not spending too much time watching TV, online, or talking/texting on the phone. Also, make sure that your child is not working too many hours or working too late at a job.
7. **Important Don'ts”**
 - a. Don't nag about school or grades. Your child will tune you out.

- b. Don't allow your child to miss school unless he/she is truly ill. You will send a message that school isn't important.
 - c. Don't criticize a teacher in front of your child. Your child will only lose respect for that teacher.
 - d. Don't make your child's failures (or successes) your own. Your child may see getting poor grades as a way to rebel.
 - e. Don't have expectations that are unrealistic. If your child knows that your expectations cannot be met, he/she may not even try.
8. **Work With Your School.** Know that teachers, counselors, and principals are there to help your child get the best education possible. A health problem, death in the family, or divorce can affect your child's attitude and/or performance in school. If such a circumstance should arise, contact the school and explain the situation. If you have a concern that relates to a specific teacher or class, call the teacher. Be sure to express any concerns that you have in a constructive, respectful manner.

If Your Child is Not Doing Well in School...

Most students who don't do well in school feel like failures. They are frustrated, discouraged, and sometimes angry. The "I don't care" attitude they often display is a defense mechanism. It's important for these students to know that their parents have not given up on them. They also need to know that their parents are interested, supportive, and willing to take the time to help them figure out how to be more successful in school.

Students who are not doing well in school usually have problems in the following areas:

- Attendance – It is extremely important for students to be in school, on time, every day. Unless a child is truly ill, he/she needs to be in school.
- Accountability – It's human nature to be tempted to "slack off" when we're not held accountable. How seriously would most workers take their jobs if they know that their bosses would never know how hard they were working or how many days they missed? Your child needs to know that you care, and that you will be checking on how he/she is doing (ex. using the Parent Portal to monitor grades via the Internet). Your child needs to know that successes will be recognized and poor performances will be noticed. He/she also needs to know that you will be consistent in your interest, and that you will contact the school if you see a potential problem.

**Information adapted from "How to Get Good Grades In Ten Easy Steps"*