

Lecture Outline: Test-Taking is a Skill (Class Time: 60 minutes)

Learning Objectives: Having participated in a one-hour class lecture, the learner will be able to:

- Debunk any myths they have about their test-taking skills.
- List and describe the seven guidelines for improved test-taking.
- Be able to implement the seven guidelines for improved test-taking in a real-world experience.

I. Debunk the Myths

- A. "I'm just not a good test-taker."
 - 1. Have you said this when performing poorly on an exam?
 - 2. Have you ever been taught how to "take" an exam?
 - 3. It's a skill, just like learning skin assessment or facial routines.
- B. Myth: "People are naturally math or science people, while others are language and arts people."
 - 1. Truth—You gravitate to what is interesting to you, and this is what makes you good at it. You are willing to put time and effort into things you care about.
- C. Myth: "People are naturally good at taking tests, while others are not."
 - 1. Truth—Test-taking is a skill, and just like any skill, understanding the components of a skill and practicing are the way to mastery.
- D. Brainstorming Exercise
 - 1. Let's discuss: In what other areas of life do myths exist about natural ability versus skill potential?

II. Skill Components

- A. Take questions at face value
 - 1. Questions are not designed to trick you
 - 2. Don't assume you are being tricked.
 - 3. Take each question as an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and comprehension or a problem to be solved rather than a game designed to outsmart you.
 - 4. Consider each question as a real-life, necessary piece of information that matters.
- B. Read the question completely before looking at the options.
 - 1. Make sure you understand the question being asked.
 - 2. What comprehension is being sought?
 - 3. Boil the question down (especially in scenario-based questions) to its core.

- C. Read each option completely.
 - 1. Don't stop at "A" just because you think it is right.
 - 2. Read everything, even if you think "A" is the right answer.
- D. Eliminate which answers you know are incorrect.
 - 1. Narrowing down your options will reduce overwhelm and help you focus on only what is viable.
- E. After choosing an answer, make sure it answers the question being posed.
 - 1. After reading all options, re-read the question.
 - 2. Sometimes answers are correct statements, but they don't answer the question.
 - 3. It is essential to boil down the question to what is being asked and what comprehension is being sought.
- F. Use terminology as a guide.
 - 1. When uncertain, pick out key terms and recall their meaning. This can quickly rule out incorrect responses.
 - 2. If you can't recall what a key term is, break it down into prefixes and suffixes. For example: *antipyretic medication*. *Anti* = against. *Pyr* = (you might ask, where have I seen this before? Pyromaniac. Pyrotechnics. *Pyr* must mean . . .) Fire. Which of the options means "against fire"? Answer—fever reducer.
- G. Watch your thoughts.
 - 1. Test-taking is a mental experience that can be thwarted by negative perceptions.
 - 2. Maintaining confidence and a positive mindset goes a long way.
 - 3. If anxiety creeps in, take a minute to pause, take deep breaths, plant your feet firmly on the floor, embody a posture of conviction and faith in yourself, and move forward with certainty.

Anchor Learners' Skills

End your lecture with a 10-question multiple-choice quiz you can do as a class or in small groups utilizing the new skill components.

Work together to slowly and methodically talk through each and every question.
