

## Test Anxiety, Essay Exams and Finals: Home

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### Articles

#### Test Anxiety

- [Ross, D. B., & Lake County Coll., G. I. \(1990\). Controlling School Anxiety: A Practical Guide for Counselors and Teachers.](#)

This document presents a handbook for high school and college counselors and teachers who work with students who have school anxiety. Chapter One defines school anxiety as a strong physical and psychological reaction to specific situations in school that seriously impairs the ability of the student to perform. General anxiety is described, along with the physiology and cognitive elements of anxiety. Chapter Two focuses on assessment of school anxiety, looking at types of assessment, sample clinical assessments, and standardized anxiety assessments. Chapter Three identifies study skills as the first cognitive therapy technique for controlling school anxiety. Four problem areas are identified and four critical skills are presented: time management, concentrating and remembering, managing test situations, and assertiveness and lack of responsibility. Chapter Four presents the technique of systematic desensitization, describing traditional desensitization, in vivo desensitization, and audio tape and group presentations. Chapter Five identifies cognitive approaches to treating school anxieties. This chapter focuses on skills acquisitions, cognitive restructuring, and the development of coping strategies. Chapter Six presents general stress management techniques, including diet and eating patterns, exercise, and managing time and life pacing. Major differences in the treatment strategies to be used for the various types of school anxieties (test, speech, and mathematics anxieties) are discussed in Chapter Seven. Chapter Eight contains relaxation and desensitization scripts. Each chapter contains references. Contains 61 references. (NB)
- [Paul, A. M. \(2013\). Relax, it is only a test. Time, 181\(5\), 42-45.](#)

The article discusses standardized testing and research results which have determined that teaching students how to cope with test anxiety can lead to better grades as of February 2013. The U.S. No Child Left Behind Act is addressed, along with cognitive scientist Sian Beilock's book "Choke: What the Secrets of the Brain Reveal About Getting It Right When You Have To." Beilock states that students need to rely on their working memory when taking an examination. The use of expressive writing by students prior to taking a test is also examined. The manner in which students study for exams is also assessed.
- [Salend, S. J. \(2012\). Teaching students not to sweat the test. Phi Delta Kappan, 93\(6\), 20-25.](#)

The article discusses strategies to reduce test anxiety and stress among students, portions of which are adapted from the article "Addressing test anxiety," written by the author and published in the 2011 November/December issue of the "Teaching Exceptional Children" journal. The author looks at the difference between test anxiety and other generalized anxiety disorders, as well as several factors that contribute to test anxiety such as family and peer pressure, perfectionism, and unfavorable testing environments. Topics include ways to use tests to improve student motivation, the alignment of tests to be consistent with instructional practices, and the impact of the clarity of test directions on test validity and accessibility.
- [Mavliidi, M., Hoogerheide, V., & Paas, F. \(2014\). A Quick and Easy Strategy to Reduce Test Anxiety and Enhance Test Performance. Applied Cognitive Psychology, 28\(5\), 720-726. doi:10.1002/acp.3058](#)

The negative thoughts that anxious children experience while sitting for an exam consume working memory resources at the cost of resources for performing on the exam. In a randomized field experiment (N = 117) with primary school students, we investigated the hypothesis that stimulating students to look through the problems of a math test before they start solving them would reduce anxiety, release these anxiety-related working memory resources, and lead to higher test performance than not allowing students to look ahead in the test. The results confirmed the hypothesis, indicating that the positive effects of looking ahead applied to all students, regardless of their anxiety level (low, medium, or high). The results suggest that by looking ahead in a test, less working memory resources are consumed by intrusive thoughts, and consequently, more resources can be used for performing on the test. Theoretical and practical implications of the results are discussed.
- [Conquering Test Anxiety. \(2014\). Reading Today, 32\(3\), 43.](#)

The article offers insights from members of the International Reading Association (IRA) on how they help their students cope with test anxiety. Among the IRA members who gave their insights include Allison Perani Hogan of Texas, Cassie Pierson-Froemming of Minnesota, and Jackie Wynkoop of Pennsylvania. The ways they mentioned include telling students to just breathe, calling test days as show off days, and placing special note and treat on students' desk.
- [Barhyte, D. M. \(2013\). Combating Test Anxiety. Collegexpress Magazine, 16-18.](#)

The article discusses the effects of anxiety on test takers, and how to relieve anxiety when taking a challenging test like the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT), Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and American College Testing (ACT). Comments about being anxious about taking tests from licensed clinical social worker and certified health coach Ellen Smith are mentioned. It also discusses how a study plan, a commitment and a schedule can help in managing anxiety.
- [Huberty, T. J. \(2010\). Test and Performance ANXIETY. Education Digest, 75\(9\), 34-38.](#)

The article is reprinted in condensed form from the journal "Principal Leadership" September 2009 issue. It discusses test and performance anxiety in adolescents. It notes symptoms of anxiety, including worrying, increased activity and flushing of the skin. It notes that behaviors to control anxiety include withdrawal and avoidance but may include acting out or appearing lazy. Interventions used at school are offered, including relaxation training, pre-task rehearsal and modifying tasks.

#### Essay Exams

- [Jacobson, L. T., & Reid, R. \(2010\). Improving the persuasive essay writing of high school students with ADHD. Exceptional Children, 76\(2\), 157-174.](#)

Students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) often experience serious academic deficits. One area that is particularly problematic is written expression. This study assesses the effectiveness of a persuasive essay-writing strategy taught by using the self-regulated strategy development model on the writing skills of 3 high school students with ADHD. Results indicate a marked improvement in the number of essay elements, length, and holistic quality of students' essays. Planning time also increased. The students maintained gains at 3-week follow-up. The article also discusses implications for future research and practice. [PUBLICATION ABSTRACT]
- [Loulou, D., & ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation, W. D. \(1995\). Making the A: How To Study for Tests. ERIC/AE Digest.](#)

Doing well on tests and earning good grades begin with good study habits. This digest offers a plan to help in preparing for tests. It explains how to study for and take tests. Organization, planning, and time management skills are essential to becoming a successful student. A good student reads assignments, listens during lectures, and takes good classroom notes that are reread and highlighted. Regular review reduces test anxiety and allows time for information to be absorbed. Review periods should be scheduled well in advance, with planned daily reviews, weekly reviews, and major reviews. For some subjects, study groups are an effective tool if groups are composed of dedicated students who set their agendas to avoid wasting time. On exam day, the student should arrive early and get organized. It is also important to pay attention to verbal directions as tests are distributed and to read the directions carefully. Scanning the entire test to notice how many points each section is worth is important. Specific advice is given for multiple-choice, true-false, open-book, short-answer, and essay tests. Four sources are listed for further reading. (SLD)

#### Studying for Finals

- [Colberg, S. \(1995, Sep 26\). TESTING 1,2,3, - Here Are Tips on How to Improve Exam-Taking. Tulsa World, p. L1..](#)
- [Rowh, M. \(2002, 09\). How to be a great test taker. Career World, 31, 8-13.](#)

The right frame of mind and the use of smart test-taking strategies can help any student succeed. The primary goal in test taking is to do well. Five steps for test success are preparation, knowing how the test will be structured, taking full advantage of the time available, staying calm and reviewing results.
- [Loulou, D., & ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation, W. D. \(1995\). Making the A: How To Study for Tests. ERIC/AE Digest.](#)

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