



How to Take and Pass a Test the First Time

Calm and Confident – Tips and Tricks

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ARE YOU HAVING TROUBLE passing tests? It is probably not because you don't know the subject matter. Most tests are poorly written and not all the questions have a relationship to the real world. Having taken dozens of tests and exams, I can tell you from experience that there are 3 keys and 10 tips to successful test taking.

Most self-help articles on test taking focus on taking the exam itself - get enough sleep, etc. This is not the place to start. Although what you do on the day of the exam is important, and we will talk about it here, it is not as important as what you do in the weeks and days leading up to your test.

The key to passing your test is proper preparation. Not just preparation; proper preparation. Yes, I know you already heard that. But think back to the last test you did not pass the first time. Was it because you weren't smart enough? No. Was it because you were not reasonably knowledgeable? Probably not. It was because you did not prepare properly. Not preparing properly can mean not knowing which book to read; not taking the time to research sample questions; not getting the skinny on what the questions are like, and who wrote them. Not realizing that even though you know the subject matter, the exam questions are crazy, made up to trick you, or do not even relate to the topic being tested. Here is what you must do.

1. RESEARCH. Start on the Internet and research prep classes on your subject. If you are going to become a building contractor, you will type that in and take notes on what you find. Assuming you already completed the application to take the test, you now need to research the best class to take. You may find plenty of online classes as well.
2. DECISIONS. From your research notes, pick the best class. You may need to call the instructor and ask for testimonials from former students. Try to find out how the students did on the exam.
3. DISCIPLINE. You have your course and sample questions. Take the time to work out a daily schedule of study. I can't overemphasize this. Did you know that over 50% of online course takers never register for an ID and password? Proper preparation means follow-through. Even if you take a local classroom prep class, you must study the materials

before you take the test. Set aside chunks of time for yourself and reward yourself after every session. Be realistic about how much you can accomplish.

Do not underestimate the ability of the test you are about to take to be completely different from what you thought it would be. If you thoroughly prepare with the advice given here, and you are getting 90's on the sample exams, you will pass the test. Follow my 10-step methodology:

1. Research the prep classes and pick out one to go through.
2. Through the prep classes or through the internet research, get sample exams to take.
3. Take the real exam no more than 1 week after the intensive prep, and preferably within days.
4. Decompress the day before the exam and relax.
5. Get to the test center early and spend 30 minutes in the parking lot going over the highlighted or tabbed areas where you were having trouble.
6. On the exam, think like the question writer. Make sure you really read and understand the question before answering.
7. Go through and answer everything you know cold first.
8. Next, attack the ones you don't know. Eliminate the answers that don't make sense to narrow your choices.
9. Don't change answers unless you are 100% sure the first answer you gave was wrong.
10. No matter how you feel when you leave the test, go celebrate that you took it!

I have used this methodology on Coast Guard exams, Six Sigma Master Black Belt exams, General Building Contractor Exams, Airframe and Powerplant exams, Home Inspector exams, Certified Engineer exams, etc., and it WORKS. The prep and getting confident with the sample questions is the key.

Do these methods take time and money? Yes! Getting your credential is worth it. GOOD LUCK.

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