

# Study Tips and Test-Taking Techniques

## Study Tips

\***Gather** all of your **study materials** together (textbooks, notes, worksheets, paper, pencil, and whatever else you need).

\*Skim the material, **deciding which parts are difficult and which you understand best.**

\* **Plan how much time** you need for each topic.

\*Read a sentence or two. Stop and **go over in your mind what the sentence is talking about.** If you do not understand it, go back over it.

\***Read aloud** and **study with a partner or parent.** Listen to yourself read.

\***Think up possible test questions,** and quiz yourself.

\*Recopy your notes for clarity. You'll understand them better.

\* **Underline or highlight main ideas or key terms** in your notes.

\*Pay **special attention to vocabulary words or bold type** in your textbook.

\* Make a **written outline** of the book material, **or just take notes.** Most textbooks are outlined for you with key topics and subtopics in different size or colour print.

\*Think back on **what points the teacher emphasized in class.** If appropriate, ask the teacher how many points will be devoted to each topic covered by the test.

\*Try mnemonics devices to help you memorize large amounts of information. A mnemonic can be a word made up from the first letters of a list of words you want to remember. For instance; "**ROY G BIV**" is the mnemonic for the colors of the visible light spectrum (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet). A mnemonic can also be a sentence of words with the same letters as the words in the list. An example of this is "King Phillip Came Over For Good Spaghetti", the mnemonic for the scientific classification levels of living things (kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, genus, species).

Another tactic is association, **relating ridiculous mental pictures to the material** and then linking, all of the pictures together. For example, to remember the phases of mitosis, the following phrase might be helpful: "My toe says, 'The professor met an ant on a television interview.'" (The phases of mitosis are prophase, metaphase, anaphase, telophase, and interphase.)

## Test-Taking Techniques

- \* Always **put your full name** and class period on the test paper or answer sheet.
- \* **Read over the entire test**, especially the instructions.
- \* **Answer the ones you know** and the ones requiring quick answers **first**.
- \* If there is an answer you are concerned you might forget, **do it immediately**.
- \* Many times you can **get clues** to answers from reading other parts of the test.
- \* **Keep an eye on the time**. Budget your time, allowing more time to answer essay questions or other questions that are worth many points.
- \* In true-false tests **long statements are often true**. (A teacher trying to be as specific as possible tends to lengthen the statement.) **Words such as only, never, and always often indicate the statement is false**. Words such as often, sometimes, probably, and usually often indicate the statement is true.
- \* Multiple choice tests usually offer four choices. **Rule out two immediately, then take a crack at the remaining two**. Then you may have at least a 50-50 chance. Often distracters such as all of the above or none of the above are not the correct answer.
- \* For matching sections, use the **process of elimination** as you do in answering multiple-choice questions.
- \* Essay or short answer questions require you to organize your thoughts before you write. Be sure to be **grammatically correct**. Underline key words or ideas in your answer so that they stand out. Be clear and concise.
- \* When you are finished, **check the entire test to be sure you haven't skipped any questions**.

**There is no substitute for knowing the material. Prepare yourself thoroughly for tests. This includes paying attention in class, using your time well in class, doing your homework, and seeing the teacher for extra help.**