

Practice Tests and Preparations

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Checklist was compiled from an article by Ruth Beechick, Dorothy Karman, and Gregory Cizek in the February/March 1990 Teaching Home, reprinted with permission.

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Practice Tests:

If you are concerned about testing, consider looking at some test prep materials. The Scoring High series is the closest practice system that we know of for Grades 1 – 8 for the Iowa, Stanford-10 and TerraNova2/CAT6 tests. The CogAT/OLSAT practice test is a great way to see samples of the types of questions asked on the CogAT and OSLAT tests.

- Having your child see and work through some test prep materials can help your child be comfortable with testing, get practice with multiple-choice questions, and de-mystify the testing for you, too.
- You might want to explain to your children that testing is something they must do to follow the law; it will show parents the things they have learned; and that they should try to do their best, but not worry too much about it. You can tell them that some questions will probably be very easy for them while some might be too hard for them. They should not spend too much time on the difficult questions but should give them their best guess.

Our Favorite Practice Tests:

- ***Iowa Practice Test*** – Available through www.TriangleEd.com for grades K-12 (a short practice test which shows a few items for each section on the test)
- ***Scoring High on the Iowa Test, Scoring High on the Stanford-10 Test, and Scoring High on the TerraNova Test*** – Available through www.TriangleEd.com for grades 1-8
- ***CogAT/OLSAT Practice Test*** – Available through www.TriangleEd.com for grades 2-12, short practice test good for an overview of the CogAT or OLSAT tests
- We also offer ACT/SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) preparation.

Checklist for the Day of the Test:

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- Plan ahead for a peaceful, unhurried evening and morning before the test.
- Check directions to the testing site and plan to leave and arrive early to avoid stress before the test.
- Make sure your child sleeps well, eats a healthy breakfast, and gets enough water to drink.
- Be prepared with necessary tools such as extra pencils or calculators if allowed.
- If this is your child's first test, you may want to be present in the back of the room for at least part of the time to relieve his anxiety.
- Be sure your child understands what to do if he needs to go to the bathroom during the test. Try to prevent this need.
- Avoid conversations between other students and your child before a test; anxiety is contagious.
- Pray with your child that he will remember what he has learned and do his best. Thank the Lord that He promised to always be with your child and take good care of him.

Test-Taking Skills You Can Teach Your Child:

There are specific skills and strategies involved in taking tests that can help your child do his best.

- **Directions**

- Always listen to and read the directions carefully; don't assume that you already know them. Sometimes they change only slightly, but significantly, from one section to the next.
- Ask the instructor to explain any directions that you do not understand.
- Be sure you know how and where to mark the answers, especially if they are on a separate sheet.
- Mark answers carefully and neatly, filling in the blanks completely so that it will be graded correctly.

- **Wording**

- Watch out for wording such as "Which of the following is not true?" or for answers that sound or look similar.
- On a true or false question, look for the words never, always, only, best.

- **Attitude**

- Relax by taking several slow, deep breaths and changing your position from time to time.
- Remember that you know a lot of information and that you are doing your best to show what you know.
- Breathe a short prayer for the Lord's help (as prayed earlier).

- **Pacing**

___ Since most tests are timed, don't get bogged down on a question that you can't answer or are unsure about.

___ Answer the items you are sure of first. This builds confidence, and you won't miss points on easy questions by running out of time.

___ Skip difficult questions and place an "x" by the number of the question in the margin on the answer sheet.

___ Answer questions that you're not sure of the best you can and mark them with a "?" in the margin.

___ When you have answered all the other questions, answer the questions with an "X" in the margin and recheck questions you marked with "?".

- **Helps**

___ If you need to, look back at the reading selection to check facts and ideas.

___ Try each answer in the blank to help you decide which one sounds right.

___ Remember, sometimes there are no mistakes to be found or two answers can be correct and you must choose the answer that includes them both.

___ When you are not sure, eliminate answers you know are incorrect and take your best guess among the rest. Some of your guesses may be right.

- **Math**

___ On arithmetic test items, do a quick estimate with rounded-off numbers. This will help you avoid "silly" mistakes and may even help you locate the only possible answer.

___ When you copy a math problem onto scratch paper, line up the numbers carefully and double check your copying.

___ Check math problems by reversing operations.

- **Timing**

___ Use all the time allotted for the test; review your test if you finish early.

___ Recheck the directions, questions, and your answers.

___ Do not change answers unless they are obviously wrong

___ Don't panic when students start handing in their papers. There's no reward for being the first.

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