

Testing Tips

- **Write the test first.** Your lessons and activities should directly relate to how you assess your students. Start out a new unit or chapter by writing a test that covers what you think are the main topics, and coordinate your lessons based on the test. This way, your assessment will help shape how the topics are covered, and your students may more easily see how the lessons, activities, and test are related.
- **Review from the start.** Provide review exercises every day to discourage “cramming.” Use warm-ups to tie together topics day-to-day and to review topics covered last week that will appear on an upcoming test. These review exercises will show you on which topics students may need extra instruction.
- **Try a partner test.** Divide the class into pairs, and give each partner a different version of the test. Tell your students that you will only grade one test from each pair, but don’t tell them which test it will be. This will allow your students to talk and debate math, facilitating learning.
- **Try a take-home test.** This will allow you to challenge your students with questions that would be too difficult to answer with classroom time limitations. Encourage students to work together on solutions outside of class.
- **Give ‘em a snack!** Hungry students will focus on their empty stomachs and not the test in front of them. Even if you have a “no food” policy in your classroom, consider allowing quiet, quality snacks on test days, or provide them yourself. Your students will appreciate the gesture and might just do better on the test, too!
- **Give every student a fair chance.** All students deserve to take tests in a quiet, supportive atmosphere. All it takes is one disruptive student to deny them that right. Have a variety of quiet activities for early finishers to work on, and always discourage talking of any sort until all tests are handed in.
- **Have students write the test.** To review for a test, have small groups create sample tests with answers. You can use some of their questions on your test.
- **Write helpful hints on the board.** These suggestions apply to every test your students will take. Remind them before each test to:
 - **Read the directions first!** If you don’t understand the directions, ask questions. You have to know what is expected of you before you can perform.
 - **Maximize your points.** Skip problems that seem time-consuming or difficult, and go back to them once you’ve done everything else.
 - **Check your work, then turn it in.** Always go over your test to fix errors.
 - **Relax!** You can do this!