

Testing, Testing 1, 2, 3!

How to Study and Take Tests

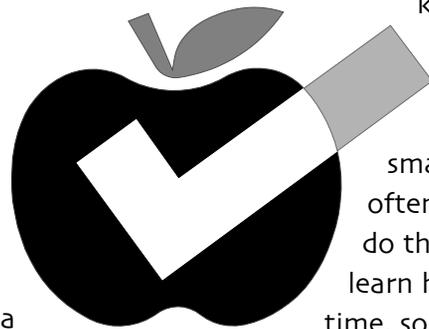
A Hot Topics Supplement from

I N T R O D U C T I O N

What's the best thing about school?
Write your answer on this line.

If you wrote "tests" on that line, you may not need to read the rest of this special newspaper section. You probably didn't, though. Like most kids, you probably don't love taking tests. But because tests are such a big part of school, you ought to learn about taking them, even if you don't love them. In this newspaper section, you're going to read about how to study and take tests. You'll learn ways to take different kinds of tests and do well!

Tests come in all shapes and sizes, and as you go through school you'll meet them all. You probably take two different kinds of tests — standardized tests and tests that your teachers create to check what you know. Standardized tests are taken by many students across your state and sometimes across the whole country. You are scored by how well you do compared to other kids in your grade. These tests are like the other tests you take in school except that you can't exactly study for them because you don't



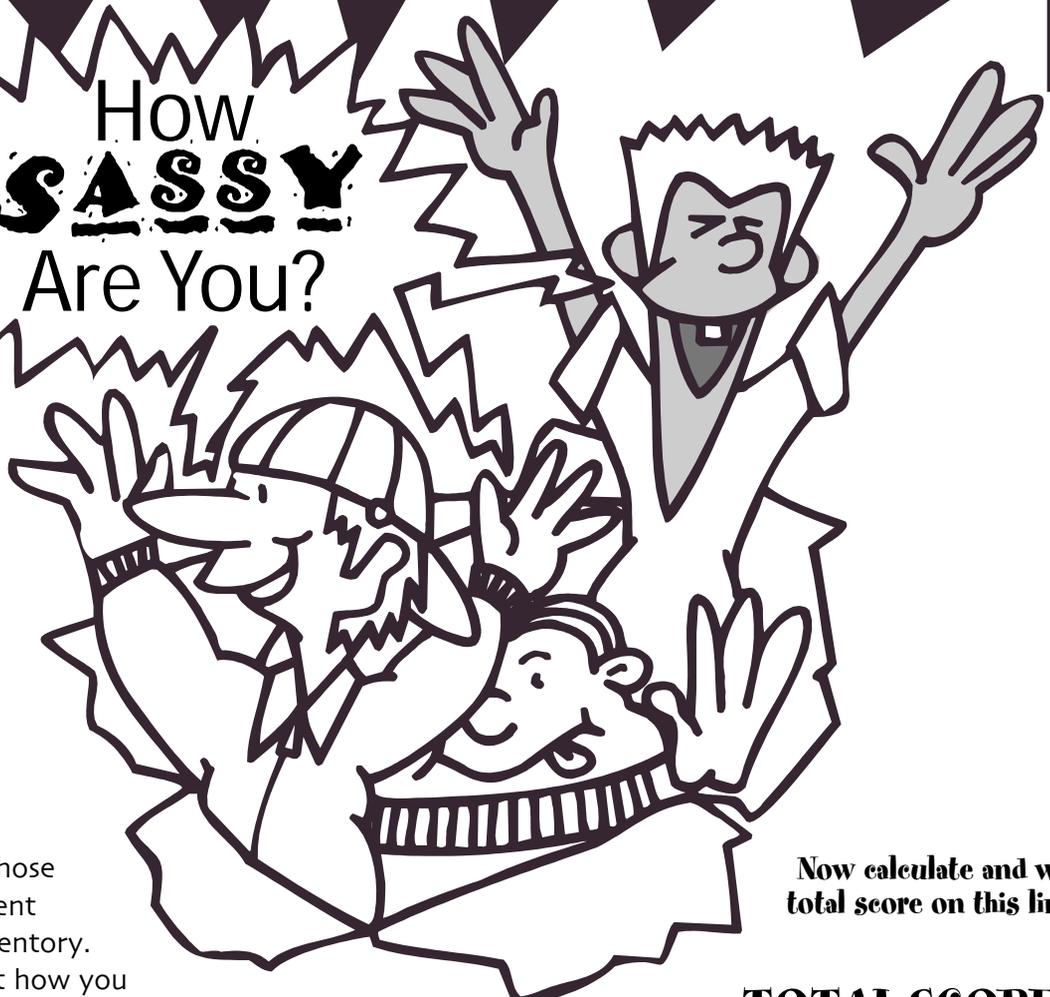
know what will be on them. You can practice taking that kind of test, though, and that practice will help you improve your score. Taking tests well is not just about being smart. (But that does help!) Smart kids are often poor test-takers. Intelligence alone won't do the job. The good news is that anyone can learn how to take tests, but it does take some time, so be patient with yourself.

Taking tests is like playing a game. You wouldn't expect to be a good soccer player if you ran out onto the field and tried to play without knowing any of the rules. If you didn't even know what a goal was, or which way to kick the ball, how would you ever win? Taking a test is no different. You need to understand how that kind of test works and how to attack it properly. But, just like in soccer, anyone who has the desire can learn the rules and play the game. If you want to get better at taking tests, you can!

You should know that reading books, writing papers, and taking tests get easier with practice. And the rewards that you get — the building up of your brain and the good grades you'll earn — make the work well worth it!



How SASSY Are You?



Here is our **SASI** test. Those letters stand for **S**tudent **A**cademic **S**uccess **I**nventory. This quiz tells you a bit about how you get ready and take tests. There are no right or wrong answers, so just give the answer that's true for you.

Now calculate and write your total score on this line.

TOTAL SCORE _____

DIRECTIONS: Circle the letters **N**, **R**, **S**, **U** and **A** to tell whether each of the following statements is **Never**, **Rarely**, **Sometimes**, **Usually** or **Always** true of you.

1. When studying for a test, I read and re-read my class notes and the book.
N R S U A
2. I memorize definitions and spelling for my classes.
N R S U A
3. When I study for a test, I copy sections of my notes over.
N R S U A
4. I memorize key words to remind me of important ideas on a test.
N R S U A
5. When I study, I practice saying the material to myself over and over.
N R S U A

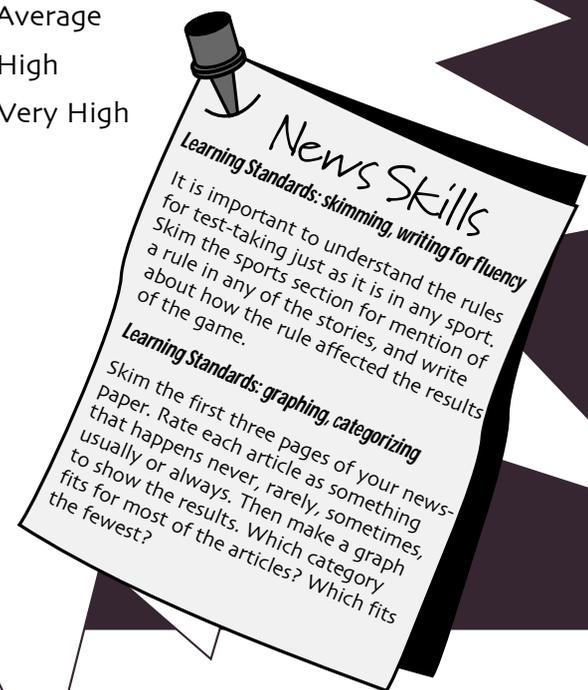
Scoring:

Give yourself 1 point for each N that you circled, 2 points for each R, 3 points for each S, 4 points for each U and 5 points for each A.

What your score says about you.

This should give you an idea of how well you practice good test behaviors. Circle the Score Range in which your Total Score falls.

Score Range	Category
5-8.....	Very Low
9-12.....	Low
13-18.....	Average
19-21.....	High
22-25.....	Very High



If Test-Taking is a Game These Are The Rules

Some Tips To Help You In Any Test

1. **Read the directions twice.** Then set up a mental schedule for working through the test. So when you're about halfway done with the test, check to make sure that you have about half the time left.
2. **Don't waste time thinking too much about really hard questions.** If you have no idea at all, just guess and go on. If you need more time to work it out, skip it and come back at the end if you have enough time.
3. **Don't make the test harder than it is.** Sometimes, simple, easy questions are just that. If you think a question is too easy, your answer is probably just right.
4. **Ask your teacher questions if you are confused about the directions.** He or she can't give you answers but may be able to give you information that can help you.
5. **Focus on the content** of the test instead of thinking about how you feel.
6. **Check your work at the end.**

Special Tips for Multiple Choice Exams

1. **As you read the question, try to guess the answer,** if you can, before looking at the choices. If the answer you guessed is one of the choices, it's probably correct.
2. **Always read each question and all of the answers completely,** even if you guessed at the answer. There may be a better answer further down the list.
3. **Quickly leave out any choices that could not possibly be right.** Many questions have only two choices that make sense, along with a few that couldn't be right. You should work at spotting poor choices so that you can quickly get rid of them.
4. Know that **sometimes information important to one question is given away in another part of the test.**

5. **On questions that have "all of the above" as a choice, if you know that just two of the choices are right, you should choose "all of the above."** If you are pretty sure that one of the choices is wrong, you should pick just one of the other answers, not "all of the above."

6. **Look out for words such as "always," "never," "necessarily," "only," "must," "completely," "totally" and others like that.** If they are so overreaching, the answer is probably wrong. Look for a more specific choice. But you should also know that words like "often," "sometimes," "perhaps," "may" and "generally" often show up in correct answers.

Tips for Essay Exams

1. **Time is usually important,** so start by looking over the questions and planning to use your time based on

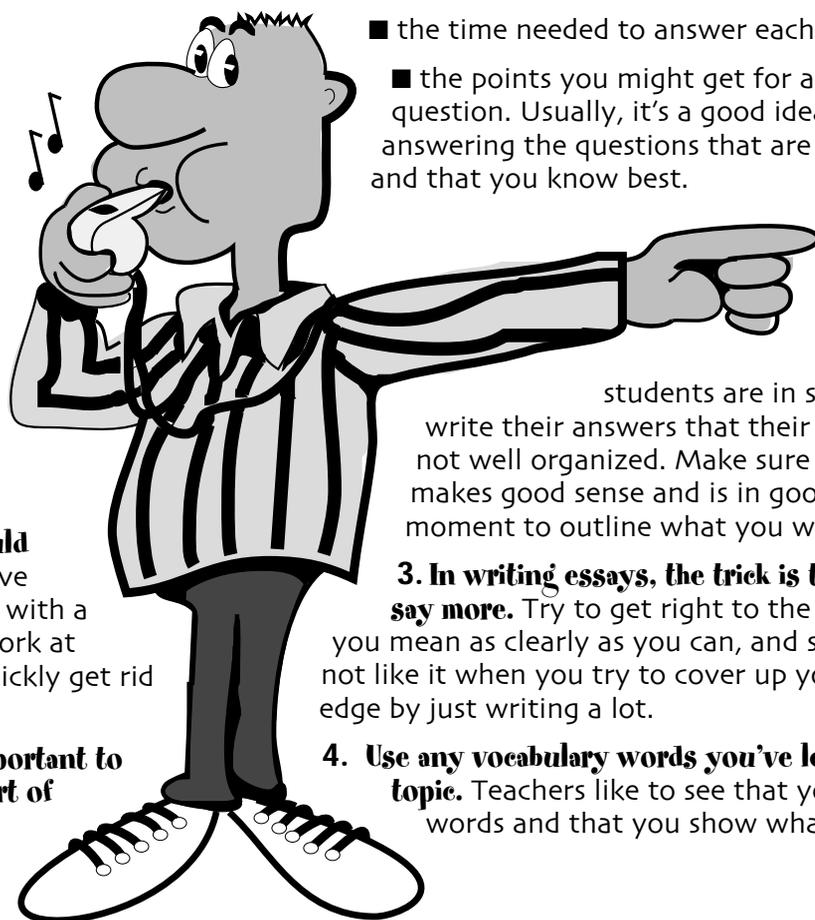
- your knowledge,
- the time needed to answer each question and
- the points you might get for answering each question. Usually, it's a good idea to start by answering the questions that are worth the most and that you know best.

2. **Spend a minute getting organized before you start the exam.** Sometimes

students are in such a hurry to write their answers that their paragraphs are not well organized. Make sure your writing makes good sense and is in good order. Take a moment to outline what you will write.

3. **In writing essays, the trick is to write less and say more.** Try to get right to the point, say what you mean as clearly as you can, and stop. Teachers do not like it when you try to cover up your lack of knowledge by just writing a lot.

4. **Use any vocabulary words you've learned about the topic.** Teachers like to see that you can use those words and that you show what you know.



PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Here is a chance for you to practice what you've learned. Check on page 3 for the test-taking tips, especially those for multiple-choice exams. Then try this practice test.

Test of Reading Comprehension

Directions: Read the passage below. Find and circle the letter of the best answer to the questions that follow the passage.

Slavery ended in Connecticut much earlier than it ended in the rest of the country. In 1784, the Connecticut Legislature passed the Gradual Emancipation Acts that freed slaves born after March 1, 1784, when they reached age 25. In 1797, the age for manumission was lowered to 21. This law was a step in ending the cruel practice of slavery, but, at the same time, it also helped create job opportunities for white workers who were having a hard time competing with the no-cost workers, the slaves.

The last Greenwich, Conn., slave was freed in 1825, when David Bush's daughter Fanny freed Candice. In 1848, Connecticut passed laws freeing all the slaves in the state, although only a handful were left at that point. There were quite a few ex-slaves in the area, though. As early as 1800, slaves escaping from the South began arriving in Connecticut. Many came by ship to its ports and others traveled by land. While no buildings in Greenwich have yet been identified as safe havens on the Underground Railroad, a route along the shore was one of many used by runaway slaves.

1. Which of these statements is true about the end of slavery in Connecticut?
 - a. Slavery ended after slaves reached the age of 16.
 - b. Slavery ended when David Bush's daughter freed Candice.
 - c. It ended earlier in Connecticut than in most of the country.
 - d. All of the above.
2. Why was it hard for some white workers to get jobs during the time of slavery?
 - a. Because the slaves did the jobs better.
 - b. Because the slaves worked for no cost.
 - c. Because the white workers did not want to work.
 - d. None of the above.
3. What was the name of the last slave in Greenwich?
 - a. Fanny.
 - b. Candice.
 - c. David.
 - d. Manumission.
4. The word "manumission" probably means
 - a. Freedom.
 - b. Hard work.
 - c. Adulthood.
 - d. All of the above

Essay Question:

Write an essay telling your opinion about slavery. On these lines, write a short outline of your essay. Then write your essay on another piece of paper.

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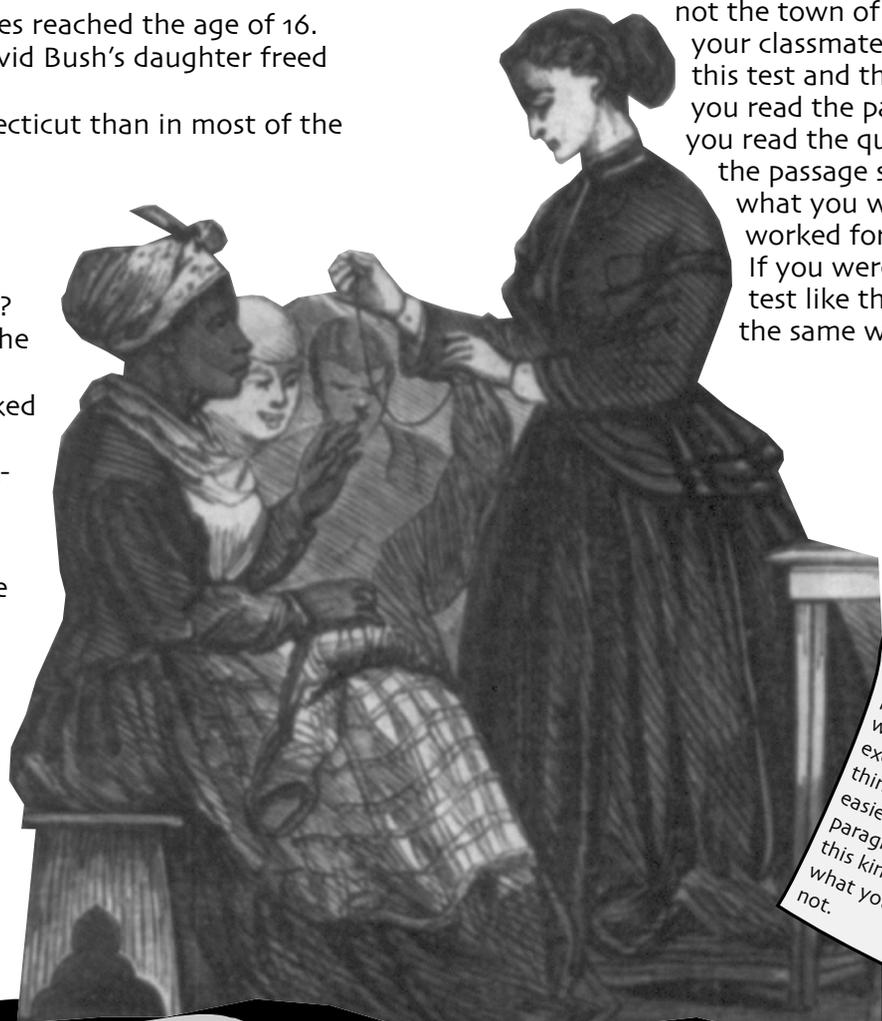
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How'd You Do?

On Question 1, did you think that "All of the above" was correct? You might have thought so because it seemed that answers b and c were right. But if you read carefully, you knew that b was not correct because although that's when slavery ended in Greenwich, the question was about the end of slavery in the state of Connecticut, not the town of Greenwich. Talk with your classmates about how you did on this test and the best way to take it. Did you read the passage once or twice? Did you read the questions before you read the passage so that you would know what you were looking for? What worked for you? What didn't work? If you were going to take another test like this one, would you do it the same way or differently?



News Skills
Learning standards: generating questions, evaluating

Take this opportunity to create your own multiple-choice test. Read an article in the newspaper about a subject you find interesting. Then write a three-question multiple-choice test for your partner. Exchange tests and see how well you performed. After you exchange tests, decide whether you think the test you wrote was harder or easier than your partner's. Write a paragraph telling why you think so. Is this kind of test a good measure of what you know? Explain why or why not.

Practice Test-Spelling

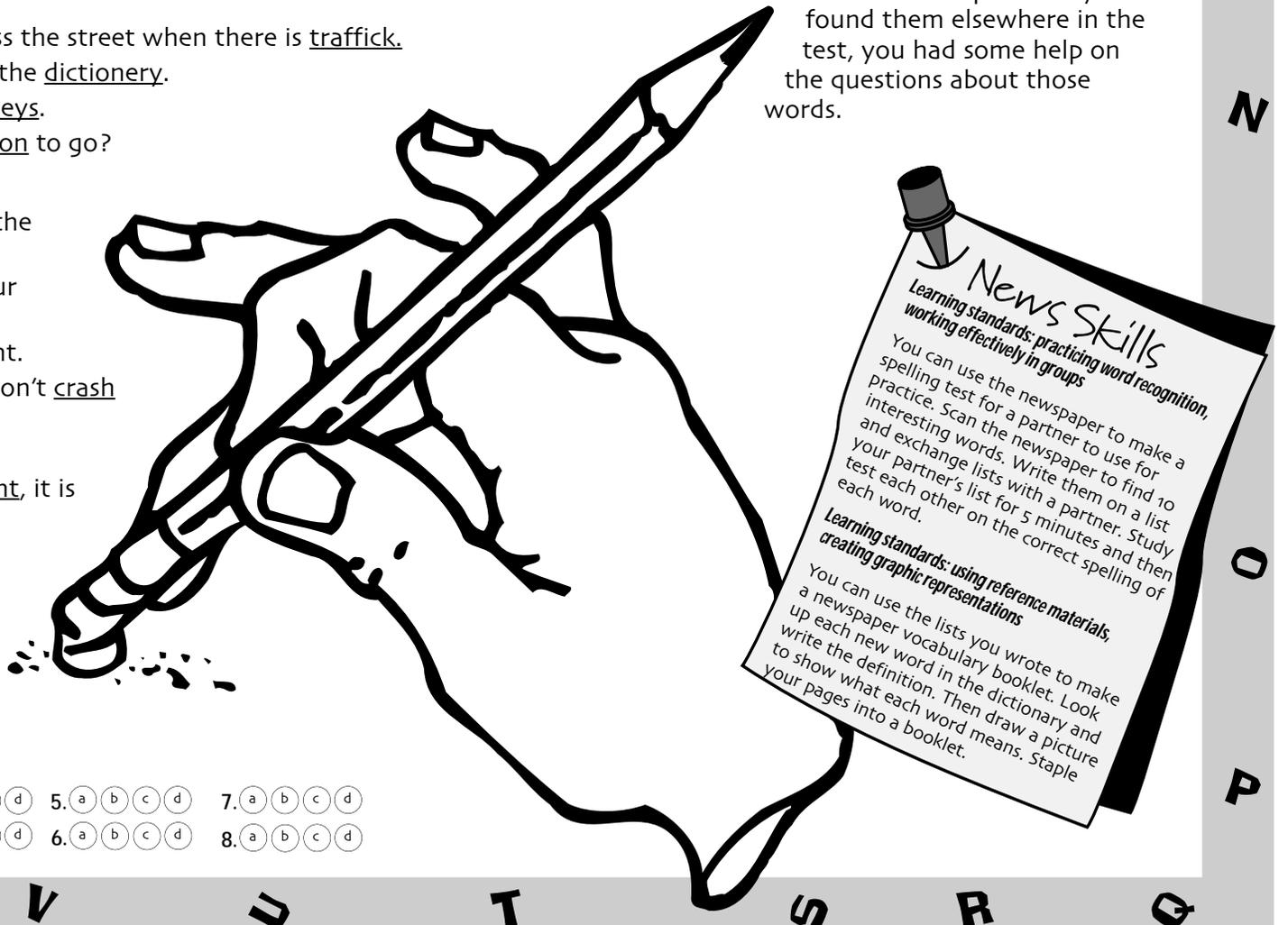
Directions: For questions 1-4, choose the underlined word in each group that is spelled correctly. For questions 5-8, choose the word in each group that is misspelled. On the grid below, fill in the circle of each answer you chose.

- He has a great deal of creativity.
 - Please sharpin my pencil.
 - I have been lonely sints you've been gone.
 - I need to check out a book from the liberry.
- You must be overjoied that you won the race.
 - Breathe deeply.
 - You can ride one of the donkies into the Grand Canyon.
 - Write a paragrafh about your sister.
- Be careful that you don't mispell any of the words on your list.
 - King Henry had too many wifes.
 - Can I borrow your brusch?
 - Blend the milk and the sugar.
- It's dangerous to cross the street when there is traffick.
 - Look the word up in the dictionery.
 - Cats like to play in alleys.
 - Do you have pirmission to go?
- Give your money to the cashier.
 - You may sharpen your pencil now.
 - Wolves howel at night.
 - Be careful that you don't crash into the wall.
- If something is ancient, it is older than I am.
 - That fruit salad is delicious.
 - A good writer uses her imagenation.
 - I love to smell the scents of summer.

- Sometimes dreams come true.
 - Don't you think puppies are cute?
 - Since you left, we don't have music.
 - She collects coyns.
- What time does the library close?
 - Good literature expands your mind.
 - She screamed in a shrill voice.
 - I'll meet you at the train statoin.

Did You Get The Hidden Help?

How did you do? If you read the test-taking tips on page 3 and then read the directions carefully, you probably did pretty well. Test tip number 4 in the section about multiple-choice tests told you that there is often important information built into the test. You also learned that you should look over the whole test first. If you paid attention to those two tips, you might have noticed that the test included the correct spelling of a few of the spelling words you were asked about. Those are: sharpen, library, since and misspelled. If you found them elsewhere in the test, you had some help on the questions about those words.



Answer Grid

- | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. (a) (b) (c) (d) | 3. (a) (b) (c) (d) | 5. (a) (b) (c) (d) | 7. (a) (b) (c) (d) |
| 2. (a) (b) (c) (d) | 4. (a) (b) (c) (d) | 6. (a) (b) (c) (d) | 8. (a) (b) (c) (d) |

Practice Test-Vocabulary

Part I Directions:

Read each item. Choose the answer that means the same or about the same as the underlined word. On the grid below, fill in the circle for each answer you chose.

HINT: If you don't know an answer, take your best guess. Begin by crossing out any choice you're sure is wrong.

- Pink is a peculiar color for a house.**
 - strange
 - unhappy
 - bright
 - ugly
- Moisture seeped into the walls and ruined the paint.**
 - freezing cold
 - dampness
 - dryness
 - insects
- Hunger makes me grumpy.**
 - sad
 - fat
 - late
 - unpleasant
- Coastal winds are strong.**
 - near the ocean
 - in the desert
 - near the city
 - near the mountains

Part I Answer Grid

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. (a) (b) (c) (d) | 3. (a) (b) (c) (d) |
| 2. (a) (b) (c) (d) | 4. (a) (b) (c) (d) |

Part II Directions:

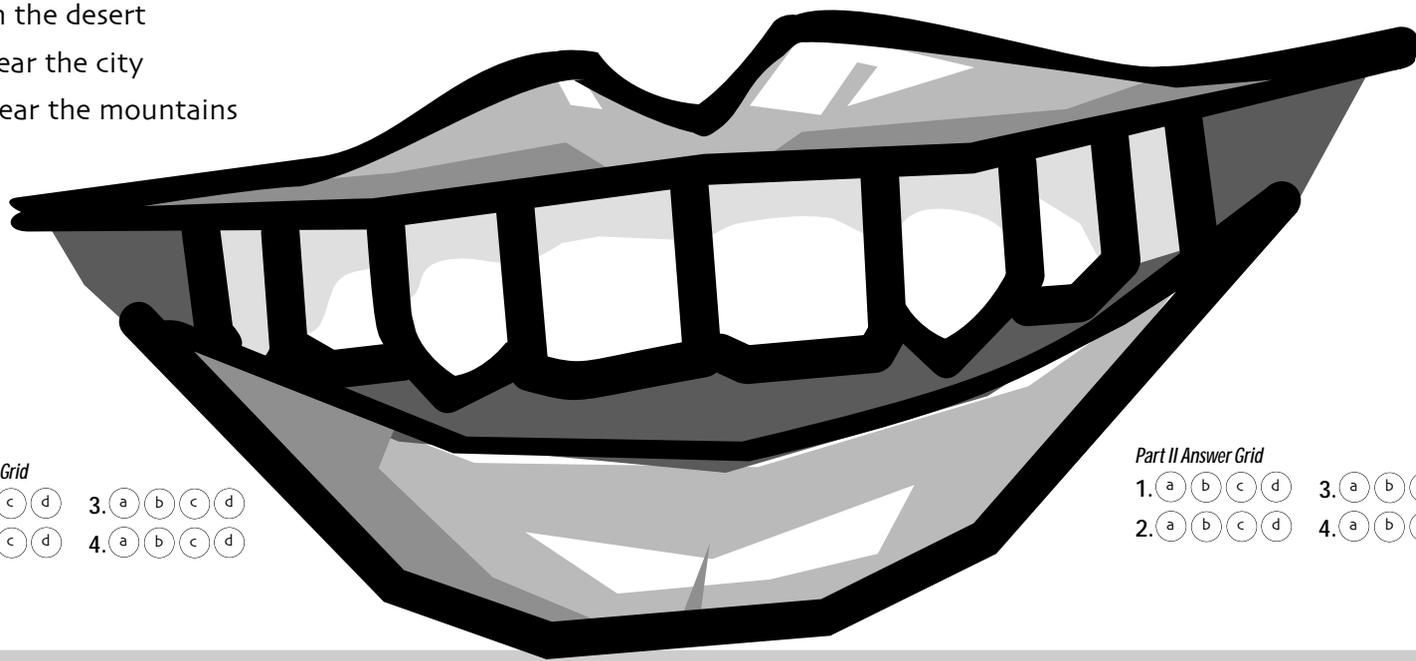
Read each item. Choose the word that is the opposite of the underlined word. On the grid below, fill in the circle for each answer you chose.

HINT: Ask yourself, "Does this mean the opposite of the underlined word?"

- I didn't recognize his brother.**
 - know
 - forget
 - hurry
 - seek
- That ring is worthless.**
 - fabulous
 - valuable
 - new
 - pretty
- The winner was fortunate.**
 - lucky
 - cute
 - unlucky
 - safe
- The ocean is deep.**
 - cold
 - huge
 - shallow
 - large

Check You Out

Did you read carefully and avoid falling in the trap? This test had two parts and each one had different directions. In the first part, you needed to find a synonym – a word that means the same. In Part II, you had to find an antonym – a word that means the opposite. In our test-taking tips, we suggested that you look through the whole test and read all directions carefully. If you did those two things, you probably did okay.



Part II Answer Grid

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. (a) (b) (c) (d) | 3. (a) (b) (c) (d) |
| 2. (a) (b) (c) (d) | 4. (a) (b) (c) (d) |

PRACTICE TEST

NUMERATION

Directions: Read and work each problem. Find the correct answer. Fill in the circle showing the letter of the answer you picked.

Hint: Skim the test and do the easiest problems first. This way, you'll use most of your time answering the questions you have the best chance of getting right, rather than spending too much time on one hard question.

1. Which of these numbers is both an even number and a multiple of 9?
 - a. 54
 - b. 50
 - c. 27
 - d. 45

2. Which group of numbers is in order from largest to smallest?
 - a. 90, 26, 40, 80
 - b. 2, 10, 15, 25
 - c. 11, 6, 4, 1
 - d. 99, 98, 96, 97

3. Which of these answers is the expanded numeral for 435?
 - a. $4 + 3 + 5$
 - b. $400 + 3 + 5$
 - c. $400 + 50 + 3$
 - d. $400 + 30 + 5$

4. How do you write $600 + 70 + 2$ as one numeral?
 - a. 672
 - b. 600702
 - c. 6072
 - d. 627

5. 3 hundreds and 6 ten thousands =
 - a. 36
 - b. 306
 - c. 60,300
 - d. 60,003

6. A builder has 100 bundles of bricks. It takes 30 bundles to build a chimney. What is the greatest number of chimneys the builder can make?
 - a. 30
 - b. 70
 - c. 3
 - d. 4



Answer Grid

1. (a) (b) (c) (d) 3. (a) (b) (c) (d) 5. (a) (b) (c) (d)
 2. (a) (b) (c) (d) 4. (a) (b) (c) (d) 6. (a) (b) (c) (d)

PRACTICE TEST

PROBLEM SOLVING

Directions: Work each problem. Choose the answer you think is correct, and in the grid below, fill in the circle with that letter.

Hint: Check your work carefully after you're finished.

1. Running shoes usually cost \$49. This week they are on sale for \$7 less than the regular price. Which number sentence shows how to find the sale price?

- a. $\$49 \times 7 =$
- b. $\$49 + \$7 =$
- c. $\$49 - \$42 =$
- d. $\$49 - \$7 =$

2. Rashid picked 93 peaches. Michael picked 37 peaches. How many did they pick altogether?

- a. 130
- b. 120
- c. 140
- d. 110

3. How much will one apple cost if 5 apples cost \$1.25?

- a. \$.25
- b. \$.20
- c. \$20
- d. none of these

4. Six students want to find their average height in inches. Their heights are 54 inches, 56 inches, 53 inches, 57 inches, 49 inches, and 52 inches. How would you find the average height?

- a. Add the heights and multiply by 6.
- b. Add the heights and divide by 6.
- c. Add the heights and divide by 12 inches.
- d. Multiply the heights by 6.

5. Cheryl bought three cans of peas and five cans of green beans. Each can contained 16 ounces. Which number sentence shows how to find the total weight of Cheryl's purchase? After you choose one, write the answer next to the sentence.

- a. $(3 + 5) - 16 =$
- b. $(16 - 3) \times 5 =$
- c. $(5 - 3) + 16 =$
- d. $(3 + 5) \times 16 =$

6. There are two pictures on the front page of the newspaper. One measures 2 inches x 5 inches. The other measures 4 inches x 4 inches. What is the total area of pictures on the front page?

- a. 16 inches
- b. 26 square inches
- c. 26 inches
- d. 15 inches

Were You Number Wise?

On these two pages, you had to be sure to read numbers really carefully. If the number was a decimal, you had to pay attention to exactly what decimal it was and be especially careful about each digit's place value. On this page, on problem 3, did you see the tricky part? The correct answer to the problem was \$.25, not \$25, but \$.25 was not one of the choices so the right choice was d (none of the above). The way to attack a math problem like that is to do the math, feel confident about your answer and then check the choices. If your answer is not a choice, do the problem again carefully checking each step. If you come up with the same answer twice, chances are you're right.



News Skills

Learning Skills: solving mathematical problems, understanding number systems

Your newspaper is a great source for creating your own word problems. Skim the ads and make up your own word problems based on the information in the ads. Then trade your word problems with a partner. Do you think the ads give you enough information in order to get your business?

Learning Skills: organizing information, understanding mathematical concepts

a mathematics newspaper scavenger hunt for the following items: a decimal, a number greater than a million, the price of a computer, how old you are, a date that is your birthday.

Answer Grid

1. (a) (b) (c) (d) 3. (a) (b) (c) (d) 5. (a) (b) (c) (d)
 2. (a) (b) (c) (d) 4. (a) (b) (c) (d) 6. (a) (b) (c) (d)



PRACTICE TEST

Words in Context

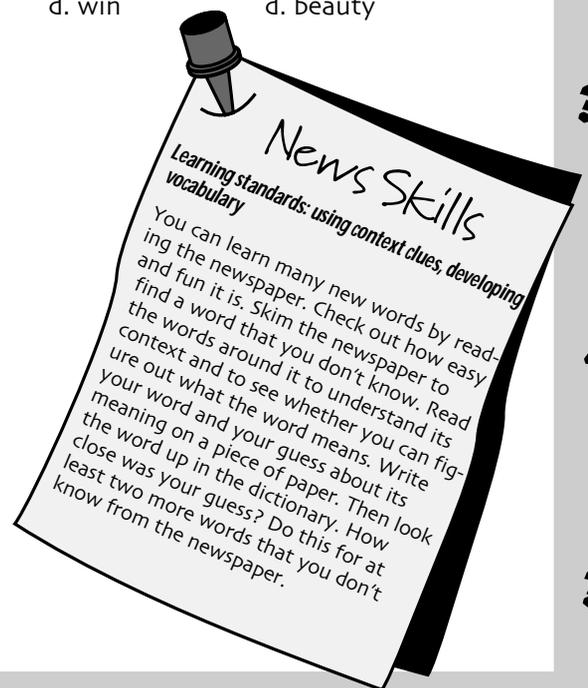
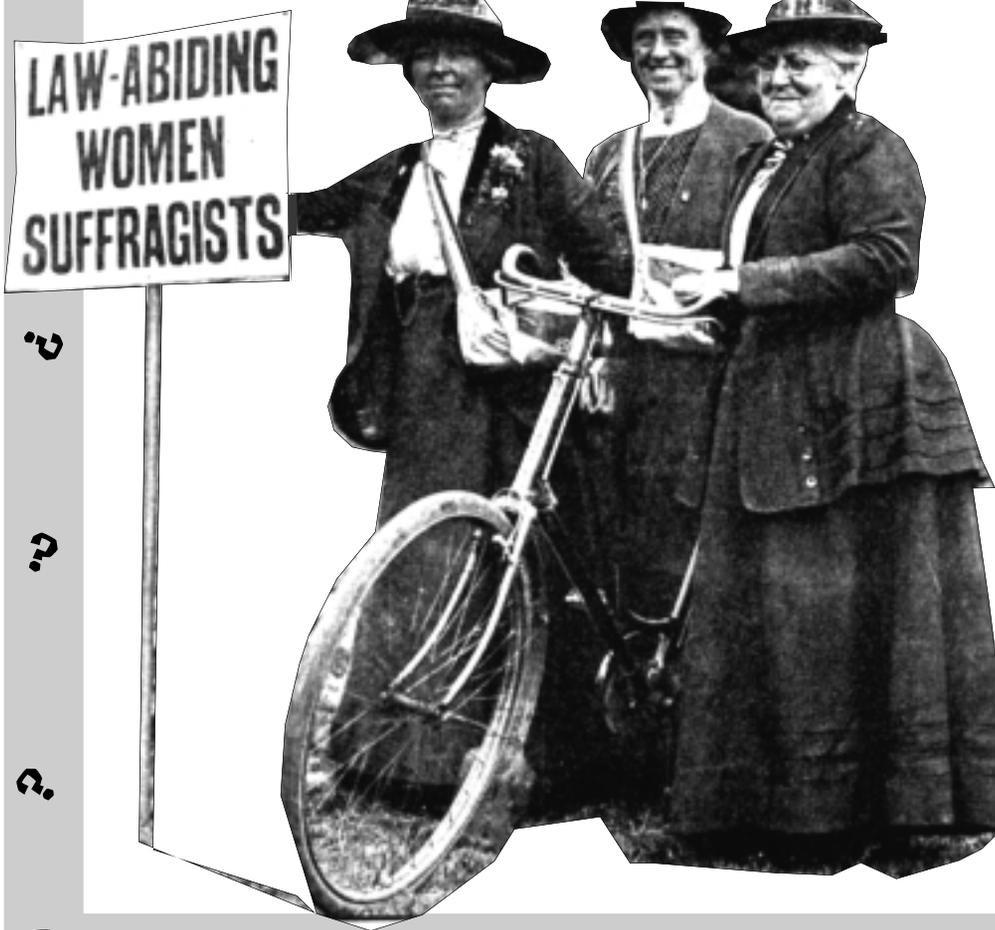
Directions

Read the paragraph. Find the word following the paragraph that fits best in each numbered blank. You could get a high score on the following quiz if you know the subject well enough to answer the questions. You could also get a high score, however, even if you don't know the subject. The logic of the paragraph can help you eliminate some choices. Or if you know that you need a verb, you can eliminate nouns as the likely answers. Read carefully! On the grid below, fill in the circle for each answer you chose.

WOMEN also fought 1. _____ for the right to vote. At a convention for women's 2. _____ in 1848 in Seneca Falls, N.Y., leaders called for help. Then, after the Civil War, the women's suffrage movement got more 3. _____. Led by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and later by Alice Paul, they began to work for the vote. They, too, 4. _____ marches and protests to win support. The United States entered World War I in 1917, and many women did their part to 5. _____ the war even though they still did not have equal voting 6. _____. President Woodrow Wilson saw the 7. _____ of this and urged the Senate to pass a women's voting amendment. Finally, in 1920, the 19th Amendment, giving women the right to vote, became law.

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. | 4. | 6. |
| a. hard | a. staged | a. measures |
| b. together | b. stopped | b. machines |
| c. always | c. celebrated | c. rights |
| d. wars | d. engaged | d. pleasures |
| 2. | 5. | 7. |
| a. clothing | a. fight | a. unfairness |
| b. mothers | b. support | b. meanness |
| c. rights | c. block | c. kindness |
| d. abilities | d. win | d. beauty |
| 3. | | |
| a. impossible | | |
| b. beautiful | | |
| c. busy | | |
| d. active | | |

- Answer Grid
- (a) (b) (c) (d)
 - (a) (b) (c) (d)



Practice Test

FRACTIONS AND DECIMALS

Directions: Read and work each problem. Find the correct answer and fill in the circle with the letter that shows that answer.

Hint: Pay close attention to the numbers in the problem and the answers. If you rush and read even one number incorrectly, you will probably pick the wrong answer.

1. $0.42 =$

- a. $4/2$
- b. $420/100$
- c. $42/10$
- d. $42/100$

$1/4$

2. Which of these is another name for $15/25$?

- a. $1/3$
- b. $3/5$
- c. $4/8$
- d. $3/4$

$.25$

3. Which fraction names the greatest number?

- a. $4/5$
- b. $2/3$
- c. $1/3$
- d. $1/10$

$.50$

4. Which of these decimals has a 9 in the hundredths place?

- a. 9.341
- b. 7.906
- c. 6.879
- d. 5.295

$1/100$

5. Which decimal names the smallest number?

- a. 1.09
- b. 1.23
- c. 1.38
- d. 1.18

6. Which of these fractions has a greater value than $1/4$?

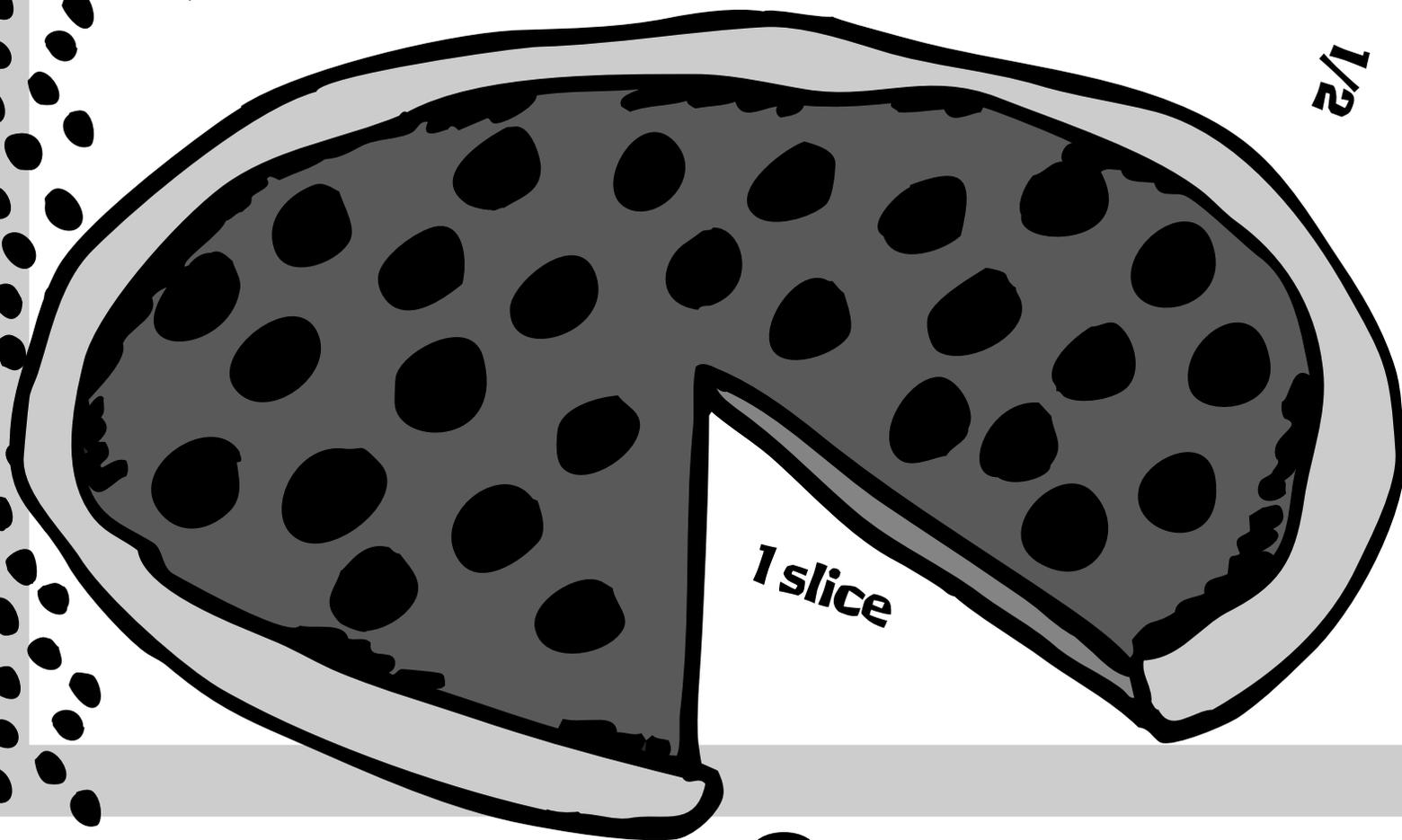
- a. $1/8$
- b. $1/5$
- c. $1/3$
- d. $1/10$

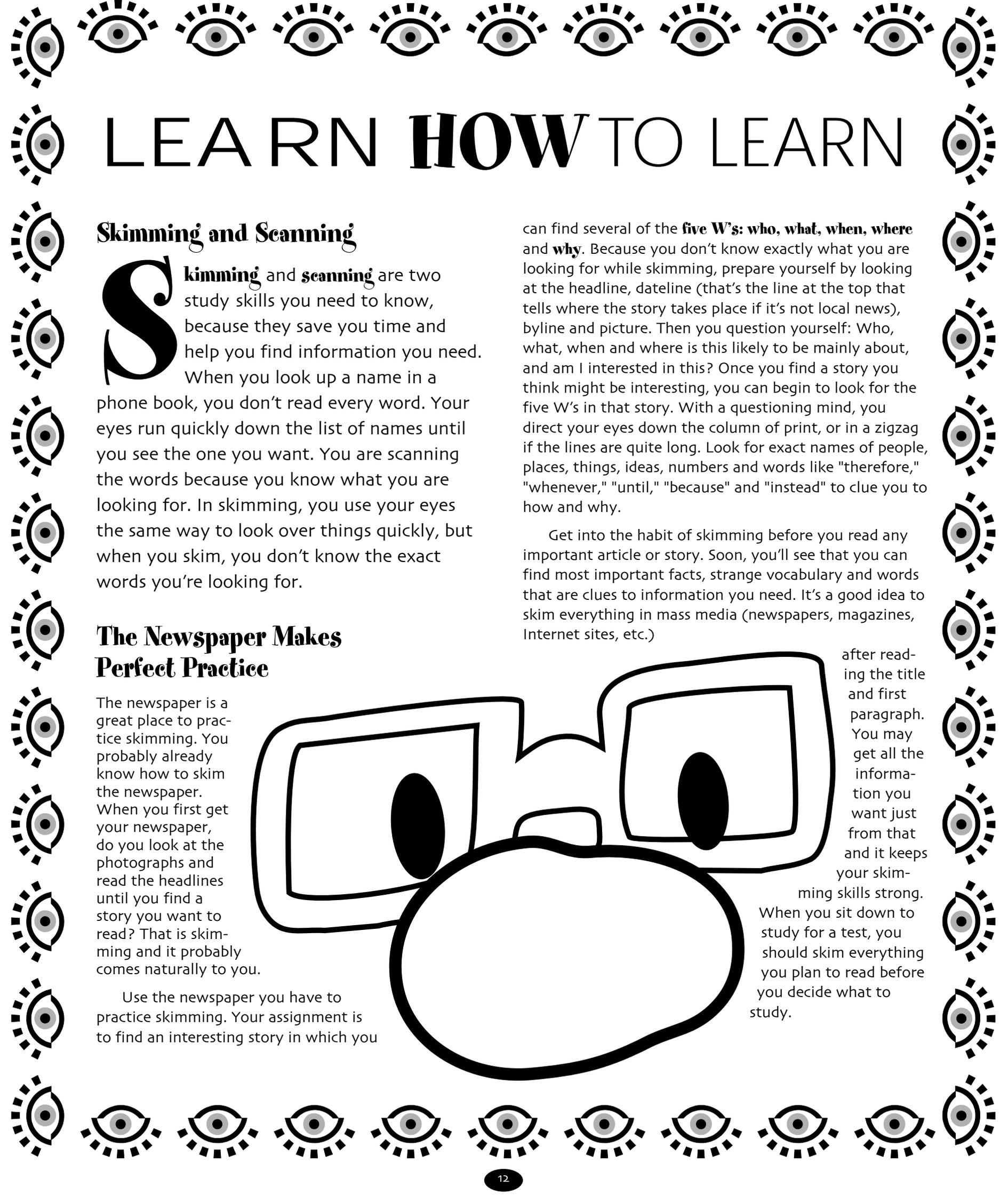
$2/7$

$.50$

Answer Grid

1. (a) (b) (c) (d) 3. (a) (b) (c) (d) 5. (a) (b) (c) (d)
2. (a) (b) (c) (d) 4. (a) (b) (c) (d) 6. (a) (b) (c) (d)





LEARN **HOW** TO LEARN

Skimming and Scanning

Skimming and scanning are two study skills you need to know, because they save you time and help you find information you need. When you look up a name in a phone book, you don't read every word. Your eyes run quickly down the list of names until you see the one you want. You are scanning the words because you know what you are looking for. In skimming, you use your eyes the same way to look over things quickly, but when you skim, you don't know the exact words you're looking for.

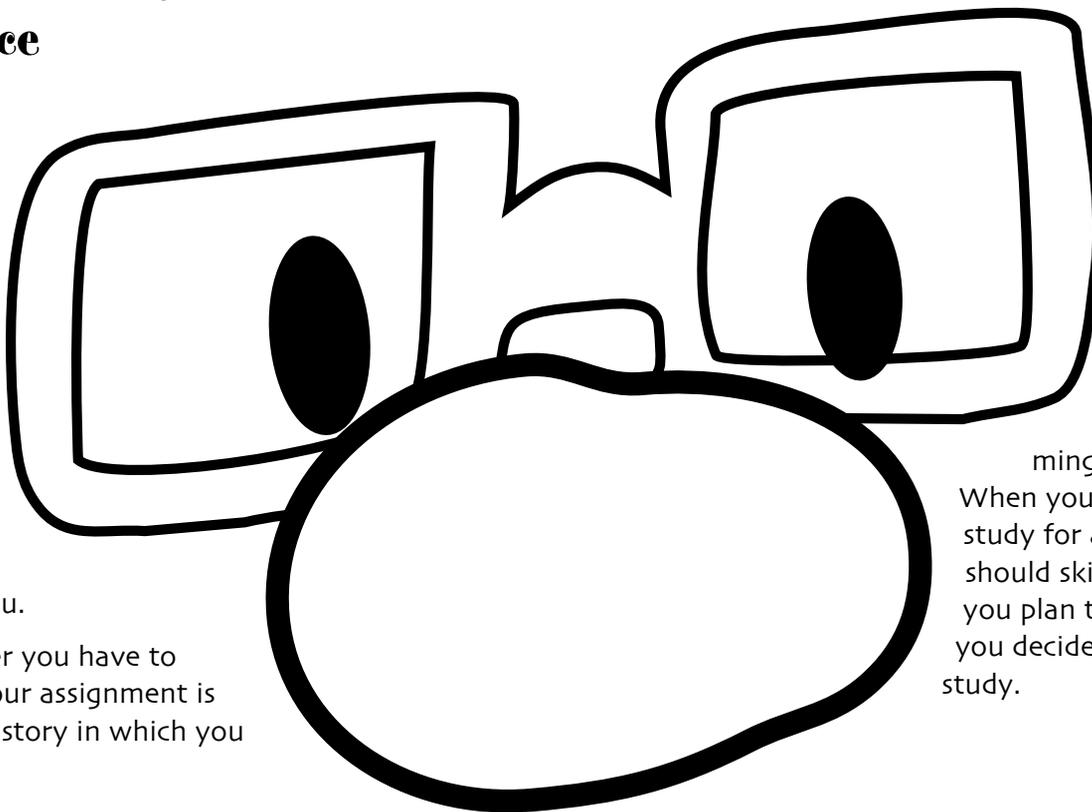
The Newspaper Makes Perfect Practice

The newspaper is a great place to practice skimming. You probably already know how to skim the newspaper. When you first get your newspaper, do you look at the photographs and read the headlines until you find a story you want to read? That is skimming and it probably comes naturally to you.

Use the newspaper you have to practice skimming. Your assignment is to find an interesting story in which you

can find several of the **five W's: who, what, when, where and why**. Because you don't know exactly what you are looking for while skimming, prepare yourself by looking at the headline, dateline (that's the line at the top that tells where the story takes place if it's not local news), byline and picture. Then you question yourself: Who, what, when and where is this likely to be mainly about, and am I interested in this? Once you find a story you think might be interesting, you can begin to look for the five W's in that story. With a questioning mind, you direct your eyes down the column of print, or in a zigzag if the lines are quite long. Look for exact names of people, places, things, ideas, numbers and words like "therefore," "whenever," "until," "because" and "instead" to clue you to how and why.

Get into the habit of skimming before you read any important article or story. Soon, you'll see that you can find most important facts, strange vocabulary and words that are clues to information you need. It's a good idea to skim everything in mass media (newspapers, magazines, Internet sites, etc.)



after reading the title and first paragraph. You may get all the information you want just from that and it keeps your skimming skills strong. When you sit down to study for a test, you should skim everything you plan to read before you decide what to study.

YOU CAN RULE@SCHOOL

You spend a lot of time in school, so you may as well get the most out of all that time. There are ways you can help yourself do better in school. You can't choose your teachers or your classmates, but you have total control over yourself.

Heads Up! Hands Up!

GOOD SCHOOL BEHAVIOR

Isn't Just About Being Good

If you can, sit near the front of the classroom. If your teacher assigns seats, you might even want to ask for a seat near the front. (Of course, you might want to do this in private so that you won't be teased about it.) Sitting up front usually helps you to hear and see better, and it's easier to stay tuned in to what's going on. Also, your teacher will easily see you and how interested you are.

If you are bored sometimes, maybe because you already know the work, spend the time reviewing your notes from before. At least you'll be doing something that is helpful and good for you.

Copy down everything on the board. A single word may be a clue to a test item or be useful to you later.

Speak up! Raise your hand! Get involved. Teachers love to see you showing what you know. Think about it: If you know an answer but you are too quiet, how will the teacher know how smart you are?

Listen Up!

The most important thing you can do in school is to listen. You might think that listening is easy and that you don't really have to try hard to do it well. But listening is better if you are active and work at it. Listening doesn't mean just hearing what is said, but also hearing, understanding and using the information. How can you be a better listener? Listening starts before you even get to school.

Listening begins at home when you do homework and think about what might be talked about in school the next day. This helps you get ready to listen in school. If you've done the homework, you're more

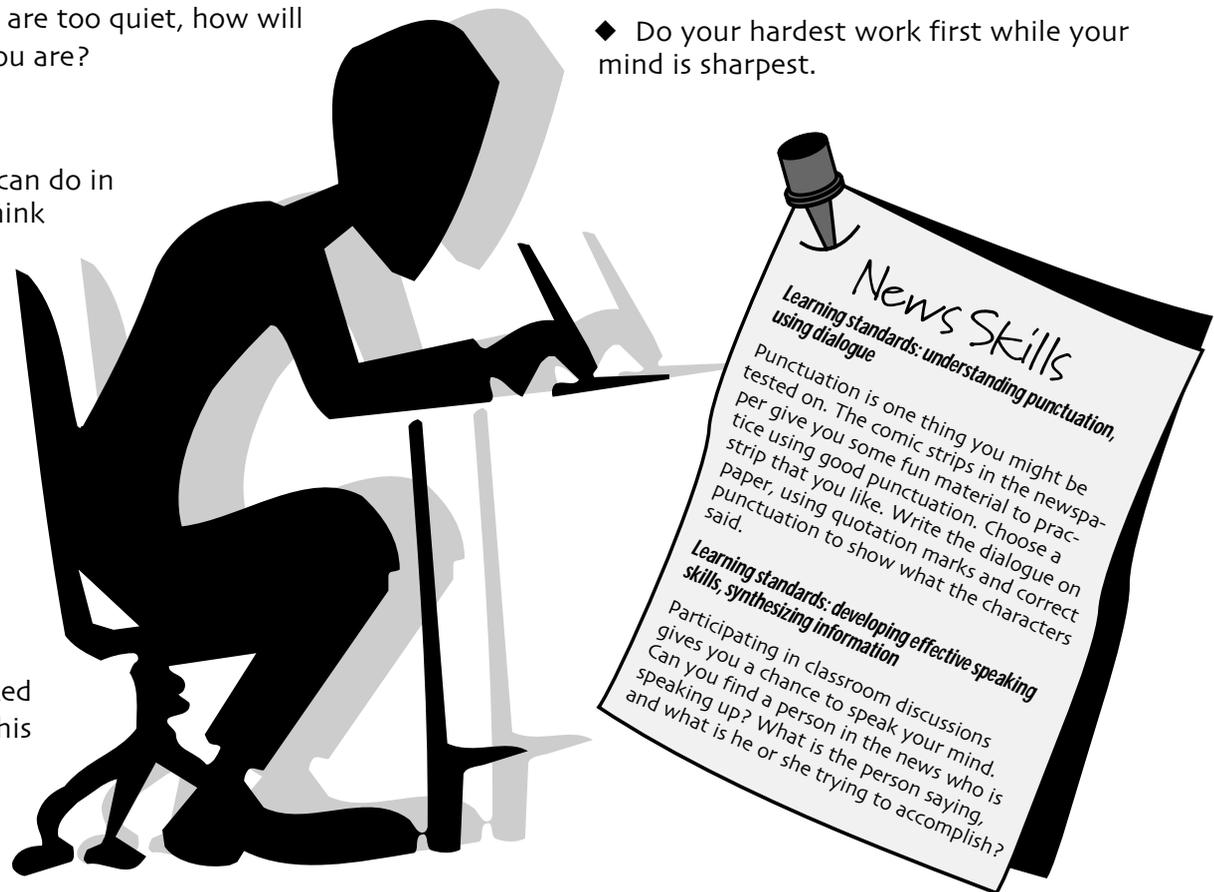
interested in hearing the class talk about it when you are in school. If you've read the book, you'll be more likely to understand what everyone is talking about and you'll really listen. While others are talking in school, just listen to them. Don't try to write down everything that's being said — just the important things.

Show Up!

Of course, if you're not there, you can't possibly do any of the right things at school. Showing up every day, unless you are truly sick, is the best way to make the most of yourself at school.

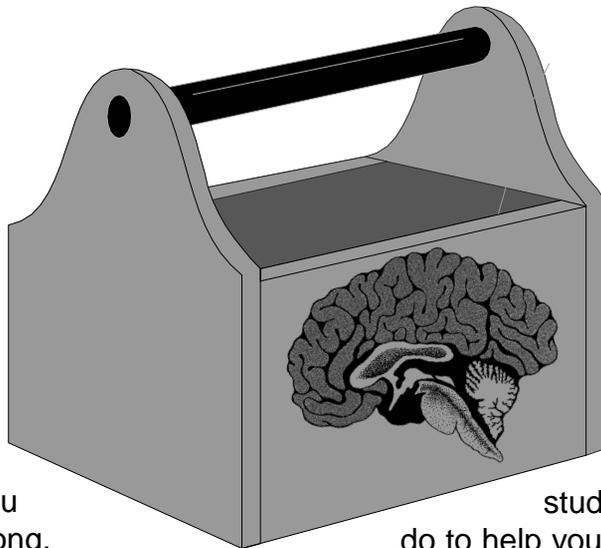
Help Yourself At Home

- ◆ Set up a schedule. It's best to do homework and study at the same time each day.
- ◆ Find a good study spot. You need a place where you are comfortable but not so comfy that you fall asleep! Sitting at a desk or table is probably better than sitting on the bed. Your spot should be quiet so that you can concentrate. If you must study with music on, try playing classical music. It helps some people think!
- ◆ Focus on one thing at a time. Clean up the other books and projects around you so that you can't even see them when you are working on something else.
- ◆ Do your hardest work first while your mind is sharpest.



M I N D

T O O L S



SQ3R

The **SQ3R METHOD** will help you when you are studying for a test or trying to understand anything you read. It's easy and it doesn't take long. Here's how each step works and the amount of time it should take you.

1. Survey (1 minute):

Look through the whole piece before you read. Check out what it's about without actually reading. Just pick out the main ideas.

2. Question (usually less than 30 seconds):

Ask yourself "What is this about?" and "What is the question that this material is trying to answer?"

3. Read (at your own speed):

Read actively and focus on what you are reading. The time here depends on how quickly you read; some of us are slower than others.

4. Recite/write (about 1 minute):

Say to yourself (it's best if you do this aloud, so you might want to be alone), or write down a key phrase that sums up the main idea of what you read. It is important to use your own words, not just to copy a phrase from the book. Research shows that we remember our own ideas better than we remember ideas given to us.

5. Review (less than 5 minutes):

Go over what you uncovered in steps 1 through 4. Test yourself by asking yourself questions about what you read. If you can't answer any of your questions, re-read that section.

Brain-Building

You can train your brain to help you remember things that you are studying. Here are four things you can do to help you think better.

MAKE CONNECTIONS

Make the things you want to remember connect to each other in some way. So, when you are trying to learn an idea, try to see how it connects to the topic you are studying. If you can make a connection, you can remember how the things go together.

CLOSE YOUR EYES AND VISUALIZE

Try to picture in your mind what you wish to remember. For example, if you are trying to remember that Columbus landed in 1492, you might want to close your eyes and visualize, or see a picture of Columbus on his ship with the date 1492 painted on the side.

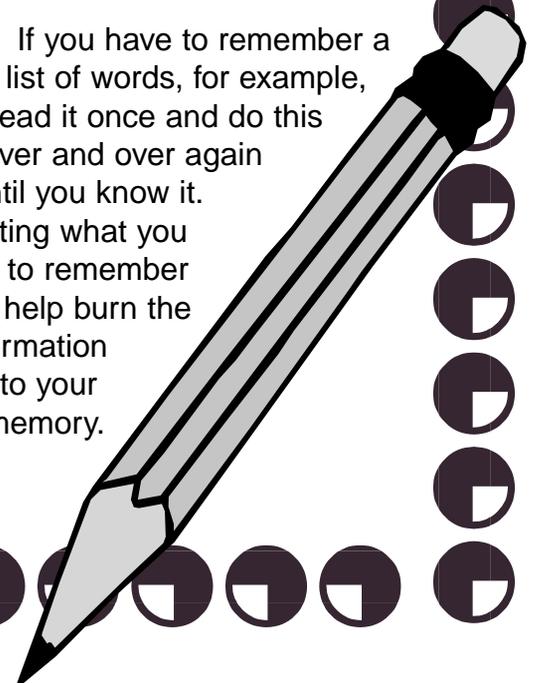
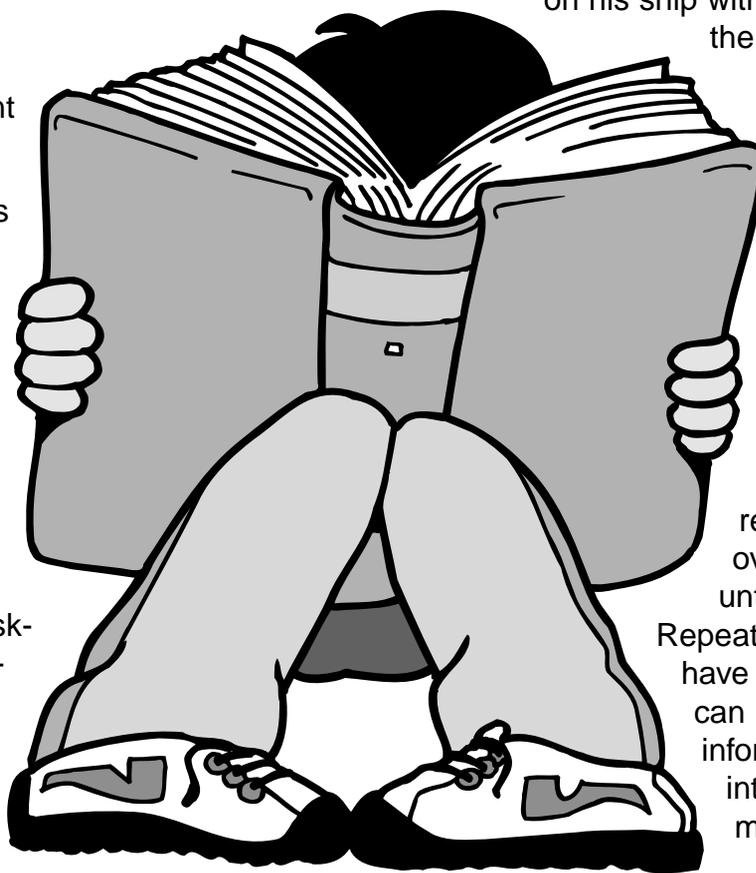
CONCENTRATE

Focus on one thing and one thing only.

REPEAT, REPEAT, REPEAT!

If you have to remember a list of words, for example, read it once and do this over and over again until you know it.

Repeating what you have to remember can help burn the information into your memory.



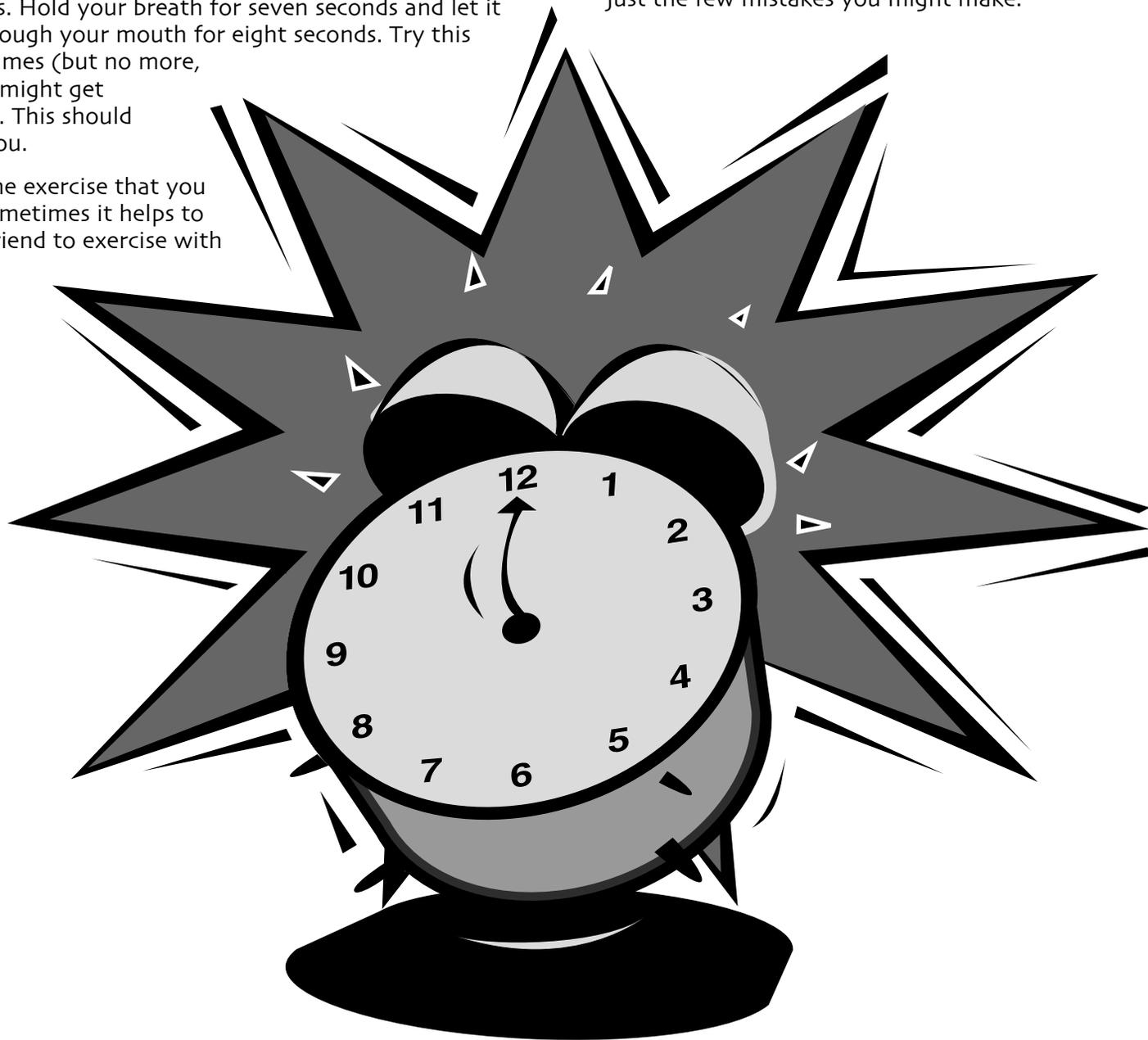
TEN WAYS TO STAY COOL

Tips to Keep Yourself From Being Too Stressed Out

If you know how to manage your time, that will help you from being too nervous about tests and about life in general. There are also some other ways to keep from letting yourself get too tightly wound up. Try some of these to find the ones that work for you.

1. Hang out with people whom you enjoy and who support you.
2. Learn and practice relaxation or meditation skills. Try this deep breathing technique when you feel nervous. Place your tongue on the roof of your mouth behind your teeth. Breathe in through your nose for four seconds. Hold your breath for seven seconds and let it out through your mouth for eight seconds. Try this three times (but no more, or you might get dizzy!). This should relax you.
3. Do some exercise that you like. Sometimes it helps to get a friend to exercise with you.

4. Don't let one thing take up all of your time, like your schoolwork, your friends or your sports. Try to give your time to things equally.
5. View life as challenges, not things to be afraid of and avoid.
6. Take responsibility for your life and your feelings.
7. Eat and sleep healthfully.
8. Open yourself to new experiences. Try new things, new foods, new places.
9. When worries start to build up, talk to someone.
10. Focus on the many things you are doing right, not just the few mistakes you might make.



Test-Taking Skills Your Child Needs

Taking tests well requires skills, not just knowledge. The more skilled your child is as a test-taker, the more she or he can use knowledge to answer the test questions correctly. Too often, students know the answers but don't get the questions right because they don't understand how that kind of test question works.

Here are some of the skills involved in taking tests. Review them with your son or daughter.

◆ Skimming

Skimming involves reading all the questions quickly before beginning the test. Students should skim the entire test, judge which questions are easy and which are difficult, then decide where to begin, based on his or her own style. They should think about creating a "time budget" as part of the plan, deciding how many minutes to devote to each section on the test.

◆ Reading

All directions and test questions should be read carefully. Students hear directions all the time, so without careful reading they begin to tune out and assume that they know the directions and can ignore them. When students don't read the questions carefully, they often give wrong answers.

◆ Answering

Answer all questions on the test, guessing if necessary, unless a wrong answer carries a greater penalty than no answer at all.

◆ Process of elimination

This applies to multiple-choice questions. These questions usually have four responses from which to choose. First, students need to eliminate choices that are known to be incorrect. Then they should pick the best response from the remaining choices.

◆ Trusting instincts

Students should review their answers if they have time but should not change any answer unless they're sure they answered incorrectly the first time.

What Parents Can Do

As a parent, you have a tremendous impact on your child's test-taking success.

- ☛ Look through this section to learn about test-taking and study skills. Review the material with your child.
- ☛ Ask your child how he or she is using these skills. Your job is to encourage and support.
- ☛ Find out the date and focus of your child's next test. Many teachers hand out detailed review sheets listing all items students need to know for a test. If a teacher doesn't do this, your child should be able to anticipate the focus of the test based on what he or she has been learning in class. Then, work with your child to do the following:

- Develop a plan for studying for the test.
- Carry out the study plan.
- Explore and practice the test-taking skills described on this page.

Standardized Tests

Understand that standardized tests are just one measure of how your child is doing at school. Try not to let low scores get you down. Think of the tests as a way to find out the areas in which your child needs help, rather than as a measure of how smart your child is. Bright children often do not test well. Your child may have poor test-taking skills or may suffer from test anxiety. In that case, your emphasis on the scores may not help him or her to improve. But you can help with that problem. If you have concerns about test scores, talk with your child's teacher.

A great Web site for parents to use as a resource is:
www.familyeducation.com

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