

SIX TYPES OF TEST TAKING ERRORS

By identifying the types of errors you make most consistently, you are able to edit for those errors before turning in a test or an assignment. This allows you to be more efficient in focusing on areas for improvement. You may wish to analyze your errors by using the chart which follows the description of types of errors. You might print this form out to get started, and design your own chart in the future.

Misread direction errors- these errors occur when you skip directions or misunderstand directions, but answer the question or do the problem anyway.

To avoid this type of error, read all directions.

Careless errors- mistakes made which can be caught automatically upon reviewing your work.

To avoid this type of error, watch for simple mistakes, carefully as you review the test.

Concept errors- mistakes made when you do not understand the properties or principles covered in the textbook and lecture.

To avoid this type of error, go back to your textbook or notes and trace through the logic of the principle or concept you do not fully understand.

Application errors- mistakes that you make when you know the concept but can not apply it to a specific situation or question.

To reduce this type of error, learn to predict the type of application requirements that will be on the test.

Test-taking errors- mistakes that you make because of the specific way you take tests, such as:

- a. Missing more questions in the 1st-third, 2nd-third, or last-third of a test

If you find that you miss more questions in a certain part of the test consistently, use your remaining test time to review that part of the test.

- b. Not completing a problem to its last step or not answering a question fully.

To avoid this mistake, review the last step of a test problem or question first, before doing an in-depth test review.

- c. Changing test answers from the correct ones to the incorrect ones

If you are a bad answer changer, then write on your test, "Don't change answers." Only change answers if you can prove to yourself or to the instructor that the changed answer is correct.

- d. Getting stuck on one problem or question and spending too much time.

Set a time limit for each problem before moving to the next problem.

- e. Rushing through the easiest part of the test and making careless errors

If you do this often, after finishing the test, review the easy problems first, then review the harder problems.

- f. In Math or Science, miscopying an answer from your scratch work to the test

To avoid this, systematically compare your last problem step on

- g. *scratch paper with the answer on the test.*
- h. Leaving answers blank

Write down some information or try, at least to do the first step.

Study errors- mistakes that occur when you study the wrong type of material or do not spend enough time studying pertinent material.

To avoid these errors in the future, take some time to track down why the errors occurred so that you can study more efficiently the next time.

Adapted by Dr. Elizabeth Hodes, SBCC Math Dept., from *Winning at Math*, by Dr. Paul Nolting (Academic Success Press, 1998, 800/247-6553).