

Test-Savvy Study Techniques for Math/Algebra

Cognitive:

- Look over the section before it's taught. Watch the MyMathLab videos. Then you have some idea of where the instruction is going, and a "framework" to fit new information.
- Begin preparing the first day of class! Create a chapter organizer (map) to fill in.
- Type your notes or recopy them (esp. if from notetaker), color-code them or some other organizational techniques. Add information from each new section to your "map."
- Create your own practice test using a mixture of homework problems. Put them on flashcards (solution on the back) and shuffle them.
- Memorize: Use chunking techniques for procedures; use association techniques for vocabulary. Use flashcards for formulas.
- Review your notes, chapter organizer, homework problems, and the chapter summaries.
- Teach someone else, or pretend you are. Nothing clarifies information better than figuring out how to explain it.
- Photocopy the teacher's review/practice before working it so you can repeat it.
- Find practice items from other sources (online sites are great! – try Interact Math).
- Test yourself one week before the test. Take it like a test (no answers, no notes) then extra-study what you missed.

Environmental:

- Study in an environment similar to the testing one.
- Work problems on the classroom board – calculator only – to create some anxiety.
- Break up study time. Study in 20-30 minute chunks with 5-10 minute breaks inbetween.
- Schedule your study time, and stick to it!
- Prioritize! (what was easy/ what gave you trouble on your practice test?)
- Seek assistance. If you don't understand a section, find someone who does.
- Develop a study group in order to help each other understand and teach the material.

Motivational:

- Notice what you do well!
- Consider the test a challenge rather than a hassle.
- The higher the grade you aim for, the higher the grade you are likely to get.
- Learn and use relaxation / stress management techniques long before the test.
- Plan something enjoyable to do after the test is over.

Test-Taking:

- "Brain dump" / "Spill it" – when you first get the test, find a space to write down any formulas or information you were making sure you remembered for the test.
- Look over the entire test before you begin, so you can plan your time.
- Do easy items first to build confidence, or difficult items first while you're fresh.
- Mark items with unexpected answers (e.g. fractions in systems) to double check later.
- Use common sense. There are no fractions when you are counting dollar bills.
- If you have time left, use it to check your answers (plug the number back into the problem), or cover the answer to a problem and re-work it. If you get a different answer, find the mistake.