



## November

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### **Theme: How to help students that are poor test takers**

Have you had students that were great in the classroom, but were poor test takers? We run into this all the time. For those who want to go into the Education field they are required to pass three major tests that often become roadblocks to success.

Understand the test and how it is constructed, using the ACT as an example. There are four different sections: English, Reading, Science, and Math. For tests like the ACT, be prepared to take the test multiple times. Prepare for taking the test by using all of the tools available. There are videos, study guides, practice tests, etc. for standardized tests. There are a lot of practice tests available for the ACT so use them to your advantage.

1. Read and pay attention to what is being read. Often the problem is in students not reading and understanding what is being asked.
2. Find a study buddy or two. (Beware: it is important that you focus on studying. Too often we hear students talk about studying for two hours when in reality they talked about the test for 5 minutes and everything else for the rest of the time. Here is a suggestion. Assign one of you to take the lead and to be the task master for that session. That person is responsible for reading the information before hand that will be reviewed and for keeping the focus on what you are there for. Alternate who has this role each time.
3. Learn a little about test construction. There are basic rules about how multiple-choice questions and answers are constructed. By learning a bit about this it can help you more easily weed out the incorrect answers and lead you in a logical way toward the right answer.
4. From the practice tests if you find that you are missing certain types of questions then a). practice doing more questions like that type/content, b). talk with your teachers from that content and let them know of your struggles and ask for their suggestions (hints). You might bring the question missed to the teacher of that content and have them help you figure out what you didn't see.
5. Assume there will be distractions. Some people need to get special accommodations in testing situations – longer time, space without visual distractions, to perform well on tests.
6. For reading sections, read the questions first, then the paragraph and underline those things that you see are connected to what the questions seem to be asking about. That allows you to focus on the things more quickly and use your time for the most difficult problems. Focus on the stem of the question. Answer the question that is asked.
7. For reading questions always figure out first what the main ideas are and where you go to find specific details. That means that when you go back to the content after seeing the question again



you will more quickly find what you are looking for. Focus on the main idea before the details. Note: We have a generation of non-readers. If you don't read much then two things happen when you do. First you become a skim reader and do not pick up the true messages being conveyed. And second you read slower. If you do any type of reading in the month prior to testing it will help to make you a faster reader and help you process information more quickly.

8. Look for correct, concise answers. The ACT does not generally have the longer answers being the right answer. The long answer might be trying to throw you off by making you rationalize why it might be true.
9. Look at questions and answers and match up if it is looking for something positive or negative and if the answers fit that model. Or is the question looking for a plural and the answers are singular. Understanding grammar makes a difference.
10. For math, memorize formulas. This is basic knowledge that you ought to know. Distance, slope, volume, sine/cosine/tangent. Math questions might take longer than a minute per question so it helps to get through the easy ones as quickly as possible to allow more time with those that you find more difficult. If the test you are taking allows the use of a calculator then you need to know how to use it for complex math problems.
11. Science questions focus on the reading and understanding what is being asked.
12. Answer the questions page by page. That way you are turning a long test into many short tests.
13. Watch your time. When you truly don't know and time is running out the answer is more likely to be "B" or "C" than the other answers. Look at the question and see which of these two makes the most sense on questions that you have not been able to figure out.
14. On science questions look at the graph first and try to figure out what it is telling you. Always read the headings. This simple thing is something that is found to have tripped people up when they review what they missed. Then read the content. If you know that this is a weak area then look at a lot of graphs in preparation and figure out what they are telling you. This will help you analyze quickly and do better on the test.
15. If you need to retake the test, use what you learn from the first time to help you prepare for the next. Each ACT test has one section that is a little more challenging than the others and it rotates through which one it will be each time it is administered. Don't count on the luck of a match between what which test will focus on the area you are the strongest in.

**Two books that I was able to buy that were only \$5.00, but worth so much more are:**

- How to ACE any Test: Tips and Techniques to boost your confidence and your test scores on every type of test. (2019). The Princeton Review: Penguin Random House: New York, NY
- The Secrets of Taking Any Test: The Basics Made Easy in 20 minutes a Day (1997). Learning Express: New York.



**Here are some current students' top tips for successfully taking and passing tests:**

- Read the question a couple times and read all the answers before choosing one.
- Flash cards. I use quizlet (<https://quizlet.com/>), but handwritten ones would be good too. Flash cards let you quiz yourself at any time and you make sure you know the information because you can't see the answer when trying to figure out the question. Plus they are super easy to take anywhere especially since you can download quizlet on your phone.
- Begin studying well before the exam so you're learning the information and not just trying to memorize it.
- My test taking tip would be to not wait until the last minute to study. Don't cram all the information in at once at the last possible minute! Instead, try to look over your notes every other night or so, so you learn/retain the information gradually.
- One is I rewrite my notes onto flash cards, so I can relearn the information, and then continue to use the flash cards to study the information again. It is also helpful to study for a little, then take small breaks so you don't wear out your brain. Then keep studying after a small break.
- Get a good night's sleep and eat breakfast. Keeping your mind and body healthy can help you do better on the test.
- I always study my notes and go over past quizzes if I have them. Another study tip I have is if the teacher posts blank worksheets or activities, I do them the night before a test. Sometimes I create my own study guide or worksheet.
- My main recommendation is to study as you are given the information and review as you go along. Learning and continuously reviewing the information will help a lot more with retention than cramming a few days before the exam.
- Study notes every day for 30 mins. This helps when test day comes because then I will remember most of the notes and it will help with memorization. Next, I study a week before the test while listening to classical music. This also helps with memorization and when someone tries to cram all the information in one day you will not retain the information.
- Take handwritten notes, create my own study guide if one is not given by the instructor. Review the study guide multiple days in a row.
- Remove electronic devices, but take studying breaks every 30 – 40 minutes (then you can check your phone) and a second one is to rewrite your notes on paper.
- Talk with someone that is not in the class and tell them about what you learned. Albert Einstein, a pretty smart guy said, "If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough."
- Think of studying as being like your job. Put in the time. To many students think of class as their job and that then their responsibility is over.



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## Adulting for Millennials

Over the past few years there has been an increase in the use of the term Adulting which has been applied to classes that teach basic life skills including cooking, budgeting and time management. For everyone, except for those that have taught or taken Family & Consumer Sciences courses this seems like a new concept. What really is going on and what is the reason for this phenomenon?

By looking at what is said a little more deeply a few things are apparent. Statements such as, “I should have watched more closely when my mother was cooking” might also help us understand the message behind the statement. It could be interpreted as saying they saw things such as cooking as “overly simple” or even mundane and that they were about more important things. It might also mean that the parent might not have been trying to teach these skills to their child. In an era when we are trying to help daughters see the wide range of possibilities for them, rather than brining both boys and girls into the kitchen, we have ended up excusing the girls leaving both genders clueless.

Interestingly this adulting concept has now moved from being taught as workshops at the high school level and workshops in community adult education to now being included on college campuses as a way of helping students acclimate to adulthood and hopefully retaining them within the college experience. It is easier to keep a student enrolled on campus than it is to recruit a new student to campus. Kansas State University has a workshop series this fall that includes: car maintenance, illness care at home, cooking basics & food safety, conflict resolution, health insurance, healthy housing, building good credit and interview etiquette. Wichita State University is offering an “Adulting 101” workshop which includes writing cover letters and creating a resume and interviewing skills.

At Pittsburg State University our Career Services Office provides many necessary resources for students. The Family & Consumer Sciences department has courses that include much of the content that is attempted to be taught within workshop formats.

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## Typical Summer Offerings through Family & Consumer Sciences at Pittsburg State University:

**FCS 203 Nutrition & Health:** This is a basic course in nutrition and healthy living. For those entering teaching through the praxis only route this is one of those essential courses that you would want to take to increase your knowledge and have evidence of gained knowledge.

**FCS 230 Consumer Education & Personal Finance:** Financial literacy is the hottest of topics right now and Family & Consumer Sciences teachers need to keep their knowledge fresh if they are to lead the way in helping the next generations of students. For those entering teaching through the praxis only route this is one of those essential courses that you would want to take to increase your knowledge and have evidence of gained knowledge.



**FCS 480 Dynamics of Family Relationships:** This is a required course for students in all of our programs and would be valuable for any FCS teacher looking to refresh their knowledge in this area. While this is an undergraduate course it can be taught as a special topics for those needing graduate credit.

**FCS 580/780 Family Violence and Child Abuse:** This course is taught at both the undergraduate and graduate level and is a good fit for any teacher looking to better understand at risk students. It is not a required course for teacher education students at the undergraduate level but has been highly recommended by returning teachers who have wished it had been a part of their undergraduate teacher preparation.

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## Curriculum Sources:

### Fun ways to teach about human development:

<https://classroom.synonym.com/creative-teaching-human-growth-development-8479507.html>

### Fun ways to teach Budgeting:

<https://outlook.office.com/mail/inbox/id/AAQkADE2MjNiNTIILWVIYWMtNDM1MS1hMzNKLWM0MDA4NjRINmU3NQAAQAF4RefW78KIJuKYhzxUZO4g%3D>

<https://www.moneyinstructor.com/budgeting.asp>

### Fun ways to teach about Consumer Education:

<https://www.greatideasforteachingmarketing.com/category/consumer-behavior/>

<https://www.thesimpledollar.com/discussion-what-should-be-part-of-a-high-school-consumer-education-curriculum/>

Fun ways to teach about Nutrition: (to many times teachers forget that they can take something designed for younger children and make it more advanced or to turn their students into the teachers.)

<https://www.superhealthykids.com/parenting/tools-for-teaching/>

<https://www.teachhub.com/classroom-activities-promote-nutrition-health>



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<https://www.pittstate.edu/fcs/>

