

Words of Wisdom

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."

Theodore Roosevelt

"There is no greater joy, nor greater reward than to make a fundamental difference in someone's life."

Sister Mary Rose McGeady

"It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer."

Albert Einstein

"There are two ways of exerting one's strength: one is pushing down, the other is pulling up."

Booker T. Washington

Happy Birthday!

October

- 1 Kayla Meyer
- 24 Angelina Paris
- 26 Zachery Clark
- 28 Andrew Nielsen

November

- 1 Kayla Meyer
- 1 Elliott Petersen
- 2 Tiara Wright
- 4 Charles King
- 10 Chalonda Hackett
- 10 Azline Nelson
- 20 Mercedez Houston
- 24 Steve Shumaker
- 30 Janeece Hodge

December

- 6 Tanea Galloway
- 12 Darius Miller
- 14 Michelle Abben
- 15 Patrice Mayo

Use Test-Taking Strategies

In order to do well on any test, you must study hard and be prepared. Having done that, you can further improve your test performance by using these test-taking strategies.

Get off to a good start.

Have everything you need for the test (pencil, erasable pen, calculator, etc.). If you have a couple of minutes before the test starts, try to relax. Think about something else or talk to your classmates. As soon as you get your test, write anything that you want to remember (facts, dates, equations, formulas, memory aids, etc.) in light pencil at the top of your test. Put your name on your test, and READ THE DIRECTIONS carefully.

Develop a plan.

Before you begin answering questions, quickly look over the entire test and develop a plan. For example, if a one hour test has 25 multiple-choice questions and 2 essay questions, you could plan 10 minutes for the multiple-choice questions, 20 minutes for each essay question, and 10 minutes to check over your answers.

Mark the questions that you want to return to.

As you go through the test, put a dot or light check mark by any answer you're not sure of. After you've gone through all of the questions, go back to the ones you've marked and try them again. Don't panic if you don't know the answers to the first few questions. Sometimes it takes a few minutes for your brain to get in gear. Chances are you'll know the answers when you come back to them. If you're not sure of an answer, always go with your first instinct.

Increase your odds on multiple-choice questions.

- As you're reading a multiple-choice question, try to come up with the answer in your head before you look at the answer choices.
- If you're not sure of an answer, eliminate the choices you know are incorrect by crossing them out. Then, make an educated guess.
- If two of the choices are similar or opposite, one of them is probably the correct answer.
- Read all of the answer choices. At least a couple of the answers will probably sound like they could be correct; don't be tempted to mark the first one that sounds good.
- Use the test to help you take the test. Sometimes questions give you information that can help you answer other questions.

Look for key words in True/False questions.

Statements with *always*, *never*, *every*, *all*, and *none* in them are usually false. Statements with *usually*, *often*, *sometimes*, *most*, and *many* in them are usually true. Read True/False questions very carefully; one word will often determine whether a statement is True or False.

Know how to approach essay questions.

- Read each question and then start with the easiest one. This will give you confidence, and you'll have time to think about how to answer the harder questions. Note how many points each essay is worth, and adjust the time you allot to each question accordingly.

- Before you do any writing, brainstorm. Jot down the key words, ideas, and points that you want to cover in your answer. If you have time, organize these ideas and points into a simple outline; if not, just number them in the order you want to present them.
- Begin writing. Write legibly, and use clear, concise, complete sentences. Studies have shown that when two identical essays are graded, the one that's easier to read gets the higher grade. In your opening paragraph, restate the question, and tell the reader what he/she can expect to learn from your essay. In your middle paragraphs, present examples, details, evidence, and facts to support the points you're making. In your final paragraph, restate the most important points, draw conclusions, and write a brief summary. Finally, reread your entire essay and make corrections.
- If you don't know the answer to an essay question, take a couple of minutes to write down what you do know about that subject. You may hit on something and get partial credit. If you don't have time to complete an essay, write your teacher a note explaining that you ran out of time, and then briefly list the points you would have covered. Again, you might get partial credit.

Improve your math test scores.

- Before you start to solve a problem, try to estimate what the answer will be.
- If you're having difficulty with a problem, try drawing a picture or diagram.
- Don't spend too much time on one problem. If you get stumped, go on, and come back to it later.
- Show all of your work. Even if you get the wrong answer, if you were on the right track, you may get partial credit.

Be prepared for open book tests.

During an open book test, you must be able to locate information quickly. To help you do this:

- Highlight your notes
- Put post-it notes or bookmarks in your textbook to help you location important information
- Rewrite all of the information you know you'll need on a separate sheet of paper.

Check your answers.

If you have time, check all of your answers, even the ones you know are correct. You may have made a careless mistake. *Always use all of the time that you're given to take a test; do not rush through!*

Go over all returned tests.

Once your test is returned, go over each question you missed and write in the correct answer. You may see one or more of these questions again. Also check to make sure that your test was graded correctly. Teachers are human and sometimes make mistakes. Keep a record of your test score, and keep returned tests in your folder.

To Review:

- Get off to a good start.
- Develop a plan.
- Mark the questions that you want to return to.
- Increase your odds on multiple-choice questions.

- Look for key words in True/False questions.
- Know how to approach essay questions.
- Improve your math test scores.
- Be prepared for open book tests.
- Check your answers.
- Go over all returned tests.

See a Classic Upward Bound staff member for more assistance on developing test-taking strategies.

Director's Letter: Academic Achievement

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit. –Aristotle

Academic achievement – whether it is in high school or college – is not wholly, or even mostly, based on intellect. Work ethic, dedication, communication, and preparation are keys to academic success. Here are some ways to develop these skills to improve your success in the classroom, no matter what your IQ:

You must be in school, on time, every day. When you miss school, you miss lectures, notes, class discussions, assignments, quizzes, and tests. It doesn't matter how good you are about making up your work; you can never make up all of what you miss, even when you're out of school for only one day. You therefore need to decide that you will be in school every day. Unless you have an extended illness or a chronic health problem, you should miss no more than five or six days of school a year, if that.

You must learn how to adapt to different teachers. In the classroom, the teachers are in charge and they make the rules. You may have one teacher who says you're tardy if you're not in your seat when the bell rings, and another teacher who considers you on time if you've got one foot inside the door. It doesn't matter whether or not you agree with the first teacher's rule; it only matters that you are in your seat when the bell rings. The tardy (poor grade, argument, etc.) is not going to affect the teacher, it is going to affect you. Part of your education is to learn how to adapt to different personalities, teaching styles, and expectations.

You must be prepared for each class. To be prepared, you need to have books, paper, etc. with you when you go to class. You also need to have all of your homework done. When you've done your homework, you get more out of the class, the lecture makes more sense, and you can participate in class discussions. If you haven't done your homework, you may not even understand the lecture and class discussions. There is a reason the teacher asked you to do it. Being prepared also means that you're ready to learn. Try taking a couple of seconds as you walk into each class to think about what you did last class and what you're going to be doing today. If you need a reminder, glance at your assignment book or syllabus. This will make it easier for you to shift your attention and to focus on the subject when the class starts. Of course, to be physically and mentally alert, you need to eat right, exercise, and get enough sleep.

You must sit in the front of the class if possible. It is easier to pay attention and to stay involved when you sit in the front of the classroom. It's also easier to ask questions and to see the board, overheads, etc. Studies have shown that students that sit in the front get more positive

attention from the teacher, as well. All of these reasons are why Upward Bound students are encouraged to sit in the front! If you've been assigned to a seat in the back of the classroom, ask your teacher if it would be possible for you to move closer to the front.

You must be aware of your body language and nonverbal behavior. You've heard the phrase, "Actions speak louder than words." This is very true in the classroom. When teachers are up in front of a class, they see everything. They know who is paying attention, taking notes, and listening to the class discussion. They also know who is doing homework for another class, writing personal notes, daydreaming and napping (even when students think they've positioned their hands and/or books to hide it. If you choose to do any of these things, don't kid yourself into thinking that your teachers don't notice and that it doesn't affect your grade – even if they don't say anything. Teachers do notice and they conclude that you don't care about what's going on in their class. It's not enough for you to say that you want to get good grades (especially when you only say it at the end of the semester); your body language and nonverbal behavior have to communicate this also.

You must always do your homework. Do not look at homework as something you should do for someone else (i.e. your teacher); think of homework as something you must do for yourself. Since a significant portion of your grades in high school is based on homework, your grade drops every time you miss an assignment. Not doing homework is the number one way to kill your grade! Even if college, when homework is not allowed factored into your grade, when you do not do it you are not as prepared for tests, papers, and projects. Always have homework completed on time and, whenever possible, do extra credit work. You never know when those extra points will come in handy and it shows your teachers that your grades are important to you.

You must participate in class. Many teachers give participation points. Those that don't, probably still factor your involvement in the class into your grade somehow. These are easy points to get, and participating in class helps keep you focused. Even in a class you don't particularly like, participating makes the time go much faster than tuning out. It also makes the class more interesting.

You must be a good group member. The number one reason people get fired from their jobs is because they can't get along with the people they work with. It's therefore not surprising that businesses are encouraging schools to teach students how to work together in small groups. When you have to do a group project, do your share of the work and do it well, accept that everyone is different and try to be open to all ideas, and support the other members of the group. You will rarely be on a team on which everyone likes everyone, but you can still respect each other and do a good job.

You must treat others with courtesy and respect. It sounds cliché, but you need to treat your teachers and classmates the same way you would want to be treated. Be polite; look at your teachers when they're speaking; listen when others are talking. Also, be very aware of the tone of your voice. The same words, in a different tone of voice, can communicate a very different message. Remember that teachers are people too. They enjoy having students say hello to them in the halls and they appreciate it when students show an interest in them. For example, if a teacher's been out ill, a simple comment like, "I hope you're feeling better." can brighten that teacher's day. Teachers also appreciate it when students make positive comments (e.g. "I like the

book we're reading."). A thank you is, of course, always appreciated (e.g. "Thanks for the extra help. "). Contrary to popular opinion, this is not "sucking up" or "brown-nosing". This is being considerate and appreciative of another human being.

You must involve your parents. Make your parents your allies. When a parent asks you what you did in school, tell them. They'll love the fact that you're talking to them about school – and will be more prepared to answer questions or concerns. Whenever possible, let your parents help you with your homework and studying. You can ask them to drill you on vocabulary words, read over a paper you've written, listen to you practice a speech, and/or help you study for a test. You'll get better grades, your parents will appreciate you giving them the opportunity to help, and they'll see for themselves that you're really trying to do well in school. If you are having a problem with a subject, teacher, class, or fellow student, let your parent know. They can help you deal with whatever the situation is and, if necessary, they can intervene on your behalf. Classic Upward Bound staff members are another resource for help studying and dealing with any problems that arise.

Success does not come to people on a silver platter. Anything worth having is difficult to obtain – and an education definitely falls into that category. In order to get where you want to go in this world, you must be willing to work for it. **All Upward Bound students are capable, but it is what you do with those capabilities that will make all the difference in your life.**