

MCAS Test-Taking Tips

Letter from the Acting Principal

Christine Barrett

Special points of interest:

- General Test Taking Tips
- Math MCAS Test Taking Tips
- ELA and Reading Comprehension Test Taking Tips
- Science and Technology Test Taking Tips



Sterling Middle School is proud to present to you its first ever MCAS Test Taking Tip Booklet. Faculty and Staff members have taken the time to produce this booklet for your assistance. We all know how stressful

MCAS time is. The purpose of this booklet is to help students along the way. Inside you will find general test taking tips, along with specific ELA, Reading, Math, and Science and Technology Tips. Please take the time to read this booklet with your child. If you have any questions or concerns, please call Sterling Middle School at (617) 984-8729.



MCAS Testing occurs every year. Please see the Quincy Public Schools Website for additional information.
www.quincypublicschools.com

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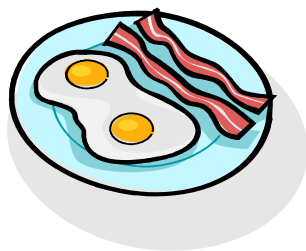




Be sure your child goes to bed early!!!



*“Shoot for the moon.
Even if you miss it you
will land among the
stars.”
Les Brown*



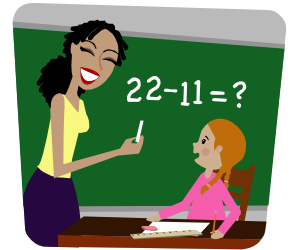
Make sure your child eats a full breakfast.

General Test Taking Tips

- ◆ Get a good night’s sleep.
- ◆ Have a good breakfast.
- ◆ Dress comfortably.
- ◆ Read and follow the directions carefully.
- ◆ Pace yourself, know how many questions are on the test.
- ◆ Be prepared to work for the entire test session.
- ◆ Skip problems you are having trouble with, BUT make sure you mark them to go back when you have finished the other test items.
- ◆ Read all the options and choose the “best answer,” don’t choose the first answer that seems reasonable – read all the choices to find the best answer.
- ◆ Mark your answers carefully.
- ◆ If you aren’t sure, guess wisely - eliminate as many answers as possible.
- ◆ Check your accuracy.
- ◆ Use any remaining time to check your work and go back to any difficult items.

Tips for Answering Multiple Choice Questions

- ◆ Read all the answers before making a selection.
- ◆ Look at the verb in the question.
- ◆ Look for singular and plural words in the question that require answers in the same form.
- ◆ Eliminate answers that are obviously wrong.
- ◆ Always put something down (You'll get more points for an educated guess than skipping the question).



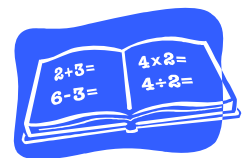
Please read the question, then re-read the question.

*“Chaos breeds life,
while order breeds
success.”*

Franklin P. Adams

Other Tips

- ◆ If you are using an answer sheet, make sure you have marked only one answer for each question.
- ◆ Erase changes or other markings completely.
- ◆ If you decide to skip a question, be sure to skip it on the answer sheet.
- ◆ Generally, your first impression is the correct one.
- ◆ Neat work scores higher than sloppy work—Write Legibly!



Take your time.

MCAS Test Taking Tips and Strategies for ELA and Reading Comprehension

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Reading Passages



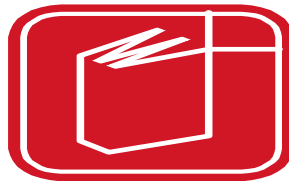
- ⇒ Read the directions and underline what you need to do.
- ⇒ Read the passage to understand the general content.
- ⇒ Reread the passage and highlight important information, including words in italics.
- ⇒ Find the main idea and put it into a sentence.

Answering Multiple Choice Questions

- ⇒ Read the question.
- ⇒ Read all answers to the question.
- ⇒ Go back to the reading selection and highlight important details.
- ⇒ Eliminate any incorrect choices.
- ⇒ Check to make sure that you are marking the correct number on your answer document.

Answering Open Response Questions

- ◆ Read the prompt to get the main idea.
- ◆ Reread the prompt and ask yourself, “What is it that I must answer?”
- ◆ Look for the five “W’s” who, what, where, why, when and how to determine how to answer the question.
- ◆ Make sure that you underline the question and answer all parts of the prompt.
- ◆ Look for specific vocabulary words that tell you what you are supposed to do, such as: **analyze, cite, compare, contrast, decide, describe, draw, explain, express, generalize, illustrate, interpret, list, paraphrase, point out, respond, review, show, state, summarize, support, and tell (Please see Pgs. 7-8).**
- ◆ Restate the question carefully and include the title and author if necessary.
- ◆ Make sure that your response has enough evidence to back up your answer.
- ◆ Make sure that your answer does not contain unrelated details.
- ◆ Proofread your answer and make any necessary corrections, such as: spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.
- ◆ Be sure to use quotations if you are taking sections directly from the passage.



Answering Long Comprehension Questions

- ◆ For the MCAS exam, you will only have time to write a rough draft and a final draft.
- ◆ Read the writing prompt carefully and figure out what you are being asked to write.
- ◆ Plan your essay carefully before you begin to write.
- ◆ Brainstorm ideas and choose the idea that you will be able to strongly support.
- ◆ Decide how many paragraphs are needed.
- ◆ An essay is well organized when it has a clear beginning, middle and end and when its ideas are logically organized.
- ◆ BACK IT UP (BIU)—use examples to explain your answer.
- ◆ Remember to answer all parts of the question.



Common Vocabulary used in MCAS Testing

Analyze: to separate into parts and explain

Argue: to prove points by using facts

Cause and Effect: to tell what happened and why

Cite: to quote as an example

Compare and Contrast: to find the similarities and differences

Convey: to carry out or transfer information

Criticize and Evaluate: to find the strengths and weaknesses

Decide: to make a choice

Define: to explain exactly what something means

Describe and Discuss: to tell all you know

Draw: to come to a conclusion

Explain: to tell how and why

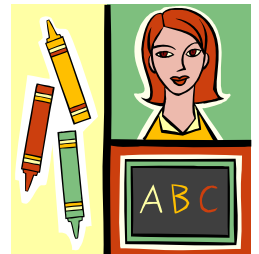
Express: to make your opinion or feelings known

Generalize: to summarize without going into details

Identify: to recognize and explain

Illustrate: to give examples

Interpret: to explain the meaning in your own words



Common Vocabulary used in MCAS Testing Cont.

Justify: to argue in support of something

List: to write a series of names or numbers in a row

Paraphrase: to restate the meaning in your own words

Point out: to show an exact detail or meaning

Prove: to show correctness by using fact

Respond: to give an answer

Review: to reexamine the main points or highlights of something

Show: to give information

State: to express in words

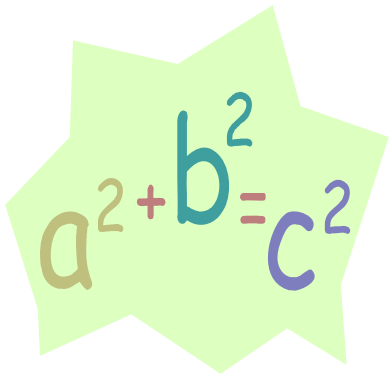
Summarize: to pull together the main point

Support: to provide evidence

Tell: to say or make known in words

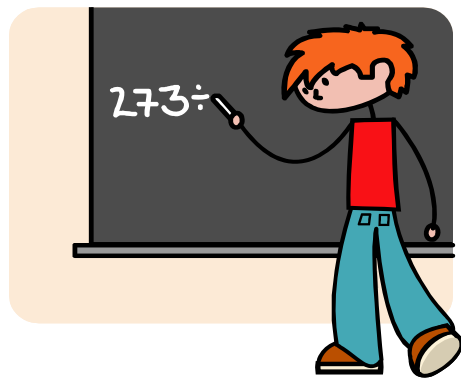
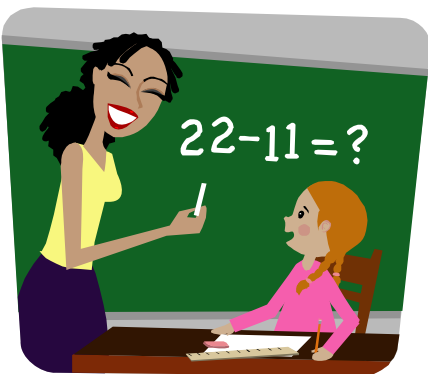
Trace: to list chronologically in order




$$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$$



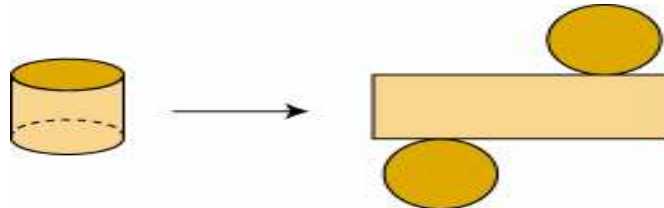
TEST TAKING STRATEGIES TO ANSWER OPEN RESPONSE MATH QUESTIONS



LOOK OVER THE GRAPHIC

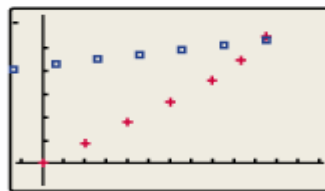
Graphic: The use of charts and pictures instead of words.

Examples:



No. of minutes	0	10	20	30	40	50	60
Keep-in-Touch	\$20.00	\$21.00	\$22.00	\$23.00	\$24.00	\$25.00	\$26.00
ChitChat	\$0.00	\$4.50	\$9.00	\$13.50	\$18.00	\$22.50	\$27.00

(a)



(b)

READ, READ, AND REREAD THE OPEN RESPONSE QUESTION

Read the open response question more than once before you start to solve the problem. Read the question slowly and carefully.



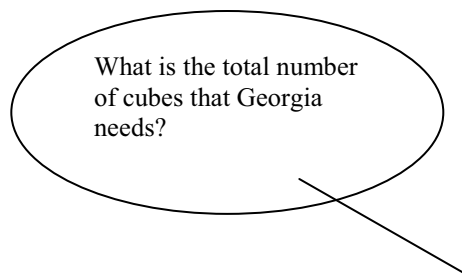
Keep reading the question as you are solving the problem.

Q THE QUESTION

Put a Q around what is being asked in the problem.

Example:

Georgia is going to fill the entire box with her cubes. What is the total number of cubes that Georgia needs? Show or explain how you got your answer.



UNDERLINE OR HIGHLIGHT THE KEY INFORMATION

Examples:

Jeremy had some bricks that he was going to use to build a short wall on his patio, next to his garden. Each brick is 8 inches long, as shown below. What is the total length of a row of 4 bricks? Show your work or explain how you got the answer.

[_____ 8 in. _____]



LABEL AND CLEARLY SHOW ALL



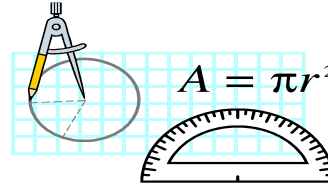
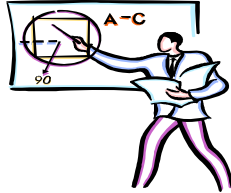
Example:

1 brick is eight inches long. Then the length of four bricks is:

Total length = 4 bricks x 8 inches

Total length = 32 inches

Include Formulas, Drawings, Math Vocabulary and be Specific: Give Examples



Example:

What is the area of a rectangle that has a length of 12 feet and a width of 2 feet?

$A = L \times W$ (The area of a rectangle equals length times width)



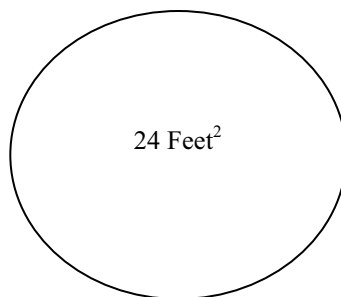
$A = 12 \text{ feet} \times 2 \text{ feet}$

$A = 24 \text{ feet}^2$

RESTATE THE QUESTION OR THE PROMPT

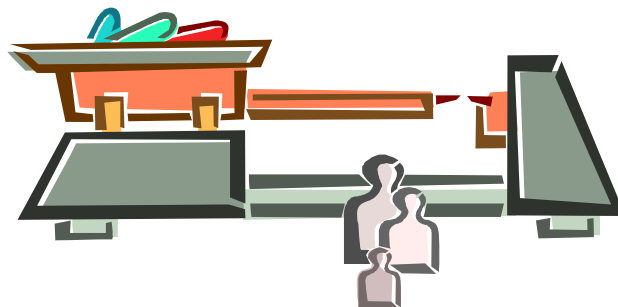
The area of a rectangle that has a length of 12 feet and a width of 2 feet is 24 feet².

DID I ANSWER THE QUESTION THAT WAS ASKED? IF YOU DID, CIRCLE THE FINAL ANSWER WITH THE CORRECT UNITS



FINAL WORDS OF WISDOM

Take a deep breath before you read the open response question.
Clear your mind and follow the tips given and you will be able to answer the question.
Good Luck!!!



Tips for Taking Science/Technology MCAS Tests


1. Read and reread the question.
2. Clearly show all the steps you've taken to get answer.
3. Label all answers.
Don't forget your units.
Make sure labels make sense.



Ex. Mass answers in grams or kilograms, not liters or meters

4. $D = m/v$ - means - Density = mass divided by volume
 $S = d/t$ - means - Speed = distance divided by time

Be sure to use formulas correctly.



Sterling Middle School
Format for Final Drafts
(all Grades)

FCA's
_____pts
_____pts
_____pts

Name
School Name
Date
Division

(Skip three lines)
Title

(Skip three lines)
Indent

Guidelines to follow:

All drafts must have proper heading
Indent all paragraphs
Rough drafts skip lines
Final draft typed in size 12 font, or written in blue or black pen

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