

Test Anxiety: Classroom Tips

View *Managing Test Anxiety: Tips for Students*: [[web page](#); [pdf document](#)]

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It is very common for students to become nervous or anxious when they must take quizzes and tests. While some students suffer from true test phobias, many experience anxiety in testing situations simply because they have not adequately prepared for the exam.

There is some good news here: most students can master test-anxiety and improve their performance on exams by following a basic plan: develop good study habits, take advantage of effective techniques to memorize content, take steps to relax during the test, and use smart test-taking strategies.

This intervention is built around a handout, *Managing Test Anxiety: Ideas for Students* [[web page](#); [pdf document](#)]. The next section shows one possible framework for introducing efficient testing skills to the entire class.



Steps in Implementing This Intervention:

Step 1: Introduce Testing Goals. Write the following headings on the board:

- *Goal 1: Practice Effective Study Habits*
- *Goal 2: Memorize Content*
- *Goal 3: Stay Calm During Tests*
- *Goal 4: Use Effective Strategies When Taking the Test*

Tell the class that you want to find out what techniques that they have found to be effective when preparing for or taking tests. Introduce each of the four headings on the board with a brief comment about how important that concept is for doing well on tests. When introducing the concept 'memorizing content', for example, you might tell the class, "A major reason that schools give tests is to see if students can recall information, ideas, and concepts that were taught. So committing information to memory is an important part of learning."

Jim's Hints for Using...

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 **Use the Handout as a Self-Study Reference.** If you are pressed for time or teach older students who are fairly responsible and self-directed, you may decide just to pass out copies of the handout and have students read it on their own. (Remember, though, that you will probably see much better outcomes if you at least use the handout as a starting point for a classroom discussion about effective test-taking skills.)

Collect Classroom Ideas to Put Together Your Own Test-Tips Guide. If your students come up with lots of creative ideas about how to get ready for and take tests, consider giving the class a group assignment to type up the suggestions into their own handout. These ideas could then be shared with other classrooms!

Step 2: Write Down Student Test Preparation Ideas. For each of the headings, have the students generate as many ideas as they can for accomplishing that goal. Write student responses on the board. Give students several minutes to read through all of the ideas. For each goal, instruct students to write down the top 2-3 ideas that they think would work best for them.

Step 3: Have Students Write Their Own 'Test-Readiness Plan'. Pass out copies of *Managing Test Anxiety: Ideas for Students* [[web page](#); [pdf document](#)]. Instruct students to read through the handout. As a homework assignment, direct each student to write up his or her own personalized 'Test Readiness Plan'. The plan should be organized according to the four goals posted on the board. Under each goal on their plan, students should include 4-5 ideas that they think are most likely to work for them. (Ideas can be selected from those generated in class or tips from the handout.) Instruct students to save this plan for future reference.

Step 4: Encourage Students to Try Out Skills. As the next quiz or test in your course approaches, remind students to use the elements of their personal Test Readiness Plan. After the test, ask students to share what strategies they found to be most effective when getting ready for and while taking the test.

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