



LEARNING TO LIVE WITH TESTS

HOSA members are surrounded by tests. As a student enrolled in Health Occupations/Health Science Education courses, tests are everywhere you turn. Unit tests, mid-term exams, final exams...and the list goes on and on.

And it doesn't end there. What about all those HOSA tests? Every year HOSA prepares 26 tests for the National Leadership Conference. That's a lot of tests!

WHY SO MANY TESTS?

Health Occupations/Health Science Education and HOSA have a responsibility to students when it comes to preparing them for a career in the health professions. A reality of the health professions is that most careers require that graduates pass a test in order to be certified, registered, or licensed.

THE ULTIMATE TEST

The ultimate test is the one you take that allows you to reach your dreams. Doctors, nurses, and most health professionals must pass a test in order to practice their profession.

The year is 1985. It took Maria five years to complete her BSN at a major university. Now, \$40,000 in debt and her wedding three weeks away, she anxiously waits for the mail to arrive with the scores from her nursing state board exam. College wasn't easy for Maria, and she had

no financial support from her family, but what she did have was a dream of being a nurse.

Now, it all comes down to the results of a test.

If she passes the test, she will have the job of her dreams in the newborn ICU, and she will have financial security.

If she fails, she will be reduced to the status and pay of a nursing assistant.

Did Maria pass the test? Yes. Maria was an active member of HOSA and participated in the Medical Terminology event. She never placed in state competition, but she did develop skills in test-taking, and an understanding of how important test-taking skills are in order to reach one's goals.

Maria was not a "great" student and always struggled with tests, but she was willing to work at it to get better. She knew that college would take a great deal of hard work and perseverance and learned ways she could help herself become a better test-taker.

Remember, the tests you take now are preparing you for success on that ultimate test. Learn to take advantage of the opportunities that HOSA competitive events offer in developing your test-taking skills.

TIPS FOR TAKING TESTS

Research shows that students who have good attitudes about testing have higher levels of achievement than students who do not have good attitudes about testing. It is beneficial to learn to approach tests as a challenge rather than as the enemy.

Students must have a basic understanding of what will be measured on a test and what is expected of the test taker. HOSA competitive event guidelines include test plans to help the HOSA member understand what will be on a test.

Students benefit when they have an opportunity to become familiar with the format of the test. Students should have practice with:

- The type of questions that will be asked, and how to deal with each type.
- Following directions.
- Performing under time constraints – to include using their time wisely and pacing themselves appropriately.
- Terms and vocabulary used on a test.

HOSA members are encouraged to take every opportunity available to participate in competitive event tests and become comfortable with the test-taking process.

Students must learn how to deal with test anxiety. (See the "Strategies for Success on HOSA Tests.")

Students should practice with any tools they will be expected to use on the test. (calculators, computers, etc.)

Students should have an understanding of how the test will be scored. They should know that with HOSA tests they will not be penalized for an incorrect answer or for guessing.

HOSA members must understand that HOSA tests are written from a national perspective using designated event resources. All members in the event take the same test, providing an equal playing field. Therefore, rest assured that if the test seems difficult to you, it will seem as equally as difficult for all of the other competitors.

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**On the Day of the Test**

SLEEP. Not during the test, the night before the test. You can't stay up talking all night and be mentally alert in the morning.

EAT. A light breakfast is a good idea if the test is in the morning. If eating before a test is not your "thing", try a glass of juice. Some test-takers find that the stimulant effect of caffeine (coffee, soft-drinks) helps them stay alert.

EXERCISE. We're serious. The best cure for butterflies is physical activity. If you can run, swim, or walk before you shower and dress for your test, you might just find the physical activity relaxing.

GET TO THE TEST EARLY AND THEN RELAX. Try visualizing something positive or pleasant. Imagine yourself walking along the beach, hiking up a mountain trail, or doing something with someone you love. Plan a trip with friends in your head. Deep, positive thinking will help you relax. Don't talk to others about the test, it will only increase your anxiety, and you won't learn anything five minutes before the test begins.

READ THE DIRECTIONS TWICE.

START WITH THE EASIER QUESTIONS. Skip the difficult questions and come back to them later. With as hard as you studied, the answers will eventually come to you.

BE SCANTRON-SMART. Some competitors prefer to answer all the questions by circling the correct response on the test booklet and then carefully transferring those answers to the Scantron form. If you want to bubble the Scantron form as you go, BE SURE you are keeping up with the right number.

MAKE EDUCATED GUESSES. Learn how to eliminate choices until you arrive at the best possible answer on a multiple choice test. Some students find it helpful to cover the answers, read the stem, and think about what the question is asking – BEFORE looking at the answer choices.

WEAR A WATCH. Know how much time you have, and pace yourself. Don't rush through the test. If you have time, review your answers – but only change an answer if you are absolutely sure the change is the right answer.

PEPPERMINTS. Put a few peppermints in your pocket and pop one in your mouth during the test. We understand there is something in peppermint that will perk you up and calm your nerves. And it really works!

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS ON HOSA TESTS

Make a plan for studying for the test. Write down what you will study and as well the amount of time you plan to study. Put it on your calendar. As you complete each planned study session, check it off. You'll be able to see your progress, and following a plan will keep you from putting it off until the last minute.

Plan to Win. Never plan for second best. If you're taking a classroom test, do what you think you need to do to get an "A." In a HOSA event, study enough to win the event. Never settle for less.

Find a study buddy. Study partners or groups can be very effective, and fun, if the others are as serious about success as you are. Reward yourselves (pizza?) after a successful study session.

Develop an athlete's attitude. Just get out and do it! No pain, no gain. Winners never quit and quitters never win.

Self talk. Don't label yourself as a "bad test taker." Instead, talk to yourself about how well you've prepared, how much you know, and how smart you really are. Believe in yourself. Tell yourself you can do anything you set your mind to do. Repeat positive statements to yourself, over and over. Write them down. Using positive self talk will help prepare your mind for success.

Reward yourself after the test – not because of your test performance but because you prepared well and did your best.