Help Your Kids Get Better Test Grades

Have a more hate-than-love relationship with test-taking? How about your kid? Go ahead, ask-and don't be surprised if negatives like forgetting and failure outweigh such positives as easy and success. For most, tests are akin to tooth drilling without Novocain, but you can improve the odds. Before resorting to bribery or grounding-neither of which holds much promise-go on a fact-finding mission to uncover what test-taking strategies, if any, are already in place. For instance, is test preparation last minute? Are objective and essay tests studied for identically? And, during tests, does your child sometimes ignore the directions and plunge in without first also scanning the whole exam? Meanwhile, does she ever complain about forgetting studied material and/or running out of time? Is panic ever mentioned? If "yes" is answered to even a couple of these scenarios, it's time for some revamping. First, remind your child that everything from listening in class and taking notes to doing homework and assigned readings helps prep for tests. So does asking questions in class. Also suggest finding out test dates in advance and scheduling several review sessions, instead of cramming the night before, which inevitably invites forgetting. He should also find out the test type: multiple choice, true/false, essay, etc., and then engage in self-quizzing. Other effective steps include taking lecture and textbook notes, making flash cards, and studying alone and out loud; recitation is the most effective study technique around. Afterward, you can do some quizzing, too. Finally, eating well and getting plenty of rest are essential for learning as memory is impaired by poor nutrition and lack of sleep. By being thus well-prepared and rested, your child should feel more confident on test day-and that's half the battle. For added measure, try a "lucky" pen/pencil or an article of clothing that's brought past success. Then share these tried and true test-taking strategies, too: 1. Get to class quickly for a moment's unwinding. 2. Avoid last minute test-talk with friends, as it can cause confusion. 3. Read and listen carefully to all directions, underlining key words and following them exactly. 4. Scan all questions first, planning time according to the type, number, and difficulty of the questions. 5. Respond to easier questions first to insure these will be answered before time runs out--but read all of them. Along the way, it's actually possible to find answers to more difficult items elsewhere in the test. 6. Place a faint mark beside any skipped questions, tackling these later if time permits. 7. Answer all items, making educated guesses on difficult items instead of leaving them blank. 8. Be careful about changing answers. Research suggests that first responses are usually, though not always, correct. 9. Make sure handwriting is legible-and use capital letters on matching tests. 10. Ignore other test-takers. Those who finish first can be very unsettling. Instead, use all the time allotted and double check answers. But don't stop there. Tests are both measures and great learning tools, so afterward, your child should answer these questions: 1) I think I did well/just okay/blew it because . . .; 2) The easiest thing about this test was . . .; 3) The hardest thing was . . .; 4) I was well-prepared/fairly prepared/unprepared, and so from now on I . . . The final step is to see that returned tests are corrected and mistakes understood. And that's it-except, of course, for the sustained effort successful test-taking demands. It's certainly worth it, though. As William James once said, "If you care enough about the result, you will certainly attain it."

About the Author

Fast Facts About Sports Nutrition. Water, Water Everywhere You can survive for a month without food, but only a few days without.

Source: http://www.productsherbal.com