

## READING & LISTENING PRACTICE

### PUT TO THE TEST

Some students bring good luck charms to school on test days. They might keep a four-leaf clover in their pocket or wear a pair of lucky underwear. While these things can't hurt, there are better ways of doing well on a test.

Writing a test is like running a marathon. Both activities require you to do your best for a long time. There are a couple of strategies you can use to stay relaxed, focused and motivated for the whole test.

Runners train before a big race. They practice their skills in the same conditions they will face in the marathon. You can train for a test in a similar way. For a reading test, there may be comprehension questions on vocabulary, main idea, details, cause and effect, sequence and inferences. You may also be asked to summarize the text. For a writing test, you will likely be asked to write a paragraph about a given topic. The topics will often involve describing something, explaining how to do something, telling a story about something, or giving your opinion about something. The goal of a test is usually to independently apply the skills you have learned and practiced in class.

Just like before a big race, it is a good idea to take care of your basic needs before the test begins. For example, get plenty of sleep the night before. During the day of the test, get enough to eat. Go to the bathroom ahead of time. These things will help you focus.

When you get the test, don't forget to put your name on it. Then, take a quick look at each page. A long test may have different sections. Notice how many marks each section is worth. Like a runner, you will want to be careful about your pace. If you have a limited amount of time to complete the test, you will want to leave yourself enough time for the sections that are worth the most marks.

Now you are ready to begin answering the questions. Read the instructions and questions very carefully. Make sure you understand what you are being asked to do. If you do not understand a question, ask your instructor. If you feel nervous, you may want to build your confidence by starting with the questions that are easiest for you.

Some runners use positive self-talk when they are struggling. They tell themselves things like, "I feel good about myself and my abilities. I am not going to worry. I will do the best that I can." Give this strategy a try. You can also take short brain breaks between sections to take some deep breaths, roll your neck and shoulders, and massage your temples.

During a reading test, it can help to do a quick pre-reading exercise you have been taught,

even if it is not part of the instructions. For example, try scanning the text to figure out the topic before you read the whole thing more carefully. Then think about what you already know about the topic. Predict the details that might be in the reading. For a writing test, pre-writing is a very important first step. Brainstorm your ideas and organize them before you start writing. Some students skip these two things, but they probably shouldn't. These activities warm up your brain so that it will work more efficiently.

Before you hand in your test, review your answers. Unlike a marathon, it doesn't matter who finishes first during a test. Check your grammar and spelling. Make sure your instructor will be able to read your handwriting. Finally, be sure that you answered every question.

Follow these tips and, if your lucky underwear doesn't work, you will have a solid back-up plan in place.

**1. Why are scanning and pre-writing important when you take a test?**

- A. They give you confidence.
- B. They help you to understand the instructions to each section of the test.
- C. They warm the brain so it will work better.

**2. The article is mainly about \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A. how marathon runners usually do well on tests
- B. how to prepare for a marathon
- C. how to do well on a test

**3. Why does the author think writing a test is like running a marathon?**

- A. They are both rewarding experiences if you do well.
- B. There are a couple of strategies you can use to prepare for both of them.
- C. You have to do your best for a long time when you run a marathon or take a test.

**4. How should you start preparing for a test?**

- A. Think about the kinds of questions you might see on the test.
- B. Think of a back-up plan in case your lucky charm doesn't work.
- C. Do relaxation exercises.

**5. How does the author feel about lucky charms?**

- A. Some can help you get a high score on a test, but others can't.
- B. They can help you get a high score on a test.
- C. They don't hurt, nor do they help when you take a test.

**6. What is not listed as something to do before taking a test?**

- A. Go to the bathroom.
- B. Get lots of sleep the night before a test.
- C. Get enough to eat the day before the test.

**7. What good luck charm is not mentioned in the reading?**

- A. wearing a sweater inside out
- B. having a four-leaf clover in your pocket
- C. wearing a pair of lucky underwear

**8. What is not listed as something to do if you are not confident you will do well on a reading test?**

- A. Massage your temples and take deep breaths.
- B. Start with the easiest questions.
- C. Do a pre-writing exercise.

**9. Why is it important to think about the topic when you begin a reading test?**

- A. It helps you to predict the details that might appear in the reading.
- B. It helps you to organize your ideas.
- C. It helps to relax you and build your confidence.

**10. What is the first thing to do when you get a test?**

- A. Start answering questions in the section that is worth the most marks.
- B. Put your name on it.
- C. Check to see how many marks each part of the test is worth.