

FINAL Week FCAT Prescription for Success

Do students ...?

Q. Know how long of each day of testing (computer based and print) will be?

A. 70 minutes each day, 140 minutes total

Q. Know how many items will be on FCAT 2.0 Reading and the FCAT 1.0 and 2.0 Reading Retake?

A. 50-55 items including the field-test items

Q. Know what percentage of points will be dedicated to each of the 4 reporting categories?

A. 15-25% Vocabulary; 20-30% Reading Applications, 20-30% Literary Analysis, 25-35% Informational Text & Research Process

Q. Know what percentage of points will be dedicated to each of the 3 cognitive complexity levels?

A. 10-20% low complexity; 45-65% moderate complexity, 25-35% high complexity

Q. Have a positive attitude about the FCAT and know what a passing score (FCAT level 3+) will do for them?

A. A passing score on FCAT will give you the opportunity to take higher-level courses needed for graduation or to boost your transcript. You have room in your schedule for electives (such as Band or Drama) that you may be interested in next year. You will not be placed in a reading class. You will be more prepared for college and career. You will meet one of your critical high school graduation requirements.

Q. Have a strategy for dealing with test fatigue and time management with the length of passages, the amount of text (words), and amount of questions during each day's assessment window?

A. Plan your time and divide the 70 minute testing window into blocks of time based on the number of passages and number of questions for each passage. Scan the test to confirm that the test does not go on forever and that, of course, it can be completed in the time allotted! Scan the test to see if there is a passage on a familiar or interesting topic that might be easier to tackle first and help build your confidence for success on the test.

Q. Have a strategy for answering all 55 questions?

A. Some people advise to read the questions first and then the passage. Others advise reading the passages first, then the questions. The research jury is mixed on which approach is most effective in a limited, timed testing situation. The most important thing is that you have practiced both and use the process that has worked best for you.

Q. Know what to do when you are stuck?

A. Don't let certain questions throw you off. Reread the question to make sure you understand what is being asked. Answer stems are often written in pairs. Try to eliminate individual answer stems or a pair of answer stems that are not completely right. Remember, all answer stems will be plausible. Be aware when you are erasing and changing your answers a lot. It's good to review and make sure that you haven't made any careless mistakes, but sometimes your first instinct turns out to be the best one. If you are still stuck, mark or circle the question and move on. You can always come back to a question later.

Q. Have a strategy for responding to unfinished items when they are out of time?

A. Leave no blanks, no unanswered questions. There is no penalty for guessing. If you are really out of time, mark all unanswered questions with the same answer letter such as "B".

Q. Know when you are really done with the test?

A. When you complete the last item on the test, you are not done. Go back to review your answers, making sure that you didn't make any careless mistakes, such as putting the right answer in the wrong place or skipping a question. Spend the last few minutes of testing time going back over the hardest questions or answering any unanswered questions.

And don't forget the importance of this simple but time-honored advice for students and parents:

Get a good night's sleep.

Start testing day with a good breakfast.

Allow enough time to get ready in the morning and arrive at school on time.

Do not cram. The FCAT is a critical thinking test. The answers are all in the text itself. You just have to read the lines, read between the lines, and if necessary, read beyond the lines to make inferences about the answers. You cannot memorize facts or "cram" for FCAT.

Have a positive attitude and just try to do your best.