

The DETER Strategy for Taking Tests

To do well on a test, you must have good knowledge of the information that is being tested. But you must also have a strategy for taking the test that allows you to show what you know. The DETER strategy can help you do your best on any test. Each letter in DETER reminds you what to do.

D = Directions

- Read the test directions very carefully.
- Ask your teacher to explain anything about the test directions you do not understand.
- Only by following the directions can you achieve a good score on the test.
- If you do not follow the directions, you will not be able to demonstrate what you know.

E = Examine

- Examine the entire test to see how much you have to do.
- Only by knowing the entire task can you break it down into parts that become manageable for you.

T = Time

- Once you have examined the entire test, decide how much time you will spend on each item.
- If there are different points for items, plan to spend the most time on the items that count for the most points.
- Planning your time is especially important for essay tests where you must avoid spending so much time on one item that you have little time left for other test items.

E = Easiest

- The second **E** in DETER reminds you to answer the items you find easiest first.
- If you get stuck on a difficult item that comes up early in the test, you may not get to answer items that test things you know.

R = Review

- If you have planned your time correctly, you will have time to review your answers and make them as complete and accurate as possible.
- Also make sure to review the test directions to be certain you have answered all items required.

Using the DETER strategy will help you do better on tests and get better grades.