

Test-Taking Tips and Strategies “Cheat Sheet”

“Fly-Over”: refers to skimming or “flying over” the passage and questions when first approaching a section in order to gain a general idea of what the passage is about and what the questions will be asking. It is important that this is done quickly – the focus is on gaining a general idea only! We have practiced focusing on the title and the first sentence or two of each paragraph for the fly-over and have found it to be very helpful in most cases.

“Bag-n-Tag”: Refers to circling (“bagging”) the part of the passage related to a particular question, and then writing the number beside to “tag” it. This can make the task of re-reading much less daunting, as well as help students to more easily identify a part of a passage that may help them answer a particular question.

“Read-n-Weed”: Though this can be used in several ways, it generally refers to reading a question carefully and weeding out the answer(s) that are obviously incorrect. For example:

64. Eli wrote down how many lunches were served at his school each week for five weeks.

2,003 1,909 1,882 2,107 1,999

Which shows these numbers in order from least to greatest?

- A. $1,882 < 1,909 < 1,999 < 2,003 < 2,107$
- B. $2,003 < 2,107 < 1,909 < 1,999 < 1,882$
- C. $2,107 < 2,003 < 1,999 < 1,909 < 1,882$
- D. $1,882 < 1,999 < 1,909 < 2,003 < 2,107$

After reading the choices, choices B and C could quickly be weeded out because they begin with a 2,*** number, which indicates that the numbers in these choices are clearly not ordered least to greatest. This strategy helps to quickly decrease the number of choices a student has to analyze.

“Skip the Trip”: Refers to skipping hard or confusing questions. Too many times students get “tripped up” on these types of questions and become frustrated or spend too much time on a single question. Students will be taught some “red flags” that might signal a need to skip and come back, as well as how to mark that they need to come back.

“Watch the Little Things”: simply refers to looking at each answer carefully when answers seem very similar. This may be used in conjunction with Read-n-Weed or independently. A specific example might be the following:

26. Read Sentence 3.

When danger is present, they will give their life to protect their masters.

What is the correct way to write this sentence?

- A. When danger is present, they will give their liffes to protect their master.
- B. When danger is present, they will give their lives to protect their masters.
- C. When danger is present, they will give their lifes to protect their masters.
- D. When dangers is present, they will give their life to protect their masters.

At first glance, Sentence 3 and all these answers appear to be the same (and correct), especially to a 3rd or 4th grade student. It’s the “little things” that make them different (spelling, grammar). I can also think of several punctuation examples from last year’s TCAP Practice book.

In addition to these things, we will also discuss reading and following directions, good “survival” tips for that week (and any school week!), and maintaining a positive attitude as part of our intro lesson and as we cover the main strategies I’ve identified above.