



Unit 8

Taking Tests

Activities

- 8-1 The DETER Test Taking Strategy
- 8-2 Learning About Multiple-Choice Tests
- 8-3 Doing Well on Multiple-Choice Tests
- 8-4 Doing Well on True/False Tests
- 8-5 Demonstrating Mastery of True/False Tests
- 8-6 Learning About Matching Tests
- 8-7 Doing Well on Matching Tests
- 8-8 Learning About Completion Tests
- 8-9 Guidelines for Taking Completion Tests
- 8-10 Learning About Essay Tests
- 8-11 Direction Words in Essay Test Items
- 8-12 Practice Writing a Response to an Essay Test Item
- 8-13 Reviewing Your Response to an Essay Test Item
- 8-14 What I Have Learned



Activity 8-1: The DETER Test Taking Strategy

You will be learning about five types of tests in this unit: multiple-choice, true/false, matching, completion, and essay. **DETER** is a strategy that will help you to do your best when you take each of these types of tests. Each letter in DETER stands for a step in the strategy. Read the following information to learn what to do for each step in DETER.

D Read the test **Directions** carefully. Be sure that you know what you have to do to complete the test. Ask your teacher to explain anything about the directions you do not understand.

E **Examine** the entire test to see how much there is to do. This will help you to establish a mental set for taking the test.

T Plan how much **Time** to spend answering each item. You can do this by dividing the number of minutes you have to take the test by the number of items. If all of the items do not count for the same number of points, plan to spend more time on those items that count for the most points.

E Answer the items you find **Easiest** first. By doing this, you will be able to answer the questions you are sure about before time runs out.

R **Review** your answers to be sure they are your best answers. Be sure that you have answered all required items.

Answer the following questions.

1. What does the second **E** stand for in the DETER strategy?

2. What can examining all the test items before answering the items help you to do?

3. Why should you answer the items you find easiest first?

4. If all items count for the same number of points, what is a good way to determine how much time you should spend answering each item?



Activity 8-2: Learning About Multiple-Choice Tests

A **multiple-choice** test contains items that consist of a stem (a question or an incomplete statement) and several *answer choices* from which you are to choose the correct choice. Typically there are four answer choices that are represented by the letters a, b, c, and d, or as (1), (2), (3), and (4).

Look at the following example of an item in which the stem is presented as a question. You should select “a” as the answer choice that correctly answers the question.

Which one of the following was a result of the Industrial Revolution in Europe?

- a. The growth of the middle class.
- b. An increase of nomadic herding.
- c. A decline in urban population.
- d. A decrease in international trade.

Here is an example of the same item with the stem presented as an incomplete statement. In this form, the missing part of the statement can appear anywhere in the statement. You should select “a” as the answer choice that correctly completes the statement.

_____ was a result of the Industrial Revolution in Europe.

- a. The growth of the middle class
- b. An increase of nomadic herding
- c. A decline in urban population
- d. A decrease in international trade



Unit 8: Taking Tests

Activity 8-2: Learning About Multiple-Choice Tests (continued)

Sometimes you will find more than one missing part in a statement. Here is an example for which (3) is the correct answer choice.

If there is nothing to absorb the energy of sound waves, they travel on _____, but their intensity _____ as they travel further from their source.

- (1) erratically - mitigates
- (2) eternally - alleviates
- (3) indefinitely - diminishes
- (4) forever - increases
- (5) steadily - stabilizes

Sometimes, one of the answer choices in a multiple-choice item is “all of the above.” Look at the following example. In this example, “all of the above” is the correct answer choice because all of the countries shown as answer choices are in South America.

Which of the following countries is in South America?

- a. Bolivia
- b. Uruguay
- c. Argentina
- d. Ecuador
- e. all of the above



Unit 8: Taking Tests

Activity 8-2: Learning About Multiple-Choice Tests (continued)

Other times, one of the answer choices is “none of the above.” Look at the following example. In this example, “none of the above” is *not* the correct answer choice because Italy is in Europe. For “none of the above” to be the correct answer choice, none of the countries shown as answer choices could be in Europe. The correct answer choice in this case is (3).

_____ is a country in Europe.
(1) Bolivia
(2) Uruguay
(3) Italy
(4) Ecuador
(5) none of the above

Use the information in the box that follows to write two multiple-choice test items. Your first item should be an incomplete statement followed by four answer choices. Your second item should be a question followed by four answer choices.

<i>Year:</i> 1876
<i>Event:</i> Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone

1. _____
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____



Unit 8: Taking Tests

Activity 8-2: Learning About Multiple-Choice Tests (continued)

2. _____
- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

Now, use the information in the box that follows to write a multiple-choice item for which one of the answer choices is “all of the above.” When writing the item, “all of the above” does not have to be the correct answer choice.

Bears, skunks, chickens, turtles, and piranhas are carnivores. Cows, elephants, iguanas, fruit bats, and manatees are herbivores.

3. _____
- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____
- (4) _____
- (5) _____



Unit 8: Taking Tests

Activity 8-2: Learning About Multiple-Choice Tests (continued)

This time, use the information in the box that follows to write a multiple-choice item for which one of the answer choices is “none of the above.” When writing the item, “none of the above” does not have to be the correct answer choice.

The United States, England, Canada, Mexico, and India were part of the Allied Forces during World War II. Germany, Japan, Italy, Hungary, and Romania were members of the Axis Powers during this war.

4. _____
a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____
e. _____
5. **Now, write some information from one of your textbooks or your class notes that you can use to create a multiple-choice item. Write the information here.**

6. **Now, write a multiple-choice item that is based on the information you just wrote.**
a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____
e. _____



Activity 8-3: Doing Well on Multiple-Choice Tests

Here are some guidelines that will help you to do your best when taking a multiple-choice test. Read these guidelines. Use them when you take the practice multiple-choice test that appears later in this activity and whenever you take a multiple-choice test.

- **Carefully read the test directions.** Usually you are asked to choose the *correct* answer choice. But sometimes you are asked to choose the *best* answer choice. When asked to choose the correct answer choice, there is only one choice that is correct. When asked to choose the best answer choice, there may be more than one answer choice that could be considered correct; you must select the choice that is better than the others.
- **Circle or underline important words in the statement or question.** Doing this will help you to make certain that you have read the statement or question carefully. This will help you to focus on the information needed to identify the correct answer choice.
- **Read all of the answer choices before selecting one as the correct choice.** Do not simply select the first answer choice that appears to be correct. One of the answer choices that follows might be the correct answer choice. The same guideline holds true when you are to select the best answer choice. The first correct choice you come to may not be the best one.
- **Cross out any answer choices that you are certain are incorrect.** Each incorrect answer choice is a distracter from the correct choice. Crossing out answer choices that you are certain are not correct will eliminate them as distracters and will help you to zero in on the correct choice.
- **Look for answer choices that contain absolute terms such as *all*, *always*, *never*, and *none*.** Answer choices that contain absolute terms are usually incorrect because there are almost always exceptions to anything. Answer choices that contain qualifiers such as *often*, *usually*, and *in certain cases* are more likely to be the correct choice.
- **Look for two answer choices that are opposites.** When two of the answer choices are opposites, one of them is likely to be the correct choice.
- **When answering an item, look for hints about the correct answer choice in other items on the test.** Sometimes the correct answer choice for an item is contained in the stem of another item on the test.
- **Look for answer choices that contain language used by your teacher or found in your textbook.** An answer choice that contains such language is often the correct choice.



Unit 8: Taking Tests

Activity 8-3: Doing Well on Multiple-Choice Tests (continued)

- **Look for grammatical clues.** For example, if the stem of an item ends with the indefinite article *an*, the correct or best answer choice probably begins with a vowel. Also look for subject-verb agreement clues.
- **Look for verbal associations between the stem and an answer choice.** An answer choice that includes key words or terms that are part of the stem is often the correct choice.
- **Select “all of the above” as an answer choice only if you are certain that all of the other answer choices are correct.** If even one of the other answer choices is incorrect, “all of the above” is not the correct answer choice. As a rule of thumb, if you are certain that at least two of the other answer choices are correct, “all of the above” is likely to be the correct answer choice.
- **Select “none of the above” as an answer choice only if you are certain that all of the other answer choices are incorrect.** If even just one of the other answer choices is correct, “none of the above” is not the correct answer choice.
- **Do not change your answer unless you become certain that a different answer choice is correct.** More often than not, your first choice is the correct answer choice. Research suggests that when students change their answer choice, they usually change from the correct choice to an incorrect choice.
- **Do not look for a pattern of correct answer choices based on the order in which the answer choices are presented.** The order of correct answer choices within items is usually random.
- **When the answer choices are numbers, choose one that is in the middle of the numerical range.** Answer choices that are at the upper or lower extreme of the range are usually incorrect.
- **Answer all items unless there is a penalty for incorrect answers.** If there is a penalty for incorrect answers, then answer only the questions for which you are certain about the answer. Guessing may not be beneficial to you. If there is no penalty for incorrect answers and you cannot make even an educated guess as to the correct answer choice, go with “b” or “c”. Research has shown these to be the correct answer choice more often than are “a” or “d.”



Unit 8: Taking Tests

Activity 8-3: Doing Well on Multiple-Choice Tests (continued)

Take the following multiple-choice test. This test is based on the guidelines for taking multiple-choice tests that you just read about in this activity.

Directions: Circle the letter in front of the answer choice you believe is correct. There is no penalty for incorrect answers.

1. When should you select an answer choice as the correct answer choice?
 - a. After you have reread the statement or question.
 - b. As soon as you come to what you think is the correct answer choice.
 - c. After you have crossed out one answer choice.
 - d. After you have read all of the answer choices.
2. Choose “all of the above” as the correct answer choice when _____
 - a. all of the other answer choices are correct.
 - b. some of the other answer choices are correct.
 - c. most of the other answer choices are incorrect.
 - d. none of the other answer choices are correct.
3. You should _____ an answer choice when you decide it is not the correct choice.
 - a. choose
 - b. cross out
 - c. reread
 - d. rewrite
4. Change your answer choice only when you are sure a different answer choice is _____
 - a. shorter.
 - b. correct.
 - c. longer.
 - d. incorrect.



Unit 8: Taking Tests

Activity 8-3: Doing Well on Multiple-Choice Tests (continued)

5. Which type of term in an answer choice usually means that the choice is incorrect?
 - a. A confusing term.
 - b. A scientific term.
 - c. A mathematical term.
 - d. An absolute term.
 - e. None of the above.

6. Sometimes you can find a hint about the correct answer choice by _____
 - a. counting the number of words in the stem.
 - b. counting the number of words in each answer choice.
 - c. looking at your answer choices for other items.
 - d. looking at other items on the test.

7. An answer choice is likely to be correct if it contains _____
 - a. words found in popular magazines.
 - b. information from a newspaper.
 - c. language used in your textbook.
 - d. words you do not understand.

8. When should you answer all items?
 - a. When you don't understand some of the items.
 - b. When you are running out of time.
 - c. When there is no penalty for incorrect answers.
 - d. When there is a penalty for incorrect answers.



Unit 8: Taking Tests

Activity 8-3: Doing Well on Multiple-Choice Tests (continued)

9. Choose “none of the above” as the correct answer choice when _____
- all of the other answer choices are correct.
 - some of the other answer choices are correct.
 - none of the other answer choices are correct.
 - most of the other answer choices are incorrect.
10. When two answer choices are _____, one of them is usually correct.
- easy
 - opposites
 - difficult
 - short
11. When there is no penalty for incorrect answers and you have no idea as to which choice is correct, choose ___ or ___.
- a or c.
 - b or c.
 - a or d.
 - b or d.

Score your test as your teacher goes over the answers with you. Your score for the test is your number correct. Enter your score in the box below to see how well you did.

My Score _____

10-11 = Excellent

8-9 = Good

0-7 = Review the guidelines presented in this activity



Activity 8-4: Doing Well on True/False Tests

Items on a **true/false** test require you to read a statement and then decide if the statement is *true* or *false*. True/false test items seem easy since you have a 50/50 chance of guessing the correct answer. However, true/false test items can be difficult because they test for very specific knowledge.

Here are some guidelines that can help you to do your best when taking a true/false test. Read these guidelines and use them when you take the practice true/false test later in this activity and whenever you take a true/false test.

- **Try to prove each statement false.** It is easier to prove that a statement is false than to prove that it is true. Select *false* if any part of the statement is false.

Read this next statement. The statement is false because although coal is made up of carbon, tar, and oils, it is not made up of salt.

Coal is a fossil fuel that is made up of carbon, tar, oils, and salt.

If all parts of the statement are true, select *true*. Read the following statement. The statement is true because all four of these musical instruments are percussion instruments.

Drums, bells, cymbals, and gongs are percussion instruments.

- **Carefully reread statements that contain a negative word such as *not* or a word that begins with a negative prefix such as *unreliable*.** Negative words such as *not* or negative prefixes such as *un* completely change the meaning of a statement.

For example, the following two statements look very similar, yet the first statement is true while the negative word *not* makes the second statement false.

Green plants are the only plants that produce oxygen and make their own food.

Green plants are not the only plants that produce oxygen and make their own food.

In the following two statements, the second statement is *false* because of the prefix “dis” that begins the word “distrust.”

You should trust an honest man.

You should distrust an honest man.



Unit 8: Taking Tests

Activity 8-4: Doing Well on True/False Tests (continued)

- **If a statement has two negatives, cross out both negatives.** Two negatives make a positive, but in a confusing way. Crossing out the two negatives will make it easier for you to understand the meaning of the statement. Read the two statements that follow. The second statement is easier to understand as true because the negatives *not* and *do not* have been crossed out.

You will not succeed in life if you do not apply yourself.

You will ~~not~~ succeed in life if you ~~do not~~ apply yourself.

- **Absolute statements are usually false. Qualified statements are usually true.** Absolute statements include words such as *all*, *none*, *always*, and *every*. Qualified statements include words such as *some*, *many*, *usually*, and *most*.

Read the following two statements. The absolute word *all* in the first statement makes the statement false. Replacing the absolute word *all* with the qualified word *some* in the second statement makes the statement true.

All metals are solid at room temperature.

Some metals are solid at room temperature.

- **If you are uncertain whether a statement is true or false, make your best guess unless there is a penalty for incorrect answers.** If there is a penalty for incorrect answers, then answer only the questions for which you are certain about the answer. Guessing may not be beneficial to you. If there is no penalty for incorrect answers and you cannot make even an educated guess, select *true*. Research has shown that *true* is more often the correct answer than is *false*.



Unit 8: Taking Tests

Activity 8-4: Doing Well on True/False Tests (continued)

Take the following true/false test. This test is based on the guidelines for taking true/false tests that are presented in this activity.

Directions: Circle TRUE or FALSE in front of each statement. There is a one-point deduction for each incorrect answer.

- | | | |
|------|-------|---|
| True | False | 1. Qualified statements are usually true. |
| True | False | 2. If there is a penalty for incorrect answers, make your best guess. |
| True | False | 3. Absolute statements are usually false. |
| True | False | 4. If a statement has two negatives, you should cross out one of the negatives. |
| True | False | 5. If you are not certain that a statement is false, do not consider it true. |
| True | False | 6. You should never reread a statement when taking a true/false test. |
| True | False | 7. Most parts of a statement must be true for the statement to be true. |
| True | False | 8. A negative word can completely change the meaning of a statement. |
| True | False | 9. It is easier to prove that a statement is true than to prove that it is false. |
| True | False | 10. All things being equal, more statements are true than false. |

Score your test as your teacher goes over the answers with you. Subtract your number incorrect from your number correct to get your score for the test. Enter your score in the box below to see how well you did.

My Score _____
9-10 = Excellent
7-8 = Good
0-6 = Review the guidelines presented in this activity.



Activity 8-5: Demonstrating Mastery of True/False Tests

Read the following information about India.

India is located in South Asia, where it fronts the Bay of Bengal on the southeast and the Arabian Sea on the southwest. It is a constitutional republic consisting of 28 states, 6 union territories, and the Delhi national capital territory, which includes New Delhi, its capital. India is the second most populous country, after China. Direct administration by England began in 1858. After Mohandas Ghandi helped end British rule in 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru became India's first prime minister. India is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. It is home to many religions and sects, innumerable castes and tribes, and hundreds of major and minor linguistic groups from several language families that are unrelated to one another. India has played an increasing role in global affairs in recent years. It has a well-developed infrastructure and a highly diversified industrial base. Its pool of scientists and engineers is one of the largest in the world. India's cultural impact is seen in its exports of music, literature, and cinema. India has expanded its agricultural base, and even today, the country's population remains largely rural.

Based on the information you just read about India, write true/false items as directed.

1. Write an item that is a qualified statement.

2. Write an item that contains a negative word or term.

3. Write an item in which everything in the statement is true.

4. Write an item that is an absolute statement.

5. Write an item in which at least one part of the statement is not true.

6. Write an item that contains two negatives.



Activity 8-6: Learning About Matching Tests

A **matching** test requires you to match items in a left-hand column (first column) with items in a right-hand column (second column). The items in the first column are termed *premises* and are assigned numbers. The items in the second column are called *responses* and are assigned letters (typically capital letters).

Here is an example of a matching test for which the answers are provided.

Directions: On the line next to each person in the first column, write the letter of the accomplishment of that person. Use each accomplishment just once.

Person	Accomplishment
1. <u> D </u> Thomas Edison	A. Composed famous waltzes
2. <u> A </u> Johann Strauss	B. Developed polio vaccine
3. <u> C </u> George Washington	C. First president of the United States
4. <u> B </u> Jonas Salk	D. Patented many inventions

Sometimes there are more items in the second column than in the first column. This means that not every item in the second column can be used as a match for an item in the first column. Here is an example of this type of matching test with the answers provided.

Directions: On the line to the left of each writer in the first column, write the letter of the genre in which that person is known for writing. Do not use a genre more than once.

Writer	Genre
1. <u> D </u> Agatha Christie	A. Children's books
2. <u> E </u> Stephen King	B. Humor
3. <u> A </u> Dr. Seuss	C. Religion
4. <u> B </u> Erma Bombeck	D. Mystery
5. <u> G </u> Ray Bradbury	E. Horror
	F. Romance
	G. Science fiction



Unit 8: Taking Tests

Activity 8-6: Learning About Matching Tests (continued)

Read the following information about world capitals.

Quite often the capital city of a country is famous, such as Paris, France. Here are some capitals that are not very well known in their own right: Nicosia, Cypress; Accra, Ghana; Doha, Qatar; Zagreb, Croatia; Reykjavik, Iceland. There are many capitals that you have probably never heard of such as the following: Monrovia, Liberia; Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia; Dhaka, Bangladesh; Antananarivo, Madagascar. The challenge is not only to remember these capitals, but to spell them as well.

Use this information to write a matching test in which capitals are to be matched to countries. Include at least six items, with more capitals than countries. Do not forget to include directions for taking the test. Use the space below to write your test.



Activity 8-7: Doing Well on Matching Tests

Here are some guidelines that will help you to do your best when taking a matching test. Read these guidelines and use them when you take the practice matching test in this activity and whenever you take matching tests given by your teachers.

- **Read all of the words or terms in both columns before making any matches.** If you make the first match that looks correct, you may not choose the correct match.
- **Start by making matches for the information about which you are certain.** This will reduce the number of choices for the matches about which you are not certain.
- **Cross out items in both columns as you make matches.** This reduces the information you will have to consider when making subsequent matches.
- **Make your best guess at the remaining matches only when there is no penalty for incorrect matches.** If there is a penalty for incorrect answers, then make matches only when you are certain they are correct. Guessing may not be beneficial.
- **Carefully review your matches when you have completed the test.** Reviewing the matches you made is important because an incorrect match may result in another match being incorrect.



Unit 8: Taking Tests

Activity 8-7: Doing Well on Matching Tests (continued)

Take the following matching test about the guidelines for taking matching tests you learned about in this activity.

Directions: On the line to the left of each Beginning of a guideline for taking matching tests, write the letter found next to the Ending that completes the guideline. There is no penalty for incorrect matches.

- | Beginning | Ending |
|---|---|
| 1. _____ Read all the words or terms in both columns | a. when you have completed the test. |
| 2. _____ Make your best guess for the remaining matches | b. before making any matches. |
| 3. _____ Cross out items in both columns | c. only after you have made your matches. |
| 4. _____ Start by making matches | d. only when there is no penalty for incorrect answers. |
| 5. _____ Carefully review your matches | e. that seem the most difficult. |
| | f. for the information about which you are certain. |
| | g. as you make matches. |

Score your test as your teacher goes over the answers with you. Your score is your number correct. Enter your score in the box below to see how well you did.

My score _____

5 = Excellent

4 = Good

0-3 = Review the guidelines presented in this activity.



Activity 8-8: Learning About Completion Tests

A **completion** test consists of statements that have one or more parts missing. A missing part of a statement can be anywhere in the statement and is shown by a blank line. You are required to complete the statement by writing the correct word or words on the blank line.

Here are examples of completion test items in which missing parts appear in different parts of the statements. The correct answers are shown in ().

1. Of the 4,000 to 5,000 languages in the world, (Chinese) is the language spoken by the greatest number of people.
2. (Cheetahs) can run faster than any other animal.
3. The main reproductive parts of a flower are the female (carpel) and the male (stamen).

Read the following information about the city of Philadelphia.

Philadelphia was founded by William Penn in 1682. It is located in southeastern Pennsylvania, at the confluence of the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers. Philadelphia was the capital of Pennsylvania from 1683-1789 and the capital of the United States between 1790 and 1800. Philadelphia's population grew in the 18th century, with many immigrants from Scotland, Ireland, and Germany. Philadelphia was the largest and most important city in the United States during the 19th century and was a center of the antislavery movement prior to the Civil War. The Pennsylvania Hospital founded in Philadelphia in 1751 was the first hospital in the United States. Philadelphia is also the site of the oldest art museum in the nation; the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts was founded there in 1805. Philadelphia was the birth place of American banking, and the first building and loan association was founded there. One of the first subway systems in the United States was established in this city in 1907. Philadelphia is very proud of the privately endowed University of Pennsylvania which was founded there in 1740. This university opened the nation's first medical school in 1765. If you are in Philadelphia, be sure to visit the Philadelphia Zoo. This zoo was founded in 1740 and is the oldest zoo in the country. Be sure to check out its 1,600 specimens representing 400 species.



Unit 8: Taking Tests

Activity 8-8: Learning About Completion Tests (continued)

Write a six-item completion test based on the information you just read about Philadelphia. Place your blank lines in different parts of the statement. At least one of your items should have two or more blank lines. Write the test in the space provided here.



Activity 8-9: Guidelines for Taking Completion Tests

Here are some guidelines that will help you to do your best when taking a completion test. Read these guidelines and use them when you take the practice completion test in this activity and whenever you take completion tests given by your teachers.

- **Read the statement and try to identify the information that is missing.** On a piece of scrap paper or in the margins of the test paper, write several pieces of information that you think may be missing from the statement.
- **Select the answer that best completes the statement.** Review the information you wrote on scrap paper or on the test paper. Select and write the information that you think best completes the statement.
- **Read the completed statement to be sure it makes sense.** If the completed statement does not make sense with the information you wrote, replace what you wrote with other information you wrote on scrap paper or the test paper.
- **Read the completed statement once more to be sure it is grammatically correct.** If the completed statement is not grammatically correct, what you wrote is probably incorrect and needs to be changed.
- **Use the length of the blank line as a clue to the length of the answer.** Short blank lines may mean that only one word is needed to complete the statement. Longer blank lines may mean that more than one word is needed to complete the statement. This guideline does not work when the length of each blank line is the same throughout the test.
- **Do not guess at an answer when there is a penalty for incorrect answers.** This guideline is particularly important for completion tests because you must produce the correct answer rather than just recognize it. Having to produce an answer increases the possibility that your guess will be incorrect.



Unit 8: Taking Tests

Activity 8-9: Guidelines for Taking Completion Tests (continued)

Take the following completion test. This test is based on the guidelines for taking completion tests that you learned about in this activity.

Directions: Complete each statement by writing the missing word or words on the blank line or lines. There is no penalty for incorrect answers.

1. The completed statement should be _____ correct.
2. Use the length of the _____ as a clue to the length of the answer.
3. Guessing at the answer to a completion test item may not be _____ to you when there is a _____ for incorrect answers.
4. Write the answer that best completes the _____.
5. Read the statement and _____ about what information could be missing.
6. Sometimes the answer is one word; sometimes it is _____.
7. _____ the entire statement including your written answer to be sure it makes sense.

Score your test as your teacher goes over the answers with you. Your score is your number correct. Enter your score in the box below to see how well you did.

My score _____

7 = Excellent

5-6 = Good

0-4 = Review the guidelines presented in this activity.



Activity 8-10: Learning About Essay Tests

An **essay test** requires you to respond to items by using extended writing. You must recall and organize information you know in order to respond to an essay test item.

Here are the steps to follow when responding to an essay test item.

Step 1. Read the essay test item to learn what you must do.

Sometimes an essay test item is presented as a question that you must answer. Here is an example of an essay test item that is presented as a question.

How does electricity make your life easier?

Often an essay test item is presented as a statement containing a direction word that tells you what you must do to respond to the item. Here is an example of this type of item. It contains the direction word *justify*.

Justify the need for inspection of food processing plants.

You will learn about this direction word and others in others in Activity 8-11. It is a good idea to underline the direction word so that you focus your attention on what it tells you to do.

Step 2. Think about the information you should include in your response. It is helpful to write some notes on a piece of scrap paper or on a corner or back of the test page.

Step 3. Organize the information into an outline that contains main ideas and supporting details. Number the main ideas in the order in which you plan to include them in your response. For each main idea, number the supporting details in the order in which you plan to present them.

Step 4. Write your response. Write legibly so that your teacher can easily read your response. Begin with an introduction in which you state your main point to be made and how you intend to respond to the item. Keep your introduction short. The bulk of your time should be spent on responding to what is asked by elaborating on the information you organized in Step 3. Use language that is clear and direct. Be sure to include all of the important information. Where appropriate include terms used in your textbook and by your teacher. Provide as many examples and facts as possible to support what you write. Conclude your response by restating both your main idea and what you did to respond to the item.



Unit 8: Taking Tests

Activity 8-10: Learning About Essay Tests (continued)

- Step 5.** Reread your response to make sure that you responded to what the item required.
- Step 6.** Check your spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Some teachers deduct points for errors in these writing mechanics.

Answer these questions.

1. Does every test item include a direction word?

2. If you are not allowed to use scrap paper, where can you write your notes?

3. Why should you check your spelling, grammar, and punctuation?

4. What should your introduction consist of?

5. How should you organize the information you will include in your response?

6. What should your conclusion consist of?

7. Why should you reread your response to an item?

8. Do essay test items require you to recognize information, or do they require you to recall information?



Activity 8-11: Direction Words in Essay Test Items

As noted in Activity 8-10, essay test items are often presented as a statement that contains a **direction word**. Here are common direction words you will often find in essay test items. Read the list below to learn what each direction word tells you to do. An example of an essay test item that contains the direction word is provided.

Analyze Break something into its separate parts. Show how the parts relate to each other to make the whole.

Analyze how blood circulates through the human body.

Compare Tell how two or more things are similar and different.

Compare electrical energy and nuclear energy.

Contrast Tell how two or more things are different.

Contrast the platform of the Republican Party with that of the Democratic Party.

Discuss Consider and debate or argue the pros and cons of an issue.

Discuss the proposal of some scientists that the United States should expand its space exploration efforts.

Define Explain the meaning of something in a brief manner.

Define what is meant by the expression “two heads are better than one.”

Describe Present a full and detailed picture of something in words. Include information about the characteristics of the thing you are describing.

Describe what it must have been like to live during the Great Depression.

Explain Provide reasons and facts to make something very clear and understandable.

Explain the system of checks and balances in American government.

Illustrate Provide concrete examples to explain something.

Illustrate the ways in which world governments are dealing with the problem of global warming.



Unit 8: Taking Tests

Activity 8-11: Direction Words in Essay Test Items (continued)

Justify	Tell why something is correct. <i>Justify</i> the need for stricter penalties for violent crimes.
List	Present information as a series of brief numbered points. <i>List</i> the steps you should follow to prepare for college.
Summarize	Present the main points about something in a brief form. <i>Summarize</i> what you need to do in order to succeed in high school.
Support	Provide an argument to back something up. Use facts and logic in your argument. <i>Support</i> the need to maintain the electoral college system.
Trace	Tell the order of events for something. <i>Trace</i> the events that led to the American Civil War.

For each of the following, write the direction word that is most appropriate. You can use a direction word more than once.

1. Your teacher wants you to briefly tell what photosynthesis means.

2. Your teacher wants you to identify five characteristics of mammals.

3. Your teacher wants you to present a case for Shakespeare being the greatest writer of all time.

4. Your teacher wants you to break down into parts or steps the process by which wood pulp is made into paper.

5. Your teacher wants you to tell what a tropical rain forest is like.



Unit 8: Taking Tests

Activity 8-11: Direction Words in Essay Test Items (continued)

6. Your teacher wants you to tell how a democracy and a monarchy are different.

7. Your teacher wants you to present clear facts about the duties of the president of the United States.

8. Your teacher wants you to tell how lions and tigers are alike and different.

9. Your teacher wants you to tell the sequence of steps to follow when answering an essay test item.

10. Your teacher wants you to briefly tell the most important points about how a person is elected to be the president of the United States.

11. Your teacher wants you to state very clearly what the SAT assesses.

12. Your teacher wants you to tell the order of the events that led up to the resignation of President Richard Nixon.

13. Your teacher wants you to present a very full and detailed description of how a hot air balloon works.

14. Your teacher wants you to write about your position regarding capital punishment.

15. Your teacher wants you to provide examples of how the World Health Organization has benefitted people around the world.



Activity 8-13: Reviewing Your Response to an Essay Test Item

Review your response to the essay test item you wrote in Activity 8-12. Circle **Yes** or **No** for each of the following questions about your response.

Did I respond to the question or do what the direction word required me to do?	Yes	No
If the item included a direction word, did I underline the direction word?	Yes	No
Did I prepare an outline containing main ideas and supporting details?	Yes	No
Did I include all important information?	Yes	No
Did I begin with an introduction?	Yes	No
Did I write notes on scrap paper or on the test paper?	Yes	No
Did I end with a conclusion?	Yes	No
Did I write legibly?	Yes	No
Did I reread my response to make sure I responded to what the item required?	Yes	No
Did I check for correct grammar?	Yes	No
Did I check for correct punctuation?	Yes	No
Did I check for correct spelling?	Yes	No

Any question for which your answer is **No** is something you should be very careful about when you take essay tests.



Activity 8-14: What I Have Learned

Read the following information about the Earth's climate.

The Earth's Climate

Many people think that weather and climate are the same thing. This is not true. Weather is the atmospheric conditions for a place at a given time. Climate is the general weather conditions for a place or region over a long period of time (a period of at least thirty years). If you think about it, over time you have acquired an impression of the climate in the place where you live. If you look at national weather reports over time, you will acquire an impression of climate in many places in the United States. For example, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the climate is most often cold in the winter and mild in the summer. In Miami, Florida, the climate is most often mild in the winter and hot in the summer.

Factors That Determine Climate

Temperature and precipitation are the two major determiners of climatic conditions anywhere on Earth.

Temperature. One of the major determiners of climate is temperature. Temperature is measured using a thermometer in degrees Fahrenheit in the United States and degrees Celsius in many other places in the world. The higher the temperature is in a place over time, the hotter the climatic conditions will be. Likewise, the lower the temperature is in a place over time, the colder the climatic conditions will be. Temperature makes the difference between hot and cold climatic conditions.

Precipitation. The second major determiner of weather is precipitation. Precipitation occurs in a variety of forms: rain, snow, hail, and sleet. Precipitation is measured in inches in the United States and in centimeters in many other places in the world. Little or no precipitation results in deserts where very little vegetation grows. A moderate amount of precipitation helps to produce an abundance of vegetation and crops. Too much precipitation can produce flooding in which overflowing rivers wash away seeds and the soil that holds the seeds. Precipitation makes the difference between dry and wet climatic conditions.

Major Factors That Influence Climate

You have already learned that temperature and precipitation determine climate. Four major factors that influence temperature and precipitation, and therefore influence



Unit 8: Taking Tests

Activity 8-14: What I Have Learned (continued)

climate, are: latitude, altitude, topography, and ocean currents. These factors create a variety of environments such as deserts, tropical rain forests, tundra, conifer forests, prairies, plains, glacial ice, and others.

Latitude. The equator is an imaginary line that divides the earth into north and south. Latitude is how distance is measured going north and south from the equator. The equator is at zero degrees latitude. Ninety degrees latitude north of the equator is the North Pole, and ninety degrees latitude south of the equator is the South Pole. Areas close to the equator receive direct rays from the sun. This results in a warm climate. In areas that are close to the poles, the rays of the sun are at an angle. This results in a cold climate. The closer one gets to the equator, the warmer the climate. The farther one gets from the equator, the colder the climate.

Altitude. Altitude is the distance above sea level. As altitude increases, air pressure decreases and the air becomes less dense. The less dense the air, the less heat it holds. Therefore, the higher the altitude, the lower the temperature. Air temperature drops approximately 3.5 degrees Fahrenheit per 1,000 feet of altitude. Altitude affects precipitation as well as air temperature. The higher the altitude, the more likely rain will become snow or ice.

Topography. When you are reading, talking, or writing about the surface features of the earth, you are studying topography. Topography can be flat lands, rolling hills, mountains, or any feature on the surface of the earth. These surface features affect the development of clouds and precipitation. For example, as humid air moves up a mountainside, clouds are formed from the water in the air. These water-laden clouds can eventually produce rain, snow, or ice.

Ocean Currents. Water in the oceans of the world travels in paths. These paths are called currents, and they can be warm or cold. Warm water heats the air above it. Cold water cools the air above it. Ocean currents moving away from the equator are warm. They bring with them heated air masses that raise the temperatures over the regions in their path. Currents moving toward the equator are colder. They bring with them cooled air masses that lower the temperatures over the regions in their path.

Types of Climates

Wladimir Köppen was a Russian/German climatologist who in 1900 introduced a system for classifying the climates of the world. His system remains in wide use today. Köppen recognized five major climate types based on annual and monthly averages of temperature and precipitation. Climate types in Köppen's system are identified by the upper case letters **A**, **B**, **C**, **D**, and **E**.



Unit 8: Taking Tests

Activity 8-14: What I Have Learned (continued)

A—Moist Tropical Climate. This climate has high temperatures throughout the year. It receives a large amount of rainfall year round.

B—Dry Climate. This climate receives little rain. The range of daily temperatures is very large.

C—Humid Middle Latitude Climate. This climate is warm and dry in the summer. In the winter, it is cool and wet.

D—Continental Climate. This climate is typically found in the interior regions of large masses of land. Total precipitation is not very high. Temperatures vary widely across the seasons.

E—Cold Climate. This climate occurs in areas where ice is always present. Freezing temperatures occur for most of the year.

Summary

Climate is the general weather conditions for a place or region over a long period. Temperature and precipitation are the two major determinants of climate. Four major factors that influence temperature and precipitation are latitude, altitude, topography, and ocean currents. Wladimir Köppen introduced a system for classifying climates in 1900. His system, which is still widely used, recognized the following five major climate types: moist tropical, dry, humid middle latitude, continental, and cold.

Based on the passage about the earth's climate, write each of the following test items.

1. A multiple-choice item in the form of an incomplete statement followed by four answer choices:

Statement: _____

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____



Unit 8: Taking Tests

Activity 8-14: What I Have Learned (continued)

2. A multiple-choice item in the form of a question followed by five answer choices.

Question: _____

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

3. A true/false item.

4. A matching test with four items in the left-hand column and five in the right-hand column.

Directions: _____

Heading _____

Heading _____

1. _____

a. _____

2. _____

b. _____

3. _____

c. _____

4. _____

d. _____

e. _____

5. A completion test item with the missing part at the end.

6. A completion test item with two missing parts.

7. An essay test item that contains a question to be answered.

8. An essay test item that contains the direction word *explain*.
