

Below is a sample chart listing the common tricks and traps students can fall into when taking a test. Also, included are tips to alert students to important items that will help them make more informed answer choices. Students need to watch out for these tricks these traps and use these tips because they can significantly impact their test results. These observations and chartings should occur during the Immersion phase of Testing Fundamentals and should be referred to throughout the lessons and reviewed during the Beating the Test wrap-up sessions.

Beating the Test

- Watch out for information hidden in the directions. Clue words like “about” or “include” signal that important information will follow.
- Remember the “W” words—who, what, where, when. These words will direct you to information needed for an answer.
- Don’t be lazy! READ THE STORY! Sometimes we need to piece together information from clues in the story to get an answer. We can’t always count on scanning the story to find the answer.
- Watch out for information hidden in pictures or photographs or captions under pictures.
- Watch out for information such as word definitions hidden in boxes.
- Watch out for the title—it can be a clue to the main idea of the story.
- Be alert!! Notice how a question is worded—sometimes the same kind of questions are asked in different ways.
- Read carefully two answers may use many of the same words to trick you.
- Read all the choices that accompany a multiple choice question. Many times the first choice may seem right, but a better choice may follow.
- Remember information needed to answer a question doesn’t always go in order. Try to remember where the information is located in a story.
- Remember to think about what a question is asking you. It might not contain the same words as in the story.
- “WHY” questions are usually a signal to piece together clues in the story with information in your brain. The answer may not be directly in the story.
- Be on the lookout for other questions asking you to infer, such as: “What will most probably happen next?” or “What do you think...will do?” or “Why did the author...?”