

## Test taking strategies for Praxis Core Math Exam 5732

There are some extra test-taking strategies because this is mostly a multiple-choice exam. These strategies are not necessarily good pedagogy, but you would be foolish to ignore them.

1. Can you plug in the answer choices and see which answer works? If the answer choices are in numerical order, start with a middle answer choice - if that choice doesn't work, hopefully you can figure out whether your next attempt should be higher or lower.
2. Can you use the answer choices to estimate the answer or to look for a factor you may not have considered? For example, if all the answer choices include  $\sqrt{3}$ , consider what might have to occur in the solution to get to that. If all the answer choices include  $\pi$ , then do your calculations in terms of  $\pi$ .
3. Can you use the more specific results of a general statement to your advantage? For example, if a statement says it is true for all regular polygons, can you use the results of an equilateral triangle? If a statement is true for all integers  $N$ , is it true for  $N=1$  and  $N=2$ ? If a statement is true for all real numbers  $x$ , is it true for  $x=0$ ?
4. The outlier answer choice is probably incorrect. This includes the case where three answer choices include the same item such as  $\sqrt{3}$ , but the fourth answer choice does not.
5. Be sure to answer the question that is asked, not the question you solved or the question you wish they asked. For example, you may have solved a word problem as  $x = 30$  years old, but the question may have asked for the age not now, but 2 years ago. Watch out for words like always, never, not.
6. Try to do the problem without being influenced by the answer choices. Then read all the answer choices - eliminate any choices you are sure are wrong, and do consider that one answer may appear right but another may then appear to be even better. However, your first answer choice is usually correct rather than changing your answer, unless you feel that you misread the problem.
7. If there are several approaches on a problem, take a moment's thought and then choose the quickest solution. Sometimes trial and error is quickest. Sometimes the online calculator is quickest.
8. If you have not used all the given information of a problem, you have probably overlooked something. However, don't make assumptions that you can't prove. For example, don't assume an angle is a right angle because it looks like one, don't assume two lines are parallel, etc.
9. As you do a problem, take detailed, clear notes. This will help while you are doing the problem, and if you have time to check your work at the end.
10. If you are doing a calculation with decimals, do not round intermediate calculations; only round the final answer.
11. If it helps, make a list or draw a diagram. If a diagram is given, feel free to add lines that divide areas.

12. For an 85-minute exam with 56 questions, that averages to about 1.5 minutes per question. With some questions you may be able to write down the answer in a few seconds, while other questions may be quite time-consuming. Work briskly, but not so fast that you are getting careless. After about thirty minutes (one-third of the total time), check to see whether you have answered about one-third of the questions (19 questions); then decide if you need to work a little quicker, or whether you are working at about the right pace.

As you work on a problem think about whether you can do it: 1. in about three minutes or less, 2. whether you can do it but it will take a lot more time, or 3. whether you don't think you can do it all. Do the problems you can do in about three minutes or less right away. Make a note of the problems you want to come back to that will take longer and do those problems next. Go back and redo the problems you already did (check your work and your detailed notes - look for arithmetic errors like a decimal point or a negative sign). In the last few minutes of the exam, simply choose any answer choice for the problems you can't do at all.

Good luck.

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