Dealing With Test Anxiety

Even the most seasoned test-takers suffer from test anxiety sometimes. The UB staff created an outline of strategies to help each step of the way—from test prep to waiting for the grade.

Preparation:
Being prepared is the key to reducing test anxiety.

- Be realistic about the amount of time needed to prepare for large exams or clusters of exams. Also, plan for distractions or obligations (work, sports) that cut into study time.
- Start early. Cramming is ineffective! Studies show that cramming does not improve test performance, and it may increase your anxiety because you are hyper-aware of the amount of information you are expected to know.
- Follow your teacher’s lead. Information covered in class, on worksheets, in chapter reviews, or during in-class reviews is often emphasized on tests. Use these sources to structure studying.
- Use your understanding of learning styles to your benefit. Learning is a unique process, try what works best for you! Don’t be afraid to try new study techniques.

During the test:

- Read the directions carefully. Rushing through the instructions may result in confusion, panic, or “stupid” mistakes. Reread each section’s instructions before starting it.
- Budget your time. Before starting the test make sure you know how many sections are on it, and the number of possible points in each section. Spend more time on the sections worth more points. Be aware of the time, but don’t get obsessed with the clock.
- Use your strengths. If you know that you do very well on multiple choice you may want to start there. You will maximize your points by guaranteeing that you finish the section. On the other hand, some tests may require essays or intense calculations. Some people may benefit from starting with these sections while they are fresh.
- Be comfortable. Dressing in layers, eating a high protein meal, and carefully selecting your seat during the test can make a difference.
- If you go blank, skip the question and go on. At the end of the test return to difficult questions you skipped.
- If you're taking an essay test and you go blank on the whole test, pick a question and start writing or outlining. This may trigger the answer in your mind.
- Remember there is no prize for being the first one finished; don’t panic if others are turning in their work.

If you are tensing up and getting anxious during the test:

- Relax! Take a moment to regroup and calm down.
- Pausing to calm down is not a waste. (Cont. on pg. 2)
In 2008, the first group of UB Seniors will prepare to submit college applications. Seniors, and all UB participants, are encouraged to discuss their college plans with Fran or Laurel. UBers and their families can set up phone conferences or face-to-face meetings to discuss college searches, the application process, or financial aid. The staff of UB understands that each participant (and family) faces unique challenges and circumstances on the road to college.

Take advantage of our knowledgeable staff; contact us to schedule a meeting about your college plans. Remember, college planning is not just for Seniors. Students at all levels can begin planning.

Test Anxiety (Cont. from pg. 1)

- Don't think about the fear, think about the hard work you did preparing. Break questions down into manageable tasks. If you start thinking about everything all at once you will feel anxious and bad.
- Expect some anxiety—remember “keep your expectations in line with reality.” Anxiety can be a "habit" and it takes practice to break out of all bad habits.

After the test:

- Take a deep breath, relax, and pat yourself on the back… you faced the challenge head on!
- List what tactics worked best for you; try to incorporate these tactics into future testing situations.
- List what tactics did not work for you, revise them or try something new. Remember, everyone has unique needs and strengths; what works for one person may not work for you.
- A last word on scores: Give yourself permission to let go. Stressing out about the F you see in your imagination won’t fix anything. Instead, congratulate yourself on taking steps to reduce your test anxiety and improve your scores!

Need Help Figuring Out a College Plan?

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Don't Forget to Register for the ACT or the SAT. UB now has both SAT and ACT waivers available for qualified individuals.
**College Corner**

**Just Wondering... Questions to Ask Yourself and Others**

Here are some suggestions for important things every student needs to consider as they create a list of colleges to visit or apply to:

- **How often will I want to come home?** What type of transportation will be available to me? What is the cost?
- **How is the campus and surrounding area?**
- **Do I have any specific medical conditions which require special care, if so am I located near qualified doctors or hospitals?**
- **Do they offer my prospective major?** Do they offer a wide variety of majors if I am undecided or considering changing my major?
- **Are there sports, student organizations, or other groups I am interested in on campus?**
- **If I am staying on campus during the weekends are there fun and interesting things to do?**
- **Do I like the campus culture?**
- **Are there support programs such as Student Support Services or McNair Scholar program located on campus?**
- **Do I know anyone who attended this school?** If so, what was their opinion of the college and the campus?
- **Can I afford to attend this college?** Am I willing to borrow additional money to fund your studies?
- **Are there any scholarships, grants or other financial opportunities I may qualify for?**
- **Do they have resources for my needs (eg. childcare, a commuters lounge/program, disability services, etc)?**

**High School Hints**

**The Quiet Side of Bullying**

The word “bully” conjures images of a hulking guy shaking down the class nerd for lunch money. Many of you experience bullying which is just as embarrassing, frustrating and painful— but it is not so obvious. Silent bullying occurs when people spread rumors, ignore you, pass notes, and exclude you from activities you once enjoyed. Silent bullying can also happen when a friend is a friend in one location, but treats you abusively in others (the bus friend or the neighborhood friend). The internet and text messaging has opened new pathways for abuse and social isolation. Here are some tips for avoiding or reducing silent bullying:

- Do not respond to abusive texts, emails, or other messages.
- Only give “real” friends access to your Myspace or Facebook pages. A real friend is someone you know and like in the real world.
- Talk to someone who cares. You are not alone, many people experience silent bullying. Being excluded from a clique, or the subject of a terrible rumor, is a common experience, but no one wants to talk about it. Break the silence. Teachers, counselors, clergy, and friends can be your cheerleaders and a great support system.
- Believe in yourself; exercise your expertise. Nobody knows you better than you, if there are untruths circulating believe in yourself. Know the truth, do not allow these falsehoods to influence your love and respect of yourself.
- Know your allies and ask them for support. You may end up changing social circles, but keep your head held high.

**Health and Wellness**

**Drive Without Dread**

For many teens driving is a double edged sword. A car provides increased freedom and responsibility. It also brings up many new expenses and potential arguments. Here are some tips to improve your driving experience:

- **Accept the responsibility.** If you promised to pick up a sibling, do it. If you agreed to pay 50% of your insurance, be prepared to hand over that hard earned cash. Learn about basic auto repair and maintenance can save money and lives.
- **Practice makes perfect.** Practice skills until comfortable executing the maneuver in a variety of conditions.
- **Communicate openly.** Talk to adults about: driving and safety concerns, destinations and routes, plans for borrowing the car, and expectations for paying for gas and/or auto insurance.
- **Take advantage of school based drivers training programs;** many insurance companies will reduce your rates. Adding a teen driver may increase insurance rates over $1,000 annually.
- **Educate yourself!** Look online to see the impact of cell phones, passengers, intoxication, and inexperience on safe driving. Take steps to avoid becoming a statistic!

To the adults in the audience:

- **Stay Calm!** Adults should try remain calm in the car; screaming at your teen only increases the risk of an accident. If you are upset or scared - pull over in a safe location, and regroup.
- **Model good driving habits.** AVOID: speeding, talking on a cell phone, or giving in to road rage. DO: wear your seatbelt, and explain what you are doing to be a safe driver.

**Caregiver’s Corner**

**Ending Homework Headaches**

School has been in session for weeks, and the homework is piling up. What is a UBer to do? The staff of UB encourages our participants to develop personal responsibility by being proactive about homework. Here are some hints for parents dealing with homework headaches:

- **Open the lines of communication.** UBers are encouraged to be honest with their parents about homework. Many teachers post homework on Edline, the schools web site, or in a syllabus. It is not snooping if a concerned adult looks into homework. Better yet students and caregivers should look together!
- **Are you smarter than a 10th grader?** It may be tempting to finish your student’s work. This does not benefit the student; they are missing an opportunity to build skills needed for future learning.
- **Take advantage of tutoring.** UB participants are required to attend two hours of tutoring per month. Private tutoring, and other tutoring programs may be offered at your school.
- **Plan ahead.** If you know that a sport, family obligation, job, or organization will be filling up a lot of time in the future, encourage students to work ahead and complete large projects early. If he/she is struggling to complete schoolwork it may be time to limit activities.
- **Understand why teachers give homework.** Every assignment from the essay to the word-search is designed to help students gain knowledge. Each assignment also encourages responsibility and independent learning- keys to success in college.
The Upwardly Mobile Student Spotlight

Richael S.
Clay-Battelle High School
12th Grade
What was your best Halloween costume ever?
My best costume was a rag doll.
Who or what inspires you to go to college?
My future and my dad he is a positive reinforcement in my life.
What is your favorite thing about being a participant in Upward Bound?
Getting individualized help and getting out to do new things and meet new people.

Tommy D.
Preston High School
10th Grade
What was your best Halloween costume ever?
A French Fry because it’s my nickname at school.
Who or what inspires you to go to college?
Getting a good job and making enough money to support my family.
What is your favorite thing about being a participant in Upward Bound?
I like the events and our counselors and other UB participants are awesome.

Dallas H.
Grafton High School
9th Grade
What was your best Halloween costume ever?
A Marine with a hat and full face paint.
Who or what inspires you to go to college?
I like music and I want to get a music related job.
What is your favorite thing about being a participant in Upward Bound?
Fieldtrips.