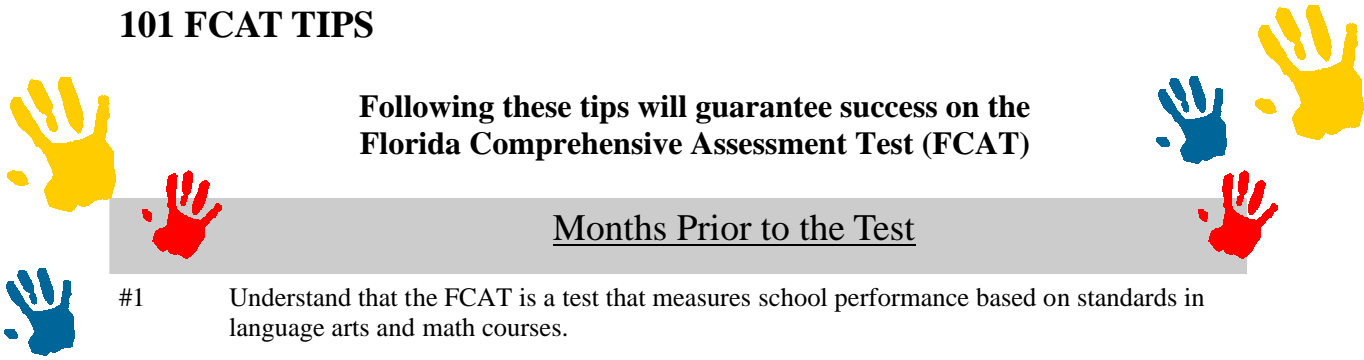


## 101 FCAT TIPS

### Following these tips will guarantee success on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)

#### Months Prior to the Test

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- #1 Understand that the FCAT is a test that measures school performance based on standards in language arts and math courses.
  - #2 Understand how you will be scored on the FCAT and learn what your score means to you and your school.
  - #3 Study hard in each and every class because reading and math can be found in every class that you take.
  - #4 Determine that performing well in school and on the FCAT is a big priority in your life. (Students who determine this fact tend to establish successful careers and are happy when they grow up)
  - #5 Listen and learn from your teachers when they provide FCAT tips and learning experiences that urge you to “think”.
  - #6 Studies show that kids who watched fewer than three hours of television a day scored higher on standardized reading tests than those who watched more.
  - #7 Read newspapers, magazines, food labels, recipes, letters, and instructions, in addition to fiction and nonfiction books.
  - #8 Use FCAT Explorer-FREE!-Online FCAT Practice for 8th graders. [www.fcatexplorer.com](http://www.fcatexplorer.com)
  - #9 Use Skillstutor.com to sharpen your higher order thinking skills. See your teachers and go to [www.skillstutor.com](http://www.skillstutor.com)
  - #10 Attend after school tutoring for both math and reading skills.
  - #11 Learn how to answer each kind of question — multiple choice, gridded response, short answer, and extended response.
  - #12 Learn strategies on identifying the setting, the characters, and how stories start and end. Be sure that you can tell the main parts of a story in order.

#### One Week Prior to the Test

- #13 Review over the FCAT tips on the five nights prior to the test.
- #14 Get a normal night's sleep for each of the five days prior to testing. (Sleep loss of cumulative and losing a small amount of sleep days prior to the test will add up to poor performance on test day.)

- #15 Take one night during the five nights prior to the test to review over math formulas and problem solving techniques that you have learned.
- #16 East a good dinner the night before and a good breakfast the morning of the test.
- #17 Determine a strategy that you will use when reading over a passage and answering multiple choice questions. (Practice if needed)
- #18 Determine a strategy that you will use when faced with short or long response questions.
- #19 Determine what you will do when faced with a question that you have no idea of the answer.
- #20 Warm your brain by reading for a least 45 minutes at home on each of the five nights prior to the test.
- #21 Relax ... don't panic ... you will do fine.

## Test Day

- #22 **Be sure to be present on test day. Students taking tests on make up days tend to score lower.**
- #23 **Eat a good breakfast. Hunger can lead to poor performance.**
- #24 Have a least two #2 pencils sharpened and ready to go.
- #25 Relax! All of the hard work is done. Now is just the time to prove that you have been working hard and have learned what is expected of you.
- #26 Get to school on time and be sure to talk with friends to break the tension.
- #27 Be sure to drink enough water so you will not get dehydrated. A dehydrated body will lead to poor performance. Too much water will also cause problems if you need to use the restroom during testing.
- #28 Avoid all strenuous activity before school such as running, football, and basketball.
- #29 Listen carefully to all test-taking directions given by the teacher and ask questions about those directions that are not clear.
- #30 Think positively; tell yourself that you can do this.

#31 To help calm down, breathe in and out slowly and deeply.

### **During The Test**

#32 It is normal to be nervous when you take a test. Try to relax and think about the readings.

#33 The FCAT is a timed test. Concentrate and work at a steady pace.

#34 **Multiple choice**

Multiple choice questions are worth one point each. Carefully determine the correct answer and then look for the answer in one of the four choices. If your answer is not there, you will need to redo the problem in math or rethink the problem in reading.

#35 **Gridded response**

Gridded response questions are worth one point each. Carefully write the number in the space above the bubbles. Fill in each bubble to match the number above it. Blank spaces should remain blank with no writing or bubbles filled in the space.

#36 **Short response (A “Read, Think, and Explain” question.)**

Short answer questions are worth two points. Since they are worth twice as much as multiple choice and gridded response questions, spend more time on them. Plan to identify and write two examples and details from the passage to support your answer using 3-5 sentences. Five minutes is recommended, but do not spend much more than that or you may run out of time.

#37 **Long response (A “Read, Think, and Explain” question.)**

Long answer questions are worth four points each. They may have two or more problems to solve within each one. You may also be asked to explain how you solved the problem with sentences and/or pictures. Plan to write four examples and details from the passage to support your answer using 5-7 sentences. You need to spend more time on these. Ten minutes is recommended.

#38 Long and short answer strategy: Turn the question into your topic sentence. For example, Question: What color is the car? Topic Sentence: The color of the car is blue.

#39 Remember: Write your answer in your own words. If you are using an example for the passage, you must place it in quotes.

- #40 Remember: You will be graded on your writing inside the box and on the lines provided. Other writing will be ignored.
- #41 As you are taking the test, systematically check to be sure that you are bubbling your answer in the correct area and number.
- #42 As you're reading a multiple-choice question, try to come up with the answer in your head before you look at the choices.
- #43 Occasionally check the time and make sure you are on track.
- #44 For each item, very carefully read the entire test item and all the possible answers.
- #45 Answer the easier questions first and persist to the end of the test and attempt to answer every question, regardless of difficulty.
- #46 **Keep a positive state of mind, and do your best.**
- #47 Be sure to move to a new question if you are confused and are having a difficult time remembering something. Coming back later sometimes triggers your memory to remember what you have forgotten.
- #48 Mark questions that you want to return to. (On your test booklet only)
- #49 Make no stray marks on your paper near your answers.
- #50 If you decide to change an answer, completely erase the old one.
- #51 If you answer all the questions in a given section and there is still time left, go back and be a detective. Reread each question and your answer and see if they make sense.
- #52 Relax...don't panic...you will do fine.
- #53 Don't leave blanks—there is no penalty for guessing or for wrong answers.
- #54 Tackle the test. These tests are not like the ones your teacher gives. There will be questions that seem too easy and questions that seem way too hard. Your goal is to think positively and to score as many points as you can.
- #55 Don't let the test trick you. Always read to the end of the answer choices. Cross off answers you know are wrong.

- #56 If you have questions about what you are to do, raise your hand.
- #57 Change answers only when you are certain. The answer comes to mind first is often correct.
- #58 Reviewing with an anxious mind and changing answers when you are not certain can do more harm than good.
- #59 Keep a steady pace and do not let more difficult questions affect your attitude and steal your valuable time. Students often cloud their minds by lingering over difficult questions. Moving on and finding success with other questions is a better method.

## Subject Matter Strategies

### Reading Strategies



- #60 Read the whole passage once before you answer any of the questions. However, a good strategy is to briefly read the questions first so you have an idea of what answers to look for while reading.
- #61 **Read carefully; pay attention to details.**
- #62 Look at the pictures and graphics to help you understand the passage.
- #63 Paragraph Labeling: Underline the main points in each paragraph you are reading.
- #64 Read each question carefully and be sure to answer what is being asked.
- #65 **Go back to the passage for clues to help you answer the questions.**
- #66 If you are asked to write your answer, be sure to include details from the passage.
- #67 Write so that others can understand what you mean. (Keep the reader in mind)
- #68 **You are allowed to go back and read the passages as many times as you want. Read them carefully.**
- #69 FCAT questions are concerned with the author's purpose and opinion and are not concerned with your opinion. Only give examples and details that come from the reading passage and not from the outside world.

- #70 When you answer the “Read, Think, and Explain” questions, think and organize what you want to say before writing down your ideas.
- #71 Identify difficult words by looking for little words inside big words, knowing the meaning of word parts, and using the words surrounding to find clues.
- #72 Write your short and long responses neatly so that anyone can read them.
- #73 After you read the passage, first answer the questions you know. Skip the ones that are too hard and go back later.
- #74 **Relax** and think positively — some questions may seem hard, but you may be able to figure out what to do after you read the question carefully.
- #75 Partial credit is given for students that attempt to answer “Read, Think, and Explain” questions. So keep going and write what you know.
- #76 Write on the test. Yes! You can write on the test, since anything written outside the answer box is ignored and will not harm your results. Use circles, underlining, arrows, and other marks that will help solve questions and problems.
- #77 Do not be disturbed about other students finishing before you do. Take your time, don’t panic, and you will do much better on the test.
- #78 Relax ... don’t panic... you will do fine.

### Math Strategies

- #79 Draw pictures to help solve math problems. Students who mark on the test booklets score higher. You can too!
- #80 Use the formulas provided.
- #81 Read each problem carefully.
- #82 Think about what is being asked.
- #83 Choose an appropriate strategy.
- #84 Solve the problem using your strategy.
- #85 Does the Answer make sense? Did the strategy work?



## Writing Strategies (FCAT Writing Essay and Extended Response)

- #86 Memorize the following FCAT writing rubric: **Focus, organization, support, and conventions.**
- #87 Write just as you do for all of your teachers. Remember you are in school and you are in one of your teachers' classrooms.
- #88 Recall writing strategies from class and write down the main points that must appear in your writing.
- #89 **Write legible, complete sentences and paragraphs, and focus on your main idea.**
- #90 **Read the prompt carefully. As a matter of fact, read it at least two times.**
- #91 Plan your writing by organizing your ideas.
- #92 Support your ideas by telling more about each reason or argument.
- #93 Use a variety of sentence structures.
- #94 Choose words that help others understand what you mean.
- #95 Use facts, incidents, reasons, examples, and statistics (FIRES) to support your topic sentence.
- #96 Review and edit your writing. In your review, check spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.
- #97 Be sure that the reader is able to TOUCH, TASTE, SEE, SMELL, AND HEAR what you are writing about. Be sure to stay on topic!
- #98 Give your sentences life by using words that show not tell.

## Final Words of Wisdom

- #99 Avoid being lazy! You only fail yourself if you don't try and give it your best.
- #100 When all testing is complete, enjoy the rest of the day and be proud of your efforts.
- #101 **Your TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND PARENTS believe in you!**