

Parent & Teacher

RESOURCE GUIDE



Finding a Tutor

The pandemic has taken a toll on everyone, including school children, and their grades may not be where you expect them to be this year.

Don't worry, though, many children are in the same boat. Help can just be a few questions away in the form of a tutor.

HOW TO FIND A TUTOR

Before you hit up friends and family looking for a reliable tutor, you need to talk to your child's teacher. The experts at Reading Rockets recommend asking these questions:

- What level of help do we need? Just for homework? Intensive remediation?
- What areas should the tutor focus on improving?
- Does my child need to improve their study skills? Do they need help with motivation?

• What do I need to know about my child's learning style? Do they learn best by reading, listening, moving or touching?

Lastly, look at your budget and decide how much money you can spend on tutoring. You may decide to pay by the week or month, or to set a short-term schedule for tutoring for an upcoming test. It depends on what your child can benefit the most from.



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You should also make an appointment with your school counselor. Counselors may be able to give you insight on your child's school behavior and can even help recommend a tutor for certain subjects.

It's also possible that some teachers in the school tutor children after hours, and the counselor may be able to tell you about that.

FINDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Beyond your child's school, you can also keep an eye out in local newspapers and on social media for tutors advertising their services. Ask friends and family for recommendations. Be on the look out for retired teachers who may be willing to help out, but be sure they're up to date on your child's curriculum.

You can also turn to learning centers in your area. These businesses usually work on more general learning problems instead of specific subject areas.

QUALIFICATIONS

Make sure to ask any potential tutor about their educational background. If they're tutoring your child in a particular subject, they

should have at least a college minor in that subject. Tutors should also have worked with children similar to age and ability to your child. Ask for recommendations and follow up with them. Ask the tutors what methods they use and what they expect from the families of the children they tutor in addition to the usual questions about cost, hours and location.

Great Teacher Gifts

Many parents love their children's teachers but struggle with gift-giving.

Getting gifts that teachers will really appreciate and use can be difficult. Don't worry. We've got your back. Here are some recommendations for out-of-this world teacher's gifts.

A GOOD SET OF PENS

Teachers go through a lot of pens, particularly red or other colored pens, grading all our children's homework. A set of good gel pens is always appreciated in the classroom. Make sure they're of good quality, have caps that will stay on and come in a variety of colors Teach can use throughout their day.

GIFT CARDS

Everyone appreciates a gift card, whether it's to a favorite restaurant or a local grocery store. If you're stumped, a gift card to an online retailer or office supply store will always be welcome, as will a VISA or MasterCard gift card that can be used like a debit card.

TOTE BAGS

Teachers carry a lot of stuff. Make it easier for them by gifting a personalized tote bag that will fit all their grading and lesson plans. Bonus points if you find out their favorite color or characters, too, and work that into the bag either in the pattern or



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through a monogram.

Movie Night Gift Set

Get creative and whip up a lovely movie night gift basket with gift cards to the local theater or movie rental service, a bag of microwave popcorn and a box of movie theater candy.

CLASSROOM SUPPLIES

Ask your student what classroom supplies they never seem to have enough of and go hog wild on that. If you're stumped, you can always go with disinfecting wipes and sanitizers; you can never have too much of that

in the classroom these days.

WHAT TO AVOID

There are some gifts that look great on paper, but that teachers say you should definitely think twice about. These include mugs (cliché), lotions or perfumes unless a

teacher specifically asks for it, alcohol, anything with an apple on it (see: mugs) and gifts that cost too much money.

Some districts have a policy that punishes teachers if they accept a gift over a certain amount.

Supporting Teachers

Teachers have been fighting on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic for two long school years now.

Virtual school, hybrid schooling and rampant illnesses have been devastating to the nation's teachers. Schools are facing critical staffing shortages nationwide, the Associated Press reports, and some schools are even having to shut down because of a lack of teachers.

STRESS

In a study of teachers during the pandemic, the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning found that teachers battle stress on two fronts — worry about their families contracting the new coronavirus and worry about their students. A pre-pandemic study showed that teacher burnout was a very real worry, and the pandemic has exacerbated that.

EMOTIONS ARE IMPORTANT

The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence said emotions are important for attention, memory and learning. Fear, especially when prolonged, can disrupt concentration and interfere with thinking while chronic stress



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can lead to persistent activation of the sympathetic nervous system and the release of stress hormones, impacting brain structures associated with executive function and memory.

Emotions are also important for decision-making and relationships, including those between teacher and student. Teachers who express anxiety or frustration, the center says,

are likely to alienate students and make them feel less safe in the classroom and maybe even at home.

RECOGNIZING TEACHERS

Responses to the Yale/CASEL study showed that teachers want more time to adjust to the new normal in the time of COVID-19. They also put honesty, respect, kindness, flexibility and

patience from administrators on their wish list.

School administrators and parents should bear in mind the extraordinary pressures teachers are under these days, and give them space and grace. Show appreciation for your child's teacher, even if it's just a handwritten note dropped off at the school. Volunteer your time in class if you can. Send extra supplies.

Realize that teachers have their own emotional needs, too, and are facing difficult circumstances for the second straight school year. Talk with your children about the pressures teachers are facing and encourage them to find ways to help. Ask your local school board about initiatives to support teachers during the pandemic and see if there's any way you can lend a hand.

Supporting Students

It's not just the teachers having a difficult time; children are, too.

Schools are different place during the coronavirus pandemic. Some campuses are completely empty as schools in particularly hard hit areas turn back to virtual schooling. Schools are also hard-hit by staffing and teacher shortages, plus there's all the extra rules and cleaning that surrounds the COVID-19 pandemic.

CHILDREN IN A CRISIS

Students respond to crises like the COVID-19 pandemic in different ways, the American Psychological Association said. They may show changes in personal hygiene, sleep routines, weight, school performance, mood, behavior and participation in activities.

These symptoms can also vary by age range. Pre-K and kindergarten students may appear sleepy, withdraw from friends, cling to parents or caregivers, or refuse to participate in activities. Elementary students may be more aggressive, irritable or clingy. They may have nightmares or withdraw from actives and friends. Middle and high school students may have problems sleeping and eating, complain about their health or experience an increase in conflicts.

TEACHER DOS AND DON'TS

The APA says there are



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some ways that teachers and other adults can give school-children extra support during the pandemic to avoid some of these behaviors. Show them that you care by noticing changes in their behavior, but don't push for information or ask pointed questions. Check in with both parents and students to let them

know what you're seeing.

Make any invitation to connect casual, though, or schedule regular check-ins with the students and families you're most concerned about. Don't assume that declining an invitation to visit means you aren't needed and don't minimize anything that's happened. Make sure your stu-

dents know that you and other trusted adults are there to keep them safe and provide plenty of opportunities for your students to express their feelings.

GET MORE HELP

As the pandemic stretches on, increasing stress on students and their families, be

prepared to get them extra help. Familiarize yourself with school district policies about crisis intervention. Families, if you're noticing troubling changes in your children, work with the school's counselor or get in touch with a psychologist, social worker or therapist to get them needed help.

Test-Taking Techniques

Tests are stressful.

Even with lots of studying and the best preparation, students can still bomb an exam just by being so nervous about taking it.

In today's classrooms, testing matters a lot.

Standardized tests mean the difference between passing and failing a grade and can also determine what college you get into and how much financial aid you get.

There are strategies for taking tests that can calm your nerves and put you in a position to do your best.

SET A ROUTINE

Wichita State University recommends planning and preparing for before, during and after the test. Before the test, schedule daily, weekly and major review sessions. Create study checklists and make flash cards to help you memorize the concepts on which you'll be tested. Take practice tests, if available, and try to get copies of old tests so you can see what it'll be like.

On the day of the test, get to your class on time and avoid last-minute cramming. Before you answer any questions, read over the entire test. Take deep breaths and relax — repeat as necessary throughout the test. Read the directions for each section



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carefully and ask questions if you need to. Answer the easier questions first and keep an eye on the clock so you don't run out of time.

After the test, think back on how you feel about it. Did you accurately predict test questions? How effective were your study skills? What adjustments can you make on

future tests? When you get your graded exam back, review any questions you missed and discuss items you didn't understand with the instructor.

STRATEGIES FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF QUESTIONS

Multiple choice: Answer

each question in your head first, WSU says, and read through all of the answers before selecting one. Test each possible answer and eliminate those that are incorrect.

True/false: Read the entire question first, then look for qualifiers and details that can help you get the correct

answer. Examples include all and never for qualifiers and dates and facts for details. Watch out for negatives.

Essays: Be clear on what the question is asking before you write. Outline your answer on scratch paper, if you can, and write legibly. Get to the point quickly and leave room to flesh out any forgotten points.

Applying for College

The end of high school doesn't mean the end of education.

For many students, it's just another beginning as they go off to college.

The college application process, however, can be long and stressful. Here are some tips from Harvard on making applying for college easier.

START EARLY

Start thinking about your future well before your senior year of high school. Spend the summer between your junior and senior year researching colleges and pick a list of schools you may want to apply to, Harvard suggests. Be critical and narrow your list to just a few schools so you don't have as many deadlines and materials to keep track of.

MANAGING DEADLINES

Applying to colleges — especially more than one, and you should be applying to more than one — means juggling lots of deadlines. Mark the deadlines for each college on a calendar and plan to complete your applications before that deadline so you can review them. Remember to work in some time for relaxing and taking breaks, too.

ESSAY TECHNIQUES

Many application processes

include writing an essay. Try to tell the college admissions officers something about yourself that they can't find anywhere else in your application packet. Be as genuine and honest as you can; don't make it seem like you're something that you're not. That sets you up for failure right off the bat.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Remember that this refers to anything you're doing when you're not in school or asleep, not just school-affiliated experiences and clubs. It can be babysitting for your neighbors, volunteering at an animal shelter or holding a part-time job. Listing your

extracurricular activities helps your admissions officer to get a better idea of who you are in and out of school.

FEES AND SCORES

College applications usually ask you for two more things — application fees and test scores. Make sure to space out your applications so you

have enough money to pay all the fees (or time to fill out requests for waivers) and to get your most recent test scores from standardized testing companies.

If you didn't do well the first time you took a test like the SAT or ACT, you need to allow time for you to sit for the test again.



Understanding Standardized Tests

Standardized tests are tests that are given and scored in a consistent — or standardized — manner.

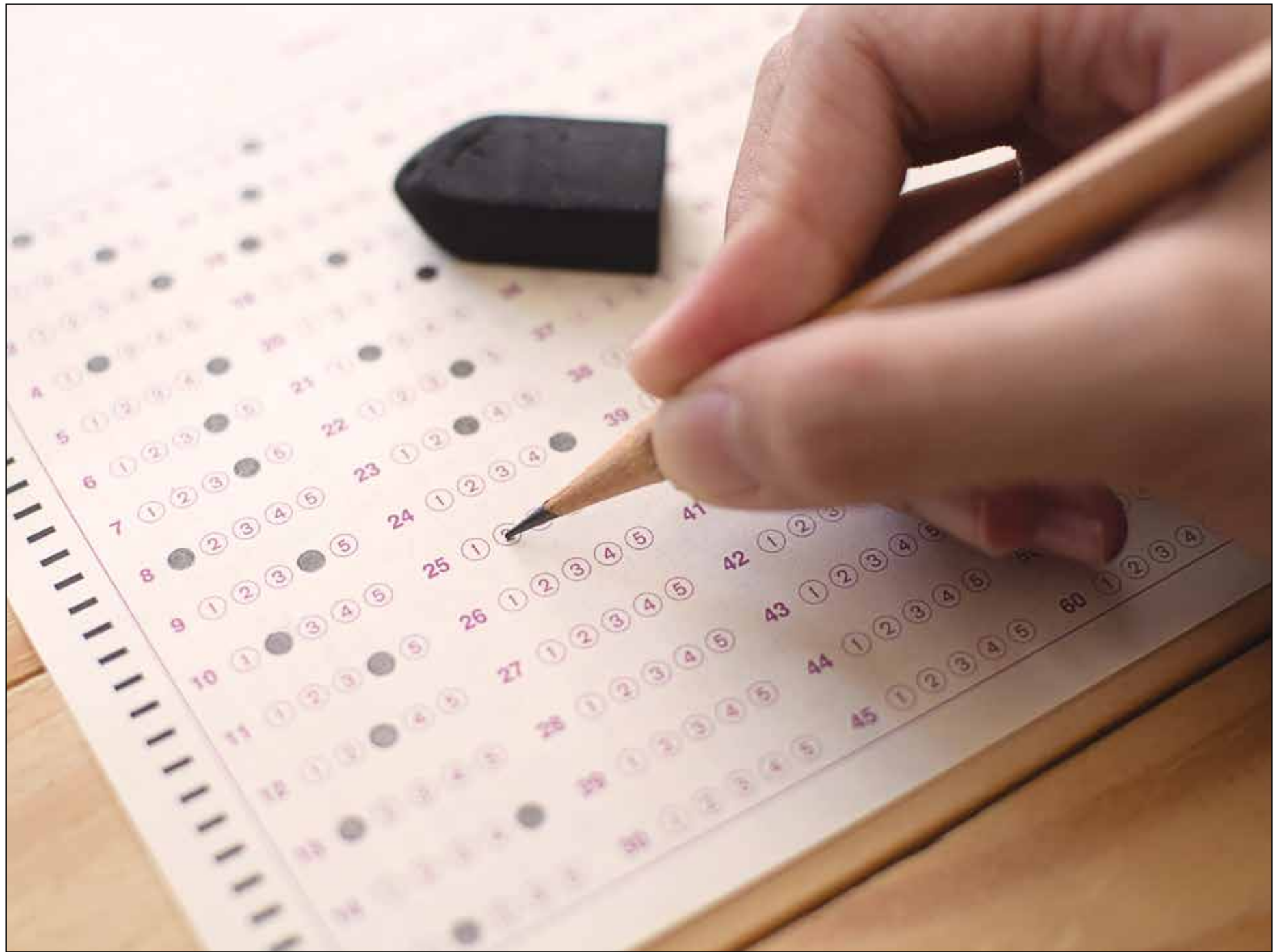
Examples of these tests include state achievement tests, usually known by an acronym and given during specified years in elementary and secondary school; the ACT and SAT; the GRE; the MCAT and more.

TESTING STRATEGIES

As with all tests, there are test-taking strategies that can give you a greater chance for scoring well. Studying test-specific guides and taking practice tests are a good start; these tests are very different from the usual exam you take in class. Knowing what to expect is a significant part of test-taking success.

You should also get plenty of rest and eat a good breakfast the day of your testing. Drink plenty of water and practice relaxation and breathing techniques to battle test anxiety. Avoid studying too much right before the test and get there early so you have plenty of time. Also avoid too much negative talk with other students and replace them with positive affirmations. No more “I’m too nervous to do well.” Try “I prepared really well for this test” instead.

If you get nervous during



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the exam, focus your attention on your breath. Concentrate on the air going in and out of your chest. Take long, deep breaths for two minutes, maximizing the oxygen flow to your brain. Find the tension in your body and make an effort to relax. Tense and release those muscles and become aware of the

relaxation. Use guided imagery — imagining yourself on a beach or in your favorite place — to help you relax more.

STUDY THE TEST ITSELF

Don’t just study the material; know more about the test you’re taking. Read up on how many sections are offered and

what those sections contain. How much time will you be given for each one? What can you bring in the testing room? What questions are permissible during the test? How is the test scored? When can you expect your scores? How soon can you retake the test?

Knowing the answers to these will not only alleviate

some of your test anxiety, but will also help you plan a successful test-taking strategy. For instance, you should plan to take the test more than once before the scores are due to your school. To do that, you’ll need to know how long it takes for the test to be scored and how soon you can retake it.