

# CHECKING YOUR WORK

## THE KEY TO PASSING MATH TESTS

It's ridiculously easy to make a mistake in math and when you're taking a math test, problems can have multiple parts that can all end up being wrong if you get a wrong number early on. How do you prevent that? You check your work. Here's a list of what to check during a test.

**1 Did I read the problem correctly?**  
This sounds like a no-brainer, but especially when it comes to word problems, sometimes it's easy to mix up what the question is actually asking you. Double-check to make sure your initial interpretation was correct!

**2 Did I use the correct formula?**  
Some formulas can seem similar but aren't. Sometimes going back and making sure that you used the formula that's appropriate to the problem can be an important step in making sure you get it right.

**3 Are all of my signs correct?**  
Checking your arithmetic is important! One of the biggest things that messes people up when it comes to math is accidentally forgetting to write a negative or subtraction sign where there should've been one.

**4 Is my answer in proper form?**  
Look back at the directions for the section of the test you are answering. Answer in whatever form it asks you for. Do the instructions want you to use mixed numbers, decimals, or something else?

**5 Does my answer make sense?**  
To check this, it's a good idea to plug your answer into the original problem. If the answer doesn't work with the original problem, then it's probably not the right answer. Go back and find the error.

**6 What units should I be using?**  
If you are answering a problem that starts with units, your answer should include the correct units. If you start in inches, your response shouldn't be just a number or in centimeters. Use the right unit or it will cost you.

## STOP! ONE LAST TIP!

Unless you're absolutely sure an answer is wrong, avoid the temptation to change it in the last few minutes of the test. Always check your work before the end of the test, but don't assume you're wrong. When a student knows what they're doing, studies have shown that they are more likely to get the question wrong if they go back and change it from what their instincts originally said—especially with multiple choice style questions.