

Run Out of Time on the Praxis Test?

I often hear about test takers running out of time. May I offer my best advice about that – it sounds simple but will make a difference:

FACT ONE: Remember that each question only has one answer.
FACT TWO: Also remember that you have about one minute per question.

If time is an issue for you on the Praxis test, apply those two facts in the following ways.

1. When you first read a problem and you have no idea how to start or if you know how to do it but think it will take more than a minute to complete, mark that question to come back to later and quickly move on. Don't let your mind play tricks with you – if you skip a problem, get it out of your mind immediately. Don't keep thinking, "I have a problem that I need to go back to." That keeps your brain from focusing 100% on the current problem. The testing software will keep track of problems you need to return to.
2. As you work through the problem and find an answer, resist the temptation to double check your work. And if you find the answer while eliminating multiple choices, resist the temptation to check the other multiple choices to see if you are right – there is only one answer per question so if you found the correct answer, select it and move to the next question.
3. Keep your work paper organized. I encourage my workshop students to fold their work paper booklet into fourths (one vertical fold and one horizontal fold) so each sheet of paper will handle four problems on the front and four problems on the back. And number your problems as you go along. Put a star beside any problem number you think you did correctly but you would want to check if there's time. Then when you finish early, you can quickly find your work and double check it.
4. I know this sounds counter-intuitive, but work slowly enough that you don't make mistakes because you are hurrying. This saves time by not having to double check your work on every problem because you know you did it right the first time.
5. Have basic knowledge facts completely memorized—to the point that you don't even have to think about them. Knowing the basic facts saves time when using those facts on the Praxis exam. These knowledge facts are found on my 400 flashcards, but the following are most important to know without thinking:
 - a. Know your multiplication facts (the times tables).
 - b. Know the prime numbers to 100.
 - c. Know the decimal equivalents for $1/2$, $1/3$, $1/4$, $1/5$, and $1/8$.
 - d. Know the first 10 perfect square numbers.
 - e. Know the first 5 perfect cube numbers.
 - f. Know how to quickly find a number's prime factorization.
 - g. Know the divisibility rules.

- h. Know the six basic properties of our number system (e.g. associative property).
 - i. Know how to find the LCM and GCF very quickly.
 - j. Know the formulas for finding circumference, area, and volume of basic geometric objects.
 - k. Know that the three angles of a triangle add to 180° .
 - l. Know the Pythagorean Theorem.
 - m. Know how to apply the two common Pythagorean Triples (2-3-4 and 5-12-13).
 - n. Know how to convert measurements within the metric system (King Henry Doesn't Usually Drink Chocolate Milk).
 - o. Know how to use Unit Analysis to convert measurements within the standard English measurement system.
 - p. Know the difference between estimation and rounding.
 - q. Know place value, the purpose of the decimal dot, expanded notation, and scientific notation.
 - r. Know how to set up and solve a proportion.
 - s. Know the English words that signal addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.
6. Understand the Praxis exam tips on my Flashcards #212 to #224.