

## Activity # 78: Strategic Uses of Outlines

1. Explain to your student the reasons for using an outline to accomplish the following tasks.
2. If you can teach your student how to construct good outlines, you will help him/her become a far more efficient and productive student.
3. **Outlines serve as superior study guides and organizing tools.**

### **Outlines are excellent tools for:**

1. Organizing a Paper
2. Creating a Study Guide for a Test
3. Preparing a Report
4. Writing a Speech
5. Organizing Course Assignments
6. Planning a Class Project
7. Taking Notes from Textbook Chapters

## Activity #79: How to Prepare for Essay Tests

1. Here are some tips for taking essay tests that you can share with your student.
2. Essay tests can be very difficult for students because they are required not only to provide information but also to structure it in a coherent fashion.
3. Practicing these techniques with your student will help him or her gain a great deal of confidence.

### 1. **Keep Track of Your Time**

If you have five questions to answer in 40 minutes, make certain you don't spend too much time on any one question.

### 2. **Read Through the Questions Once**

By familiarizing yourself with all the questions at the outset, you will have much more time to consider your answers.

### 3. **Identify the Directive Words**

Read the directions carefully and pinpoint the key terms. If a teacher wants you to describe, then do so; if she wants you to evaluate, then don't worry so much about description.

### 4. **Outline Your Answer First**

Whether teachers acknowledge it or not, they are greatly influenced by the coherence and structure of your answer. To list facts in random order makes it seem as if you do not have a clear grasp of the material. Try to organize your answers as well as you can.

### 5. **Take Time to Write an Introduction and Conclusion**

A good introduction and conclusion are essential parts of a good essay. They give your responses the appearance of being logical arguments.

## Activity #80: How to Take True-False Tests

1. Students often get "tripped up" by true-false questions because they don't read the question carefully.
2. The key to doing well in true/false tests is to read the questions very carefully.
3. Read over these basic principles with your student.
4. Ask your student practice questions that illustrate these principles.

1. **Look for any word in the question that could make it false.**

If you can falsify an answer by providing a counter-example, the answer is obviously false.

2. **There are generally more true than false answers on a test.**

3. **Look out for extreme modifiers that tend to make a question false:** all, none, never, only, etc.

Once again, try to think of a counter-example that falsifies the answer.

4. **Identify qualifiers that tend to make questions true:** usually, frequently, often, probably, etc.

5. **Questions that state a reason tend to be false.**

Words that justify a statement — since, because, when -- tend to make the statement false because they introduce a reason that is incorrect.

### Activity #8 I: How to Take Multiple-Choice Tests

1. Students need to learn how to take multiple-choice tests since this format is often used on standardized tests.
2. Here are a few things students should know.
3. Review each one of these principles with your student and have him/her explain why it is true.
  1. Read each question with the intention of answering the question without looking at the possible answers.
  2. Use educated guessing. Eliminate two alternatives quickly and then decide between the other two.
  3. Choose the numbers that are in the middle range, not the extremes, when guessing.
  4. Choose answers that are longer and more descriptive, when in doubt.
  5. When two similar answers appear, one is likely correct.

## Activity #82: Improving Reading and Building Vocabulary

Here is some basic information about reading: how we read, how to increase our reading speed, how reading is taught in the schools, and some tips on motivating students to read.

### Increasing Reading Speed

1. As our eyes move across the page they make a series of jerky movements.
2. Whenever they come to rest on a word, this is called a "fixation."
3. Most people fixate on each individual word across a line of print.
4. In order to make our speed increase we must take in more words with each fixation, rather than make our eyes move faster.
5. Practice reading a book with your student.
6. Encourage him/her to use the following principles.
7. By practicing these seven principles, students will improve their reading speed.

**1. Try to avoid focusing on every word.**

**2. Look at groups of 2 or more words.**

**3. Focus on the main words and meanings.**

**4. Work on vocabulary improvement: look up words you don't know!**

**5. Read for a set period every day: 15 minutes a day can add up to 20 books a year!**

**6. Practice reading faster and then slow down for comprehension.**

**7. Read as much as possible from different types of books.**

### What To Do If Your Student Has a Problem Reading

1. As a mentor, you are not expected to be a reading specialist.
2. You may be able to recognize if your student has a problem with his/her reading.
3. If you believe your student has a reading problem, contact a guidance counselor for more information about tutoring assistance.
4. Many students are not good readers due to a limited vocabulary. Teaching them how to use a dictionary can help.