

English STAAR Test-Taking Strategies



Be sure to ask for a **DICTIONARY** and a **HIGHLIGHTER** to use throughout the **ENTIRE TEST**.

Writing Section

- Budget 2.5 hours for the entire section
 - Write the **ESSAY FIRST** before answering any multiple-choice questions
 - Correctly **HIGHLIGHT** the **PROMPT** (usually starts with the words **WRITE AN ESSAY**)
- FOR EXAMPLE:

Read the information in the box below

In 1911, Marie Curie was awarded a Nobel Prize for both Chemistry and Physics due to her discoveries with radiation. Curie's work propelled medical science through her discovery of the X-ray. Like Marie Curie, many other individuals have made a positive impact in various fields.

In order to make a positive impact on society, we should leave the world better than we found it.

Write an essay explaining the importance of making a positive impact on society.

Be sure to—

- Clearly state your thesis
 - Organize and develop your ideas effectively
 - Choose your words carefully
 - Edit your writing for grammar, mechanics
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- Writing the essay should take no more than 1 hour:
 - ❖ 10 minutes to **BRAINSTORM** (DEFINE IT, REMEMBER IT, CONNECT IT, SO WHAT?)
 - ❖ 20-25 minutes to write a **ROUGH DRAFT**
 - ❖ 10-15 minutes to **REVISE** and **EDIT**
 - ❖ 15-20 minutes to **NEATLY** write the **FINAL DRAFT**
 - Use a dictionary for the revising and editing passages and questions.
 - Read each passage slowly and carefully. Make notes on the passage when you find errors.

Reading Section

- Budget 2.5 hours for the entire section
- Read short answer question before reading the selection
- Read and annotate a passage then **IMMEDIATELY** answer the questions for that passage before moving on to the next reading selection.
- Some answers are found directly in the text while others come from your prior knowledge.
- SPECIFIC STRATEGIES TO USE...
 - Process of elimination method:
 - ❖ Eliminate any **OBVIOUSLY WRONG** answer choices
 - ❖ Eliminate any answer choices that are **TOO BROAD OR TOO NARROW** in scope; these answer choices include unnecessary, extra information or not enough information to satisfy the question
 - ❖ Eliminate **ILLOGICAL** answer choices (these don't make sense)
 - ❖ If two answer choices are close (and there will be some that seem somewhat reasonable), choose the **BEST** answer—the answer choice that answers **ALL PARTS** of the question
 - Substitution method (fill-in-the-blank):
 - ❖ **REPHRASE** the question, leaving a blank where the answer should be
 - ❖ Fill in the blank with each answer choice until you find the **BEST** answer to the question
 - Using the context clues method:
 - ❖ When a question directs you to a specific set of lines, words, or phrases, **LOCATE THE REFERENCE**
 - ❖ Read the sentence **PRECEDING** the reference, the sentence **OF** the reference, and the sentence **FOLLOWING** the reference
 - ❖ Choose the **BEST** answer to the question
- Short Answer Responses
 - single-selection short answer response (budget 20 minutes)
 - paired-selection short answer response (budget 20 minutes)
 - Usually a multiple choice question from the reading section will help to answer the short answer responses (there is usually a multiple choice question that thematically links the paired passages)