Praxis II: Subject Assessments - Tips and Resources

The tips and resources below were supplied by teacher educators and students who took the Praxis II assessment.

Several months before you plan to take the Praxis II:

- Audit a class if you know you are weak in that subject.
- For anxiety or test phobias, consult with your campus or private counseling center.
- Study high school or college textbooks from appropriate grade levels and subjects.
- Study your old class notes.
- Use the ETS website to find study materials and tips on taking the Praxis II: http://www.ets.org.
- Use the Advanced Placement web site review test items from specific content areas: http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html.
- Use the GED study materials on Test Prep Review web site: http://testpreview.com/.
- Purchase subject specific folders (e.g., two-pocket folders) that have basic information for specific subjects such as biology, chemistry, etc.
- Request accommodations for the actual ETS test if needed: extra time, ELL and Special Education.
- Some students are finding the study materials on the "TeachingSolutions" web site to be helpful: http://www.teachingsolutions.org/praxisii.html.
- Cliff Notes may offer a basic refresher in math.
- Science: Know how the Periodic Table is set up. Answer may be found within a group or a period of elements.

During the exam:

- Focus on your areas of strength and try to get as many answers correct in those areas. Spend the remaining time on the weak area(s) and again try to get as many correct.
- In most questions, two of the responses can be eliminated using logic and any background the student knows. Eliminate unlikely answers and use logic to choose the answer.
- Use the margins in the exam booklet to work problems or jot down what is already known.
- Some students with test anxiety are finding relaxation techniques helpful when taking the test.
- If you experience distractions you have the right to ask the Proctor to fix the problem:
- talking during the test
- allowing the whole group to take a break together
- allowing test takers to leave early

• Proctors should write the start time on the board - if they do not, write the time on the test book yourself.

General test-taking strategies:

• When studying any test preparation materials be sure that you are familiar with each choice under a multiple choice test question. Chances are, the question will change but the responses (i.e., A, B, C, D, etc.) will remain the same.
• Study sample test questions out loud with someone else who is taking the same test. You may find that you learn additional strategies for taking the test and you will also become familiar with the formal language of the test.
• Keep up on current events.
• The History Channel offers many programs on anthropology, archeology, world history, American history and geography.

Tips from an experienced science teacher who took and passed the General Science: Content Knowledge test (0435).

Following are the steps I used to prepare for the Praxis II General Science test. These steps worked for me - I can’t say they will work for others.

• Order the test prep book from ETS.

• Go through the outline that is presented in the study guide and assess the individual areas that are strengths and weaknesses.

• Do a cursory review of the information that is considered strong-easily remembered. Don’t spend a great deal of time on these areas, just enough to keep the information mentally organized.

• Go on to the areas identified as weak. Take each area and correlate it with an upper level high school text or a textbook from a 100-200 level college course. Read the chapter in the text that covers the weak area. Do the review questions/problems in that chapter to determine understanding. If questions/problems are real difficult, go back and reread the chapter.

• Continue doing this until all weak areas have been covered.

• At the end, a few days before the test will be taken, review all of the items in the study guide to make sure everything has been covered.

• Don’t obsess. Relax a day before the test is to be taken. Go out and do something fun.
• On the night before the test, get a good night’s sleep, have a good breakfast and arrive at the test site with two number two pencils and anything else you are permitted to have. Be confident of your abilities and knowledge.

• On the day of the test, read each question and possible answers carefully. Some of the wording can be tricky. Do the questions that are “easy” first. If a question is too difficult, skip it and go on to the next question. Make sure to leave the answer space blank so it can be revisited later. Continue through the test doing the “easy” questions first. When all of the questions have been covered, go back to the difficult questions that need to be answered and slowly, carefully try to answer them. This technique allows you to get through all of the questions before the test is over. By not skipping the difficult question early in the test and spending too much time on it, you may not get to an easy question that is later in the test because you ran out of time.

• When all the questions have been answered, take a deep breath, relax and go back over the whole test. Reread each question to make sure that something wasn’t misread and answered incorrectly.

• When the test is completed, walk out the door and decompress.

• From my personal experience, the general science test that I took was 120 minutes in length and I took about 70 minutes to go through the test the first time answering only the “easy” questions. Then I spent another 20 minutes going back to the difficult questions that were unanswered. Even after the second reading, there were probably 4-6 questions that were essentially guesses. Finally I spent around 10 minutes skimming the rest of the test. I did catch a couple of errors from rereading the questions a second/third time.

• In preparation for the test, I would estimate that I spent around 60 hours reviewing. I only used one high school chemistry text and one high school physics text to study. On a few areas that gave me more difficulty, I did go to the Internet to see if there were better explanations available. Since I was teaching full time, I felt I had to balance my studying with my job and family needs. Therefore, I would usually read a chapter a night, spending maybe an hour to an hour and a half each night. Once school was out, I was able to spend a little more time each day preparing.

This document is available at: http://dpi.wi.gov/tepdl/testing.html