

Top tips on tests under timed situations

Pupils work in different ways when it is a test- some panic and some thrive in this type of situation. For those who worry or do not perform well in test conditions, I would always say it is important to **stay focused, persevere and don't be afraid to move on from being stuck on a question**. Some of these important reminders and top tips may be helpful below to discuss with your child and the approach they should take.

Test	Time allowed	Number of questions	Average time on each question	Recommendations
<i>Reading</i>	60 minutes	Usually between 32-38 questions	One and a half minutes to allow time to check at the end.	First text- 10-15 mins Second text- 15-20 mins Third text- 20 mins This will allow around 5-10 minutes to check your work at the end.
<i>Grammar & punctuation test</i> (with knowledge of spelling tested to some degree)	45 minutes	Usually 49 questions	Around 45 seconds on each question.	If you are not sure of one, move onto the next and come back to it if time.
<i>Spelling</i>	Not timed- 15 minutes as a guide	20 spelling words in a passage that is read aloud.	N/A	Listen to the words when they are repeated and listen to them at the end when in context and read aloud for the whole passage.

KS2 reading paper support

- It is important to always make a mental note of the page numbers given, to find the answers to section of questions. This saves time.
- It is important to always have the reading booklet in front of you to refer to, as you can, for your answers. Don't ever guess!
- Underline or highlight any key words or phrases, if it is useful.
- Always write within or to the lines given for an answer- do not write too much and waffle.
- Never be afraid to move on from a question you are stuck on- do not dwell too long, as this wastes time. You can come back to it!
- In a test situation, **read between the lines** if you are not sure of a word, **use clues around the word to help put it into a context**.
- Although skimming and scanning is a useful technique for pupils to be familiar with, many of the retrieval questions cannot be answered with simple skimming and scanning for keywords. **Teach pupils to scan for key words from the question and their synonyms** (similar meaning words), which will help with speed.
- Encourage pupils to use grammatical knowledge to help them with **scanning** for answers to retrieval questions, **such as names of people or places which will begin with capital letters**. Again, this is good for time pressures and helps locate information quickly.
- Tell pupils to check their answers by reading the question followed by their answer, if time – they need to **make sure that their answer actually answers the question**, as this is a common error that pupils make.

KS2 reading paper support (continued)

- Children should not be repeating the question within the answer. In **one** word answers, ensure a detailed answer is **not** given in the hope that **one** of the words will be correct (it won't, as they will only accept **one** word in the answer!)
- This approach above is also really important because it does waste an awful lot of time when, for example, a **two-line** space has **five or six lines** of unnecessary writing too!
- Questions with speech or thought bubbles appear regularly for pupils to fill in to infer what characters are thinking or were about to say before they were interrupted. This is a skill worth practising, as it's a way to get easy marks. They need to remember it should be in the right **person**, so if it is a character's feelings, it should be what **they** are feeling in **first person** (put yourself in their shoes with **'I'**).
- Use strategies for working out the meaning of unfamiliar words, linking this to pupils' spelling knowledge of prefixes, suffixes and root words (**Mrs Thompson's spelling ideas will help this**).

Top tips for all the tests if unsure with a short amount of time left (excluding the non-timed spelling test of course)

Reading	Grammar	Spelling
Head for the questions which require the least thinking- tick boxes, lines to or circles around answers .	Can you go over punctuation symbols, so you know them off by heart? ; : - ()	Look at your spelling- does it look right?
If a bit of time, do not avoid the 3 mark questions where you require an impression (adjectives) followed by evidence (a quote from the text). You can pick these marks up easily and they are worth more.	Can you ensure that you always answer a question and you know you haven't missed one? How could you do this? Have you checked each question several times? Have you proved the other answers are definitely wrong?	Listen to the spelling repeated twice, does it sound like what you have written down?
Ensure you have answered all the questions and turned over the back page in case of any further questions.	Remember a root word should contain that base with an addition to the word. Do not change the word e.g. music and an adjective would be 'musical' or a noun 'musician' .	Is there a strategy you use to remember a suffix ending e.g. essential (travel in a line)?
Consider questions that only required a numbered order of events from 1-5. These can be fairly quick and easy to complete.	Remember that pairs of punctuation should have two e.g. a pair of brackets or a pair of dashes. Know the symbols for it and where you put it.	Can you break the word down into syllables?
Guess some tick boxes or true or false answers if right near the end of a test, as you can still get 1 out of 2 marks for only one incorrect answer. Worth having a go.	If you are talking about conjunctions, FANBOYS- remember the rule. All others are subordinating conjunctions. For And Nor But Or Yet So	Make sure your spellings are clear- do not join at all if your handwriting is not legible at times.

