

# Test Taking Strategies - 8th Grade StS - March 5

## SLIDE 1: Introduction Slide

**SAY:** “Today we will be talking about some strategies that you might find useful on your upcoming Writing SOLs. Your English teacher should have told you what days you will be taking your tests. Our focus in STS today will be looking at some tips and tricks you can use during your tests.”

## SLIDE 2: SOL Schedule

*Have the students get out their planners. They need to write down the dates of their SOLs. Some students may have already done this.*

**SAY:** “Here is the schedule for your upcoming Writing SOLs. Let’s take a minute to make sure you know when you will be taking your tests. The writing SOL has two parts. You will take the multiple choice part on one day and the essay part on another day. You need to write your SOL dates in your planner.”

## SLIDE 3: Before an SOL

**SAY:** “It is important to come to school on the day of an SOL prepared for your test.” *Ask a student to read each of the bullets from the slide. Discuss as a class why each one is important.*

## SLIDE 4: The Multiple Choice Test

**SAY:** “Your writing SOL will be taken over the course of two days. One day you will take a multiple choice test. This test will include questions about grammar rules, sentence structure, the writing process and parts of an essay. What are some strategies you know that can help you on multiple choice tests?” *Ask students to share their strategies.*

## SLIDE 5: The Multiple Choice Test

**SAY:** “Here are a few strategies that you can use while taking your multiple choice test.” *Have a student read the list of strategies.*

“Slash the Trash” - **SAY:** “When taking a multiple choice test a great strategy is to cross out any answers you know are wrong. This takes away distracting choices.”

-Rephrase the question **SAY:** “If a question is confusing see if you can rephrase it to make more sense. You can do this in your head or on the paper you are given.”

-Read each question and answer choice carefully **SAY:** “Sometimes questions contain bold or italicized words. These are key words to help you answer the question. Also, if you read the first answer choice and think it is correct and choose it without reading the other choices, you might miss an answer that is a better choice.”

-Skip and return **SAY:** “If you get stuck on a difficult question don’t spend too much time on it. You can always mark it for review and return to it later. Just make sure to check at the end for any questions you may have flagged!”

-Go back over each answer **SAY:** “Reviewing your answers is so important. You should always take the time to look at each question once you finish the test. This allows you to make sure you didn’t skip any questions and you didn’t make any careless mistakes.”

## SLIDES 6: The Essay Test

**SAY:** “The second part of the writing SOL is an essay. You will be given a prompt and asked to write an essay about it. What are some strategies you know that can help you write an essay” *Invite students to share their strategies.*

### **SLIDE 7: The Essay Test**

**SAY:** “There are a few important strategies to use when taking the essay part of the SOL.” *Ask a student to read the strategies.*

-Read the prompt more than once- **SAY:** “If you only read the prompt one time you might miss important parts of the question. By rereading the prompt several times you can think the question through and make sure you know exactly what the prompt is asking you to write about.”

-Create a graphic organizer- PLAN! PLAN! PLAN!- **SAY:** “Before you take the SOL you will be given scrap paper to write on. Use this piece of paper to create a graphic organizer. Graphic organizers help you plan out what you want to write about. It is a great way to visualize your plan for your essay. We will be looking at some specific types you can use later in the lesson.”

-Reread and edit your writing- **SAY:** “Editing your essay is an important part of the writing process. Rereading your essay will allow you to find any spelling, grammar, or structural errors in your essay.”

### **SLIDE 8: Graphic Organizers**

**SAY:** “Let’s look at a few different graphic organizers you can use during the essay part of the SOL.”

### **SLIDE 9: Compare/Contrast**

**SAY:** “One type of graphic organizer you may be familiar with is a venn diagram. Venn diagrams are used when comparing and contrasting to objects or ideas. What are some things you have compared in a venn diagram before?” *Possible answers could include- characters in a story, beliefs of political parties, pros and cons of a decision.*

### **SLIDE 10: Concept Map**

**SAY:** “Concept maps are a very versatile graphic organizer. They can be used for almost any type of writing. The most common way to use a concept map is by thinking about the main idea for your writing and putting that in the center circle. Then you use the other circles to write down your supporting details.”

### **SLIDE 11: Sequence**

**SAY:** “Another graphic organizer helps when you need to plan our a sequence of events. This sequence organizer gives you a way to visualize the order of events. Sequence graphic organizers can be used when you need to describe the order in which something happens or when you are explaining how to do something. How could you use this arrow to plan your writing?”

*Possible answers could include- writing each step in order in the arrow, break the arrow up into parts and put one step in each part*

### **SLIDE 12 and 13: Practice**

**SAY:** “Let’s look at these released Writing SOL prompts and decide which graphic organizer you would use for each one.”

*Have a student read the first prompt. Ask the class to discuss at their table which graphic organizer they would use.*

*Have a couple of groups share out what they chose. Repeat with the other 5 examples.*

*They should chose the following for each:*

- |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Sequence         | 4. Concept Map      |
| 2. Compare/Contrast | 5. Compare/Contrast |
| 3. Concept Map      | 6. Sequence         |

### **SLIDE 14: My SOL Worries**

**SAY:** “While it is completely normal to be worried or stressed about big tests like the SOL it is important to remember that

*Invite students to come up and write on the board some of their worries or stresses about the SOL.*

**SAY:** “Now that we have shared some of the things we are worried about, let's try to let go of them.” **ERASE THE BOARD**  
*“By erasing the thoughts from our heads we can go into the upcoming writing SOL worry free.”*