



# PEN Notes: Fact Sheet #13

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## Preparing for the PAWS

The Proficiency Assessment for Wyoming Students (PAWS) is a test which meets the current *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) federal law testing requirements for language arts (reading and writing) and mathematics in grades three through eight (3 - 8) and 11. Students are tested for science in grades 4, 8, and 11.

In the spring, all Wyoming public school students will be assessed. Students in grade ten are allowed to take advantage of an early testing opportunity. Students may "bank" successful mathematics and/or reading and writing scores during their tenth grade year. AYP will be determined only for students in grade eleven using their "banked" grade 10 scores or scores achieved during their grade 11 year, whichever is higher.

In order to have a valid assessment of students, more than one type of question needs to be used. These question types include:

- ✓ **Multiple choice questions** give students 4 possible answers, only one of which is correct. This type of questioning allows for testing a broad range of content in a fairly short time span.
- ✓ **Constructed-response questions** ask students to respond in sentence or paragraph form. This type of questioning allows a student to explain what he/she understands or thinks about a particular topic or point.
- ✓ **Extended-response questions** ask students to respond in more depth and length than a sentence or paragraph, so these longer writings may be a page or so depending on grade level.

## What can parents do to help students perform well on the PAWS?

- Let your child know that testing is important and that he should do the best he can on the test.
- Be sure your child gets plenty of sleep during the testing days.
- Provide your child nourishing meals, especially during the testing days.
- Be sure your child is at school on time.
- Visit with your child about the testing at the end of the day.
- Do something calming and fun with your child to help him/her relax.
- When test results come back, talk about the results with your child.
- Praise your child for doing her best.



# What can students do to perform well on the PAWS?

## Before the test:

- ✓ Get a good night's sleep. You won't be able to think clearly if you're tired.
- ✓ Eat a nourishing breakfast and/or lunch. If you're hungry, you won't be able to focus on the test.
- ✓ Gather pencils, erasers, calculators, and any other materials you will need.



## During the test:

- ✓ Be a good listener. Listen to the directions given by the teacher. If you don't know what to do, ask for clearer directions.
- ✓ Read and follow the directions in the test booklet.
- ✓ Plan your time. Do the easy questions first so you can spend more time on the harder ones.
- ✓ If required, fill in circles darkly and neatly.
- ✓ Completely erase answers if you change your mind.
- ✓ Trust your instincts; your first choice is usually the right answer.

## Clues for Multiple Choice Tests:

1. Follow directions.
2. Read the whole passage before answering any questions in case you have to draw conclusions about the material and not simply find a fact.
3. Carefully read each question and the choices.
4. If the question is hard, underline key words.
5. Try to put hard questions in your own words.
6. Predict the right answer.
7. Pick the answer that is closest to the one you predicted.
8. Guess wisely if you have to guess.
9. Mark your answer carefully.
10. Check your work, but do not spend too much time on any one question.
11. If there is no penalty for guessing, use a smart guessing plan (predict the answer, cross off unlikely answers, choose the most likely answer).

## Constructed-Response Test Tips:

1. Read the directions carefully.
2. Think about how you will organize your response—write a brief outline.
3. Write your response as completely and clearly as you can.
4. Review your response, checking for correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
5. If you hand-write your response, make sure it is readable!
6. If you are allowed to write your response on the computer, be sure to use spell-check to reduce the number of grammar and spelling errors.



This website is designed to provide practice activities for the skills needed for online PAWS assessment:  
<http://www.internet4classrooms.com/assistance.htm>