

Getting results – help your teen prepare for provincial tests

Help your teen prepare for the grade 9 math test

For parents of middle and secondary school students

Practice makes perfect

The most important point to remember about the grade 9 Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) math test is that it tests what your teen learns in math class every day. So the best way to help your teen prepare for the test is to help him with his math every day. Math is just like any skill, practice makes perfect. Nobody expects to be good at playing an instrument without practice.

Good thoughts can equal good results

Many people have strong feelings about math, and they are not always good. Several days of math testing can also be very stressful. Be positive about the test and your teen's final results. **A “can-do” attitude improves chances for success.**

In general, be as positive about math as possible. Support doesn't always have to be answering math questions. Showing interest and offering advice on work and study habits is also a good way to encourage your teen. Offering support throughout the year is the best thing you can do.

What's on the test?

Your teen is the best person to answer this question. Ask her to describe and explain what she has covered in her grade 9 math class. Encourage her to use her course outline, textbook, notes or worksheets to remind him of all topics. By the end of the course, she will know what's on the test.

For advance knowledge at the beginning of the course, or to make sure all topics are included in the course summary, get to know the Ontario Secondary School Curriculum for grade 9 mathematics. Visit the Ministry of Education's website at ww.edu.gov.on.ca.

Yes, you can practise a test

You may think that you can practise math questions, but you can't practice a test. That isn't true thanks to the EQAO website and all its support materials. On the website, www.eqao.com, there are sample tests and sample answers. The answers show a complete solution and incorrect solutions, with the errors explained.

The marking scheme is included along with explanations of what answers are expected and why. This comes from the Achievement Chart for the math curriculum, which is also on the Ministry of Education website.

Your teen may not have mastered all the different styles of questions, or he may not know what an ideal answer looks like to a particular question. **Practising an actual EQAO test is a very important step.** Being familiar with the test format helps to reduce test anxiety. It is also a great way to review the course and study for the actual test as well as final exams. Remember that your teen may not be able to complete all the questions until he has learned all the topics in his grade 9 math class.

If that wasn't reason enough to visit

The EQAO website also has the following helpful information:

- a parent information section
- actual formulas used on the test
- frequently asked questions
- keywords and phrases from the test

Both you and your teen should visit and explore the site.

Communication is always the key

Students are often not as successful as they could be because of the poor quality of the

communication of their answers, not necessarily because of any difficulty with the material on the test. When your teen writes the practice test, go over her answers together and look especially at the amount and quality of what she wrote. Ask her to explain her answers to you in more detail. Then help her write out the more detailed explanations. Encourage her to use lots of words as well as diagrams, formulas, graphs, charts, and well set out calculations.

Go over the keywords and phrases together. Knowing exactly what these words mean and what kind of answers are expected when these words are used can make a huge difference in the quality of his answers.

Remember the positive attitude that is so helpful? Not quitting is part of that attitude. Any answer that has mathematics and good reasoning behind it can be marked for communication even if it is the wrong answer. Encourage your teen to try every question, even if all she can do is write down some relevant formulas or ideas.

Where else can you find help?

The Peel board's *Math Online* website (mathonline.peelschools.org) is an excellent resource offering homework help, math practice and a list of other useful sites, including links to the EQAO website.

You can find other approved textbooks and resources in a library or by asking to borrow some from your teen's math teacher. Many resources are topic-specific even if they do not exactly match the grade 9 curriculum.

Get in contact with the teacher. The teacher will be familiar with the test and many ways to support your teen.

Some schools offer a program called *Counting on You*. This board program runs after school and offers help in numeracy, specifically made to prepare students for the grade 9 EQAO math test, and literacy, for the grade 10 EQAO literacy test. Contact your local school to find out more.

Cheat! Oh, did I say that?

Some people think that it is cheating to know what is on a test ahead of time, or to know exactly what is wanted or how the teacher, e.g. the marker, thinks. But your teen can do all of those things with your help and the help of the EQAO website.

The grade 9 curriculum doesn't change from year to year. The types of questions are always the same. How things are marked, including the exact expectations for sample questions, is available for all to see.

The test is different for applied & academic courses

Discuss his short- and long-term goals. His post-secondary plans will affect his choice of which math course to take in high school. Students enrolled in Locally Developed Courses do not write the EQAO test.

And most importantly . . .

No one can do well on a test that isn't completed. **Being there is the most important thing.** Also, a good night's sleep, a good breakfast, a good attitude and a good math set, along with a pencil, eraser and calculator are excellent things to have for the test. Remember that your teen's teacher may be marking part of the test and may include it as part of your teen's final mark.

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