

Educational Talent Search Student Newsletter



A Publication of Clarion University's Educational Talent Search

Fall 2010

EDUCATIONAL TALENT SEARCH RECEIVES FUNDING!



The US Department of Education currently funds our program at Clarion University in the amount of \$380,961. ETS will be submitting a new proposal in late December that will determine continued funding for the next five years.

In the summer of 2010, ETS was awarded a grant in the amount of \$1,360 to help cover travel (bus) costs for our annual student incentive trip. This project is funded in part by the Venango Area Community Foundation-Youth Philanthropy Board, and will take place in Summer 2011.

For the second year, ETS will offer *Get SMART!* This year SMART will address careers, service, and opportunities related to social service, management, architecture, recreation, and theatre. ETS received funding from the Venango Human Services Fund of the Venango Area Community Foundation in the amount of \$3,800.

ETS continues to work with Venango Training and Development Center to provide STEM programming. In 2010, VTDC helped to sponsor our CSI program, nanotechnology, Mythbusters, and our trips to CCI and WYEP, and Presque Isle, Ridge Environmental Center, and Lincoln Metals Recycling.

Additionally, there are still a few spots available for ETS participants that meet specific income guidelines to participate in the cooperative with Clarion County United Way - Family Savings Account Program.

So, check our website often (www.clarion.edu/ets), listen to school announcements, read the paper, and watch your mail - then join us for some great activities and experiences!

FINANCIAL AID - KNOW IT NOW!

There are four main types of financial aid available to help pay for your future education.

Scholarships - Money awarded that generally does not have to be paid back. Scholarships are given to students who demonstrate or show promise of high achievement in a specific area, such as academics, the arts, or athletics.

Grants - Money awarded that typically does not have to be paid back. Grants are given to students based upon financial need. There are state and federal grants.

Loans - Money borrowed that must be paid back with interest.

Work-Study - Money paid to students who work on-campus or off-campus to help pay for school costs. Work-study may be funded by the state or federal government or by the school that the student attends.

So, what can you do now - ahead of time?

- \$ Consider earning money outside of your home, whether babysitting, mowing lawns, or working in an established business. A job can be an opportunity to learn about careers, "network" with professionals, provide responsibility and allow for a feeling of accomplishment.
- \$ Learn to "pay" yourself first - put money into a savings or investment before you are tempted to spend it.
- \$ Open a bank account. It is a good way to learn about money management and to watch your dollars grow with a goal in mind.

ESSAY WRITING MADE SIMPLE



"I can't procrastinate any longer! I **MUST** write this essay because it is due **TOMORROW!**" Sound familiar?

You finally sit down to write and have absolutely no idea where to begin. As your frustration builds, you begin to get upset. I mean *really* upset. Instead of throwing objects across the room, being mean to your little brother, or simply having a "melt down" with excessive tears...**STOP!** Take a few deep breaths and look at the following five simple steps. Complete one step at a time and before you know it - you will have a quality essay.

1. Choose a topic that interests you.

It is much easier to brainstorm ideas (step two) when you select a topic that matters to you. Make sure the topic is not too broad or too narrow. Pick a subject that you can write about, yet not one that would require volumes of information to get your point across.

2. Brainstorm.

Jot down everything you can think of about your topic. Let your ideas flow. Write down thoughts and phrases. You will have an easier time organizing your thoughts (step three), if you dream up a large number of ideas in this early stage.

3. Organize ideas.

Review your brainstorming. Narrow your ideas into three main thoughts - these become your main ideas. Write them down. Review your brainstorming notes again and pull out ideas that can be used to support the three main ideas. Write down these points under each main idea. Now move to step four!

4. Write a first draft.

Now that your ideas are organized, begin a rough draft. Take your three main ideas and create an **introductory paragraph**. This is where you introduce your topic and let the reader know the main ideas you will talk about in the next few (middle) paragraphs. The middle paragraphs (**the body**) contain the heart of your essay. State each main idea in a paragraph of its own and share with the reader all the supporting information that came up while brainstorming. Use examples and details to support the main ideas in an organized way. In the last paragraph (**the conclusion**) restate your three main ideas and make sure the reader has no doubt where you stand on your topic.

5. Read and revise your draft.

Reread your rough draft. So many times students write only a rough draft and turn it in. You must reread your work. Correct spelling errors, punctuation, run-on sentences, subject-verb agreement and so on. Do this at least twice and even more often if you want to receive an excellent grade.

Remember that help is always nearby. If possible, have someone else proofread your writing. Use your dictionary, thesaurus, and MS Word tutorial. Then ask a friend or parent for help and an additional opinion.

THE MS WORD TUTORIAL

Don't forget about the MS Word spelling and grammar check. Most students never explore Word's grammar capabilities which are quite extensive. Go to the Review tab and select Spelling & Grammar in the proofing section. You will be surprised at the options that are available including word count. Proofing your papers will help to increase your writing scores.



COMPUTER TIPS

Never turn your computer off while you're in the middle of a program or if you have windows open. Always close all programs and windows before shutting down. If a program freezes, try Ctrl+Alt+Del before you do anything else.

Never turn your computer off and then turn it back on without waiting at least 60 seconds. The system needs at least that long to reset.

Never remove a disk or CD until the drive light has turned off. It usually takes a few seconds, but if it's still on, don't push that release button!

Never use a magnet around your computer or monitor.

Never force a disk into the drive. If it doesn't fit, you may have it upside down or backwards.

Never eat or drink around your computer.

Always make sure you turn your computer off before you connect any new hardware. It will save you trouble down the road.

SHOOTING FOR AS



Do you ever feel like you could strangle whomever invented homework? Don't worry. I have a study strategy that will get rid of those pesky overwhelming feelings from too many assignments and challenging classes.

M.U.R.D.E.R (A Study Strategy)*

Mood: Get into a positive mood. Choose a good time and place to study and approach the study session with an upbeat attitude.

Understand: Make a note of any information that puzzles you.

Recall: After studying a chapter or assignment, put what you have learned into your own words.

Digest: Go back to what you did not understand and reconsider the information. If you still don't get it, ask a classmate or your teacher for help as soon as you can.

Expand: Ask yourself three questions about the material:

- *If I could speak to the author, what would I ask or what criticism would I offer?
- *How can I apply this material to me personally?
- *How can I make this information interesting and understandable to others?

Review: Go over the material once, twice, three times or however often it takes to master it.

*Barron's Pocket Guide to Study Tips

MURDERS, MYSTERIES, AND MAYHEM

It's been proven that reading (just 30 minutes a day) is a great way to improve your vocabulary and reading comprehension. Reading also improves concentration and conversational skills, and boosts your knowledge and creativity. This all leads to academic success. Here's a young adult reading list that is guaranteed to thrill you:

Never Trust a Dead Man by Vivian Vande Velde

Wrongly convicted of murder and punished by being sealed in a tomb with a dead man, seventeen-year-old Selwyn enlists the help of a witch and the resurrected victim to find the true killer.

Christopher Killer: A Forensic Mystery
by Alane Ferguson

Cameryn convinces the county coroner (her dad) to let her be his assistant. She never dreamed her first autopsy would be a friend.

The Witch of Blackbird Pond
by Elizabeth George Speare

Kit's headstrong behavior and friendship with an old Quaker woman put her at risk of being regarded as a witch.

The House of Dies Drear by Virginia Hamilton

A family moves into an enormous house once used as a hiding place for runaway slaves. Mysterious sounds, events, and discoveries of secret passageways make the family believe they are in great danger.

Getting Lincoln's Goat by E.M. Goldman

Tenth-grader Elliot wants to be a detective when he grows up. When he discovers that Lincoln the goat, the school mascot, is missing, he and some of his classmates get a taste of what their chosen careers would really be like.

And Then There Were None by Agatha Christie

Ten strangers, each with a dark secret, are gathered together on an isolated island. One by one they die.

The Body of Christopher Creed by Carol Plum-Ucci

A classmate of Torey Adams disappears into thin air. Did he run away or was he murdered?

Double Helix by Nancy Werlin

Eli discovers a shocking secret while working for a Nobel Prize-winning scientist whose specialty is genetic engineering.

The Thief by Megan Whalen Turner

A known thief is made to help the king's magus locate Hamiathes's Gift that is said to confer the right of rule.

Down the Rabbit Hole by Peter Abrahams

Ingrid Levin is in the wrong place at the wrong time, or at least her shoes are. When she tries to get them back, she finds a dead body instead.

Visit www.teenreads.com, www.ala.org (YALSA booklists), or www.bookspot.com/youngadult.htm for more lists and book recommendations.



ACE WITH GRACE!



Tests, tests and more tests! Are you feeling overwhelmed? Are PSSAs driving you crazy along with all the other tests you have in your classes? Relax, you are NOT alone! All students feel pressure and anxiety about test taking. As a matter of fact, it is normal to feel this way. The stress created when you are preparing for a test can actually benefit you. Yes, benefit you. Although stress is often thought of as negative, it is actually a positive motivator. If you don't have stress you won't be as successful as you can be. Here are some helpful hints to get you through even the most dreaded tests:

The DETER Method

- D = DETER** -Read the test directions carefully.
-Ask your teacher to explain anything you don't understand.
- E = Examine** -Examine the entire test.
-Break the test into smaller parts that are manageable.
- T = Time** -Decide how much time you can allot to each part of the test.
-Planning your time is important. If you spend too much time in one area, you will run out of time.
- E = Easy** -Always answer the EASY questions first; then move to the harder ones.
- R = Review** -If you planned your time, you should have time to review your answers.
-Review the directions one more time, just to make sure they were followed.

(Deter: To prevent something from happening - in this case, preventing a bad grade!)

Use your voice on MULTIPLE CHOICE

-Answer each question in your head, before looking at the possible choices. If you know the answer before you look at the choices, you will not get confused when you make your selection.

-If you don't know an answer, mark the question and move on. You can always go back if time permits.

-If you still don't know the answer:

- ▶ If two answers are similar, except for a few words, choose one of these answers.
- ▶ If two answers have similar sounding/looking words such as *intermediate* and *intermittent*, then choose one of these.

- ▶ If the answer calls for sentence completion, eliminate the answers that would not form grammatically correct sentences.
- ▶ If answers cover a wide range, choose one in the middle (1, 18, 19, 53).
- ▶ If there is no penalty for guessing...GUESS!

Don't convulse over TRUE OR FALSE

-Answer true/false questions quickly. They are not usually worth many points, so don't waste your time grueling over low point questions.

-If ANY part of the statement is false...choose FALSE.

-Look for qualifiers like "all," "most," "sometimes," "never" or "rarely." These are key words in the answer. "Always" and "never" usually indicate a false answer.

Go to the bank to FILL IN THE BLANK

-Concentrate on keywords and facts.

-Be brief.

-Put time into studying. If you know the material, you can answer these questions quickly.

OPEN BOOK tests

-Place tabs or paperclips in your book/notebook so you can easily find answers.

-Number and date your notes as you take them to make sure it is easy to find information.

-Prepare! These are often the most difficult tests you take. Be organized and prepared.

Don't stray on the ESSAY

-Whip up a quick outline before you start to write.

-Get to the point quickly.

-Include part of the question in your answer.

-Expand your answer with supporting ideas and facts.

Use your PENCIL to stencil

-When taking machine graded tests, make sure you are filling in the blank for the correct question.

-Re-check your questions and answers after each section.

-Fill in the blanks completely and watch for sloppy marks which can confuse the computer.

"The DETER Strategy for Taking Tests." Retrieved from: <http://www.how-to-study.com/study-skills/en/taking-tests/46/the-deter-strategy-for-taking-tests/>, October 21, 2010.



THE DREADED SAT



Any test that lasts three hours and 45 minutes and is made up of math, reading, and writing is going to make you stressed. Here is the general scoop on each section and some tips to survive the torture.

The **math** section includes fill-ins and multiple choice questions. It tests basic math fundamentals, algebra, geometry, and assorted other topics. You do not need to know complex math like trigonometry or calculus to do well. Formulas are provided and calculators are permitted. Don't go out and buy a new calculator, a simple one will do.

The **critical reading** section contains multiple choice questions which include sentence completion, short passages, and long passages. You don't need any special knowledge for this section, just be ready to think critically. The better your vocabulary and reading comprehension - the better you will do on this section.

The **writing** section is composed of multiple choice questions and a short essay. To do well on this section, study basic grammar rules such as agreement and verb tense. You will identify sentence errors, improve sentences, and improve paragraph structure. Essays are scored on a scale of one to six. Two examiners grade your ability to organize, express an idea, and support your idea while using proper sentence and paragraph structure.

So here are some tips to take away the torture:

- Questions tend to get harder. Most people do better if they spend more time on the easy or medium questions (first two-thirds).
- If you are in a time crunch, follow your personal order of difficulty. If you are better at geometry than algebra, skip the algebra and go to geometry.
- Remember there is a penalty for guessing, but if you can eliminate choices, your odds are better at answering correctly.
- Brush up on math fundamentals.
- Build your vocabulary by reading and being familiar with roots, prefixes, and suffixes.
- Check for careless mistakes after a series of questions; try every five.
- Mark up your test booklet: underline, circle, summarize.
- Circle skipped questions on both the booklet and answer key.

- Know your speed and move on when completely stumped.
- Use these free practice sites to prepare: www.prepinteractive.com, www.collegeboard.com, and www.majortests.com.



TEN "GOOGLING" TIPS

Many of us use Google as an indispensable search tool. Instead of just typing in a phrase and wading through thousands of results, here are a few ways to make your search more efficient.

1. **OR:** Google normally searches for pages that contain all the words you search, but you can use the "OR" operator (or use the | symbol). Note: "OR" must be in capitals.
2. **Quotation marks:** If you want to search for an exact phrase-in the exact order-without any changes, use quotes around your terms.
3. **Not:** If you want to exclude a term, use the "-" symbol. Think of it as a subtraction sign.
4. **Wildcard:** The "*" symbol is a wildcard. It tells Google to treat the asterisk as a place holder for an unknown. This is useful if you can't remember an exact title, or the exact spelling of a name. It's also useful for finding information only in certain domains, such as *.edu.
5. **Definitions:** Use the "define:" operator to get a quick definition, define: persepolis.
6. **Calculator:** Type a calculation into the search box and get an answer. It's usually faster than calling up your computer's calculator.
7. **Site-specific:** Use the "site:" operator to search only within a certain website.
8. **Vertical search:** Instead of searching for a term across the web, search within a specialized field. Google has a number of specific searches, allowing you to search within blogs, news, books, and more. Use Blog Search, Images, Book Search, Scholar, Local/Maps, Patent Search and many other available options.
9. **Music:** The "music:" operator returns content related only to music.
10. **Numbers:** Google recognizes patterns in numbers, so you can search by: telephone number, vehicle identification number, UPC code, patent number, stock symbol, and more.



Attention Seniors!

Mark your calendars!

FAFSA Completion Day

Saturday, February 12, 2011

Cranberry High School and a Clarion County site to be determined.

Details to follow!

www.fafsa.gov (after January 1, 2011)

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For more information on postsecondary education or questions pertaining to Talent Search, contact:

Phone: 814-393-2071 Toll free: 1-888-533-6487
Fax: 814-393-1804

Rhonda McMillen-Toth - Director -
rmcmillen@clarion.edu

Joni Kifer - Administrative Assistant -
jkifer@clarion.edu

Connie Bradley - Academic Skills Instructor -
cbradley@clarion.edu

Jodi Burns - Outreach Coordinator -
jburns@clarion.edu

Tami Doverspike - Academic Skills Instructor -
tdoverspike@clarion.edu

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Educational Talent Search
219 Ralston Hall
Clarion University of PA
840 Wood Street
Clarion, PA 16214-1232
25333101311.1