

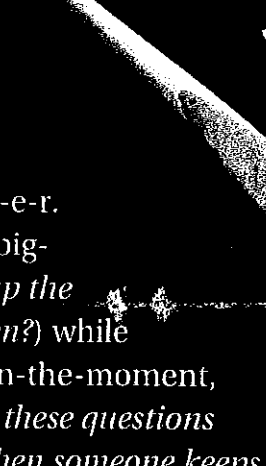
YOUR LIFE

TAKE TESTS

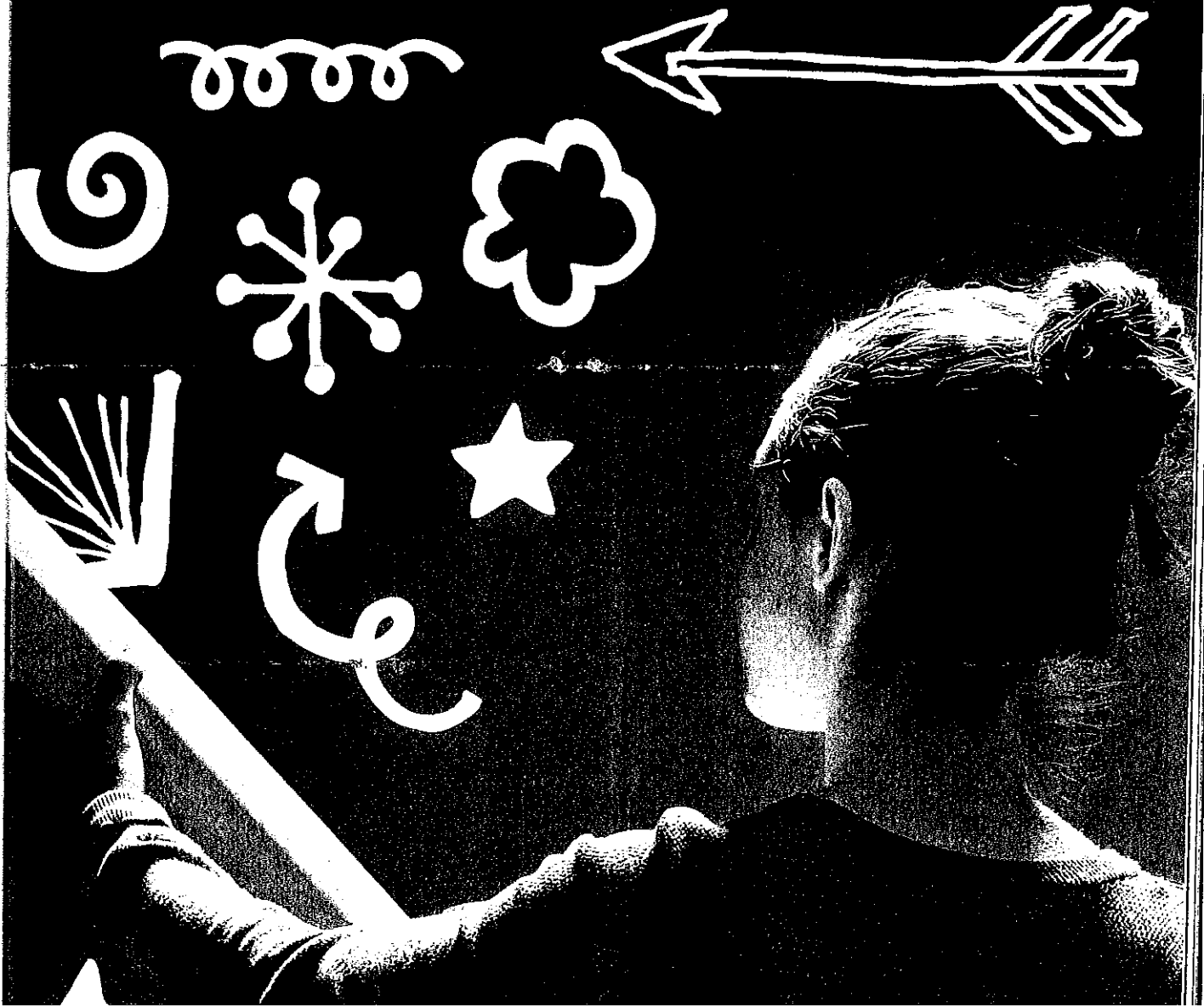


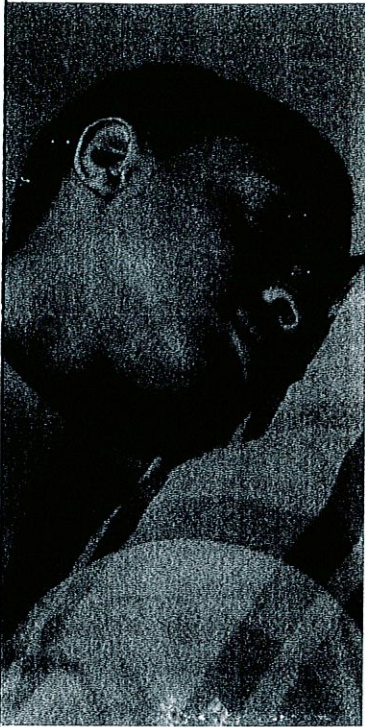
Don't let standardized test insanity drag you down. This guide will help you survive the toughest

NO ONE loves test season—that stretch of days when you feel trapped in your classroom, tapping away at a computer or bubbling in answers for what feels like f-o-r-e-v-e-r. Part of the anxiety comes from the big-picture pressure (*Did I really soak up the Pythagorean theorem way back when?*) while the rest takes the form of random, in-the-moment, very nervous energy. (*Am I tackling these questions fast enough? And how can I focus when someone keeps*



LIKE A BOSS!





RULE
1

TAKE SLEEP SERIOUSLY

No more denying it: Test scores have been scientifically proven to benefit from sleep, says Dr. Alon Y. Avidan, a neurologist and sleep expert. Use these tips to fall asleep faster.

NOON	AFTER SCHOOL	8 P.M.	9 P.M.	10(ish) P.M.
Cut off your caffeine. It may help you plow through sports or homework, but—even if you consume it hours before bedtime—it can keep you up.	Get moving! A little exercise will help you de-stress and tire you out, which will prime you to fall asleep more easily and sleep more deeply.	Set your thermostat to 67-68 degrees. Cooler temps in the evening are linked to the production of melatonin, a hormone that helps you sleep.	Shut down your screens. The light from your phone, computer, and TV is an activating signal for the circadian clock that keeps your brain awake.	Bedtime! It doesn't have to be 10 p.m. exactly—to find yours, work backward from when you need to wake up, allowing for at least 8 hours of sleep.

RULE
2

DON'T SKIP BREAKFAST

Admit it: You've complained about your lack of exam stamina, aka that sleepy "who cares?" feeling you get

midway through a marathon morning of testing. But the only formula you need to keep you going is this one.

CARB + PROTEIN + FIBER = LASTING BRAINPOWER!

These easy, yummy breakfasts from registered dietitian Sarah B. Krieger all complete the equation!

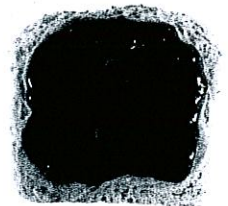
EGG SANDWICH:

Whisk an egg in a small glass bowl, then pop it in the microwave for 30 seconds, covered. Scoop onto a toasted whole-grain English muffin and top with a slice of cheese!



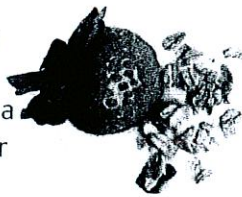
PB&J:

Try any nut or seed butter—whether it's almond, peanut, or sunflower—plus a little jelly on whole-grain bread or toast. It's an oldie but a goodie!



YOGURT COMBO:

Greek yogurt has more protein than regular yogurt—grab one on your way out the door, plus a baggie of whole-grain cereal for crunch. Don't forget a spoon!



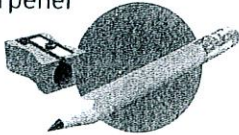
LEFTOVER PIZZA:

Why wait for dinner? Cheese and crust give you the right mix of carbs and protein. Heat it up if you have time; eat it cold if you're rushing.



CHECKLIST: Pack this on test day!

- ❑ Extra pencils plus a pencil sharpener



- ❑ A permitted calculator



- ❑ Your healthy snack (See box on p. 8.)



- ❑ Water (When you're even mildly dehydrated, your thinking gets foggy.)



- ❑ Entertainment! (A favorite magazine or book will help you unwind post-exam, either at lunch or on your ride home.)



RULE 3

LEARN THIS SNEAKY STRETCH

During a test, it will: **(a)** get oxygen flowing to wake up your brain; **(b)** make you feel more confident. And you can do it without leaving your desk!



1. Sit toward the front of your chair.
2. Reach your arms back to hold the sides of your chair (as shown).
3. Lift your chest and squeeze your shoulders together behind you.
4. Repeat a few times, breathing as you do it.

SOURCE: Mayuri Gonzalez, program director of The School Yoga Project

RULE 4

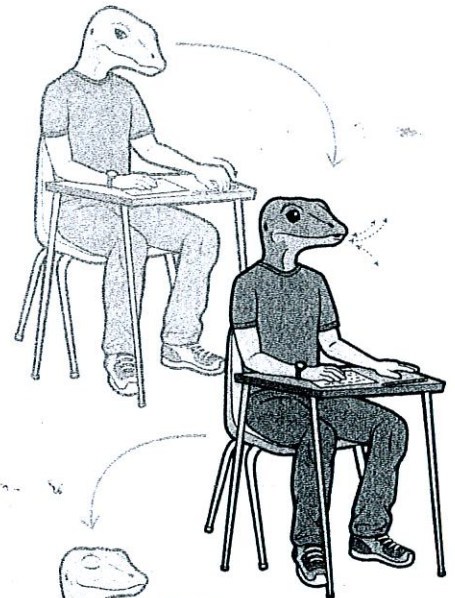
HAVE A SECRET STRESS WEAPON

It will help you tame your lizard brain! (Yes, you read that right.)

Some stress is good: It gives you an energy boost and motivates you to try your best, says Dr. Dzung Vo, author of *The Mindful Teen*. "But when we get overwhelmed with stress, our 'lizard brain' takes over," he explains. This **primitive** instinct is designed to help us survive danger (like animal attacks!) but isn't capable of focusing on a test. So how can you halt a mid-test meltdown? Try the STOP approach:

S Stop.

In lizard-brain mode, you're on autopilot and might not make the best decision. So put your pencil down for a second!

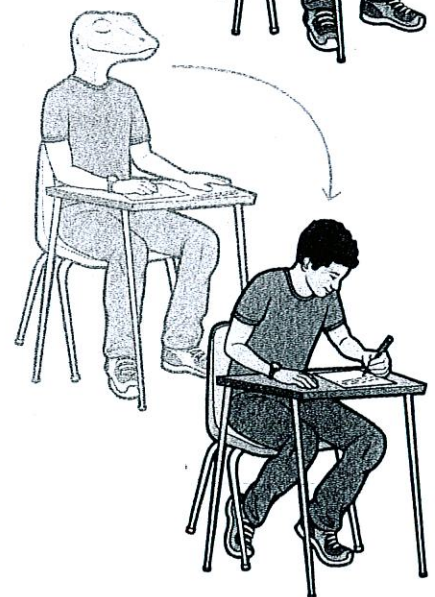


T Take three deep breaths.

Breathe in and out, slowly.

O Observe.

Close your eyes, and recognize that you're not in danger. You're OK.



P Proceed.

Now that you've calmed your body and mind, your good ol' human brain can concentrate again!

POP QUIZ

Which is the best mid-test snack?



A.
A handful
of
jellybeans



B.
A baggie
of fruit-
and-nut
trail mix



C.
An
apple

Answer: B. Mental work **depletes** glucose, the type of sugar (found in everything from fruit to candy) that gives your body energy. So for tests that have a break, you want to pair a little sweetness with protein, which will give your snack staying power. Trail mix is the perfect combo!

SOURCE: Krieger



Real-Life Stress-Buster

"I get really stressed out, but tactical breathing helps me. Basically, you take four breaths and picture each one drawing a line to complete a square. It may sound cheesy, but it has been proven that oxygen flow to your brain allows you to think more clearly and stop panic and anxiety." —Alexa, 14, Colorado



PACE YOURSELF

You've been there: Everyone appears to be racing through the test while you're still on question No. 1. (Or you reach the end first, then panic: *Did I skip something?*) Pacing yourself is tricky, so let these strategies from test-prep experts help:

1. Understand the rules. Find out before test day whether your exam is timed and what you're allowed to bring into the room. The last thing you want is the wrong calculator or a mid-test snack that's against the rules.

2. If your test is timed, write the start time, midpoint, and end time at the top of the test or on a scrap sheet of paper—it's a simple way to keep track of your progress.

3. Answer the easiest questions first. Put a star next to ones you're not sure of (or note them on your scrap sheet), and go back to them after you've nailed the answers you know.

4. Practice! You may not want to hear it, but practice will help you build up your **stamina**—and confidence. Ask your teachers ahead of time for practice questions or the prep tips they recommend.



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR ADDITIONAL EXPERTS: Darla M. Castelli, Ph.D., professor at the University of Texas at Austin, Department of Kinesiology and Health Education; Adam Ingersoll, co-founder of Compass Education Group; Taylor Kelly, marketing director for Bright Kids; Ash Kramer, director of curriculum, Compass Education Group; Joanne Spence, executive director, Yoga in Schools; Elie Venezky, educational director, Prestige Prep. "STOP" approach based on research by Elisha Goldstein, Ph.D., and Bob Stahl, Ph.D.