Strategy #4- Test-Taking Strategies – Following Directions

No matter the subject, following directions is one of the most important ways to increase your chances of success on a test. Conversely. and perhaps even more importantly, **not** following directions can keep you from succeeding, which can be very frustrating when you really think you know the information on the test!

Reasons Following Directions on Math Tests Can Be Particularly Challenging:

* Directions have more than one step, and/or different types of steps
* Answers may need to be copied, transferred, labeled, circled, etc.
* Answers may need to be converted into another form in order to be correctly expressed and final (examples: measurement conversions, fractions in lowest terms, etc.)

How to Make Following the Directions Easier

* Highlight or number the different steps
* **Example:** List all the factors of the numbers. Circle the common factors. Write the greatest common factor (GCF) of the numbers
* 1. List all the factors of the numbers. 2. Circle the common factors. 3. Write the greatest common factor (GCF) of the numbers.
* When answers need to be copied or transferred, reread the problem and your answers to make sure you don’t miss any, and that you copy your numbers correctly! This also includes labels whenever they apply! (measurements, degrees, problem solving answers, etc.)
* When converting and/or labeling answers to make them final, make sure you do it **every single time** it applies!
* If you can’t read your answer, your teacher probably won’t be able to read it, either! If you need more space to make sure your answer is legible, ask your teacher if you may write answers on the side or back of the page or on a separate sheet of paper. If you do this, though, make sure you follow all the directions, and use the strategies I’ve already mentioned to make sure you do!