

The 5 Biggest Mistakes Parents Make in the Final Weeks Before OC

And What to Do Instead (Before It Is Too Late)

A free resource from Scholarly Training

For parents of Year 4 students sitting the OC test in 2026

INSIDE THIS GUIDE:

- The 5 errors we see Year 4 families make every year in the final stretch
- Why each mistake directly costs marks on test day
- The specific fix for each one (things you can do this week)
- How to tell if your current approach is helping or hurting
- The one question that determines whether your child is actually ready

The Final Weeks Are Where Results Are Won or Lost

The OC test is weeks away. Your child has been preparing for months. But right now, in the final stretch, well-intentioned parents are making mistakes that will cost their children marks on test day. Not because they do not care. Because they do not know.

Every year we see the same patterns. Families who have done everything right for months suddenly change course in the final weeks: cramming harder, adding extra sessions, panicking over practice scores. And every year, the families who stay disciplined and focused in the final stretch outperform the ones who panic.

This guide covers the five most damaging final-week mistakes. Be honest with yourself as you read. If you recognise your family in any of these, there is still time to correct course.

"The final weeks are not about learning more. They are about not undoing the work you have already done."

Mistake #1**Cramming Harder Instead of Consolidating**

With the test approaching, the natural instinct is to increase intensity: longer sessions, more practice tests, extra worksheets. Parents feel that every spare minute should be spent studying. But in the final weeks, your child does not need to learn new material. They need to consolidate what they already know and build confidence in applying it under pressure.

Why This Hurts

Cramming in the final weeks creates fatigue, anxiety, and cognitive overload. Your child's brain needs rest to consolidate learning. Adding 2-hour evening sessions on top of school and existing practice leads to diminishing returns. Performance actually drops when a child is exhausted and stressed.

What to Do Instead

Maintain your existing routine. Do not add hours. If anything, slightly reduce session length in the final week and focus on revision of known material rather than introducing new concepts. Short, focused 20-minute sessions of mixed practice are more effective than marathon study blocks. Your child should arrive at the test rested, confident, and sharp.

Mistake #2

Running Practice Test After Practice Test

In the final weeks, many parents put their child through a practice test every day or every other day. The logic seems sound: more tests equals more practice. But practice tests do not build skills. They measure them. If your child keeps getting the same types of questions wrong, doing more tests just measures the same weakness over and over without fixing it.

Why This Hurts

Test fatigue is real. Each practice test takes 90-100 minutes of intense focus. Doing this daily burns through your child's mental energy and motivation. Scores begin to plateau or decline. Confidence drops. And because the underlying skills are not being trained, the results on test day are no better than they were two weeks ago.

What to Do Instead

Limit practice tests to once per week maximum in the final stretch. Use them diagnostically: after each test, identify the 2-3 specific question types your child got wrong and spend the next few days drilling those specific skills. The test should inform your practice, not replace it.

Mistake #3**Neglecting Computer-Based Practice**

Even at this late stage, some families are still doing the majority of their practice on paper. Printed worksheets, textbook exercises, handwritten answers. The 2026 OC test is fully computer-based. Reading on a screen, scrolling between passage and questions, clicking answers, managing an on-screen timer: these are all skills that need to feel automatic by test day.

Why This Hurts

A child who has practised primarily on paper will be slower on screen. They will lose time scrolling. They will find it harder to concentrate on a screen for 100 minutes. They may struggle with the interface. All of this translates directly into lost marks, not because of skill gaps, but because of format unfamiliarity.

What to Do Instead

At this point, at least 50% of practice should be on screen. Use online practice platforms, read passages on a tablet or computer, and do timed sessions digitally. Your child needs to feel completely comfortable with the digital format before test day. This is not optional.

Mistake #4

Ignoring Time Management Practice

Many parents focus on accuracy but neglect speed. They let their child work through practice questions at their own pace without a timer. On test day, the timer is real. 30 minutes for 40 reading questions. 40 minutes for 35 maths questions. 30 minutes for 30 thinking skills questions. That is roughly 45 seconds to 1 minute per question with no room for getting stuck.

Why This Hurts

Students who have not practised under timed conditions consistently lose marks in the final third of each section. They spend too long on hard questions early on, then rush through easier questions at the end. Or they run out of time entirely and leave questions unanswered. Untimed practice creates a false sense of readiness.

What to Do Instead

Every practice session in the final weeks should be timed. Teach your child the "skip and return" strategy: if a question takes more than 60 seconds, mark it and move on. Answer every question you can first, then return to the hard ones. Practise this strategy until it is automatic. It can be worth 5-10 marks on test day.

Mistake #5**Transferring Your Anxiety to Your Child**

This is the most damaging mistake on this list, and the hardest to see in yourself. In the final weeks, parental anxiety peaks. Every practice score is agonised over. Every bad day triggers a lecture. Conversations at dinner revolve around the test. The child feels the weight of your expectations and your fear, and it directly impacts their performance.

Why This Hurts

Test anxiety impairs working memory. This is not opinion; it is well-documented. Working memory is the exact cognitive function the OC test relies on most heavily. An anxious child on test day will score below their true ability regardless of how well they have prepared. Your anxiety becomes their anxiety, and their anxiety becomes lost marks.

What to Do Instead

In the final weeks, consciously reduce test talk at home. Do not discuss scores at the dinner table. Do not compare your child to others. Praise effort and process ("I noticed you read that question really carefully"), not outcomes. On the night before the test, do something fun and unrelated to studying. Your child should walk into the test room feeling calm, capable, and supported.

Section 6

The Pattern Behind All 5 Mistakes

Every mistake on this list comes from the same place: **panic**. The test is close. The stakes feel enormous. And the natural human response is to do more, push harder, control everything.

But the families who get the best results in the final weeks do the opposite. They trust the preparation. They maintain the routine. They keep sessions short and focused. They manage their own emotions so their child can focus on performing. They make small, strategic adjustments instead of wholesale changes.

The question is not whether your child has worked hard enough. They almost certainly have. The question is whether the final weeks of preparation are **helping or hurting** their test-day performance.

The One Question to Ask Yourself Right Now

"Is what we are doing right now making my child more confident and more prepared, or more tired and more anxious?"

If the answer is the second, something needs to change. And it needs to change now, not next week.

Your Next Step

You have read the five most common final-week mistakes. You may have recognised your family in one or more of them. That is not a failure. That is awareness. And with the test still ahead, awareness gives you time to change course.

But changing course requires knowing exactly where your child stands right now. Not where they were a month ago. Not what their last practice score said. A clear, honest picture of their strengths, weaknesses, and readiness for the specific format and pressure of the 2026 test.

Free Year 4 OC Strategy Call

In a free 15-minute strategy call, we will:

- Discuss your child's current readiness and your preparation approach
- Identify whether you are making any of these 5 mistakes right now
- Pinpoint the single highest-impact adjustment for the remaining weeks
- Give you a clear, honest answer on whether your child is on track

This is not a sales pitch. It is a genuine conversation about your child's OC readiness. If Scholarly can help, we will explain how. If your child is on track, we will tell you that too.

BOOK YOUR FREE STRATEGY CALL

Limited spots available. The test is weeks away. Every day of misdirected preparation is a day you cannot get back.

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