

Studying For Tests

Check it Out! Study Skills for Tests

Checklist: Studying for Tests

A. Plan an Overall Strategy for the Exam

Survey what you need to know for the exam:

1. How much material are you expected to know from your readings and how much from your notes?
2. Write down definitions, major points, theories, formulas and other information that you need to know.
3. Estimate how much study time you will have for the exam.
4. Find out what form the exam will be.
5. Review flash cards, outlines and summaries.

B. Plan Your Study Time for the Exam

Plot a chart of the hours available for studying for an upcoming exam:

1. Break large tasks into more workable sub-tasks and set up a specific time for each.
2. Do your hard studying first and then reward yourself with the easier study tasks.
3. Use waiting or odd times, such as waiting in the doctor's office, to recall information.
4. Vary your study tasks and topics during lengthy study periods. For example, summarize your history notes, and then review your science problems.

C. Know Pertinent Information

1. Know what the professor emphasizes.
2. Ask the instructor what you are expected to know.
3. Watch for test questions by observing **what** the instructor says and **how** he/she says it.
4. Ask what type of test will be given.
5. Be attentive to key issues and approaches to the subject matter.
6. Talk to students who have had the instructor, and ask what kinds of questions (s)he asks.

D. Predict and Compose Test Questions

You will probably be graded upon your ability to see the subject matter from your instructor's perspective.

Essay exams:

1. Prepare several essay type questions on a variety of the topics to be tested.
2. Learn the important points for each answer.

Problem-solving exams:

1. Design representative problems and prepare solutions.

True-false, multiple choice & fill-in-the-blank exams:

1. Study by listing facts and bits of information around a particular theme or concept.

Make up all the questions that you think the examiner could ask about the material to be covered and learn the answers. The key to these self-made tests is to practice, practice, practice. You will want to go through your test questions much the same way an athletic team runs its plays.

E. Beware of Time Spent on Unread Material

Approach unread material only after you have gathered all material for the exam together and planned the overall approach. Use the following guides for unread material:

1. Survey the material and then divide it into parts for more intensive study. Set time limits for each part.
2. Start reading the material, staying within the time limits you set even if you must skim key sentences **only**. Pace yourself by moving a pencil down the page as you read.
3. As you finish a page or part, **recall** the material immediately. Say it aloud at times. This enhances retention even without later review.

F. Study and Review Actively

1. Review chapter sub-headings and topic sentences and recalling the important points.
2. Recite, write, say, hear, and visualize them.
3. Reinforce the important points by using as many senses as possible.
4. Create daily and weekly reviews.
5. Use daily reviews to scan your notes and the sections you underlined.
6. Plan weekly reviews for longer sessions of your daily reviews on assigned readings, lecture notes, summary sheets, and note cards.
7. On longer review, study the most difficult material when you are most alert.
8. Try organizing a study group. Look for students you are comfortable with and who share some of your academic goals.