



## Study Tips

When preparing for tests, midterms, and examinations it is important to view it as a process: from preparing for class, to taking the test and reviewing the returned test. Here are several tips you may want to include in your own preparations.

### ***Preparing for Class:***

1. Early in the term find out: what type of exams will be required (e.g.. Essays vs. multiple choice), the date of your exams, the scope of the exams, and where the exam material comes from.
2. Read and outline the chapter before class. This allows you to add important information from the lecture to your study notes. It also avoids you having to write everything down your professor is saying.
3. Make notes in the margins of your textbooks with questions you may have, personal experiences that relate, and specific information that you found interesting and important to remember.
4. Review your previous notes before class so that you can remember what was covered. This will help prepare you to receive new information from your professor.

### ***In Class:***

1. For each class, try to sit at the same seat each day, especially when you have a test. You will associate this area with learning and your concentration should improve.
2. Make pictures and add diagrams to your notes. For example, history dates can be used to create a timeline, a process in science can be made into a diagram, and graph or chart can be made from statistical information.
3. Remember to ALWAYS take notes! This will help you remember the materials and stay focused.
4. Create a method of abbreviation you understand, like using symbols in place of words (% instead of 'percent', 'med' instead of 'medical', etc.). This way you can write more quickly during class.
5. If you find that you have trouble keeping the up the pace when taking notes, ask permission to bring a tape recorder to class. This way you can listen to the lecture again later and fill in any information missing from your notes.
6. Focus during a lecture. Listen for signals of important things to remember, such as "The most important point . . ." and "Remember that . . ." Be sure to include in your notes any information the teacher repeats or writes on the board.
7. Make note of information you are confused about. Talk to your professor or classmates later to clarify the details.



### ***Your Study Space:***

1. Find a 'study space' where the bulk of your time spent in the same space is used solely for study purposes. After a week of using the same space for the same activity (to study), your body will associate that space with studying, and will help you focus.
2. Schedule your study time in the same place. Use a calendar to record your daily routine including meals, class, and sleep time, to find hidden free-time that can be used for a quick review of your notes.
3. Choose to study when you are at your best!
4. Reduce the risk of distractions and turn off your cell phone and computer during scheduled when studying.
5. Make sure to take breaks. Take 10 minutes for every hour of study, and 5 minutes for every half-hour.
6. Keep your study space well lit. This will reduce eyestrain and headaches.
7. Use your time effectively; five minutes waiting for a bus, 20 minutes waiting for the dentist, 10 minutes in between classes – waiting time adds up fast. Have short study tasks ready to do during these periods.
8. Keep a notebook handy to write down any distracting thoughts, helping you focus only on the information you are studying and putting your mind at ease that you won't forget what it is you are concerned about.

### ***Preparing for Exams:***

1. Predict how the information (your notes, readings, the lecture and other sources) will show up on the test.
2. Decide on an active study strategy to prepare for the test. You may need to use a variety of strategies (e.g. outlines, concept maps, sample test, etc.).
3. Make a one-page study guide with important information the night before the exam. Review this material before the test.
4. Review previous exams you have taken in the class or old exams that may be on reserve at the library.
5. Take care of yourself the night before the test. Get at least 6-8 hours of sleep. Visualize success.
6. Get up and eat a good breakfast on the morning of the test!
7. Make sure to study for the courses you find most difficult first as they often require the most creative energy.

<b><i>During the Exam:</i></b>
1. Go to the test early so you can select a seat; organize yourself and your materials. Make sure to take a few deep breaths to relax your muscles
2. When you receive your test in the exam room, flip it over and quickly write down any information you are likely to forget. This is called a “memory dump. You can use this information throughout the test.
3. During the exam if you come across material you are unfamiliar with or you find difficult, skip it. Move on to other items you already know, then come back to it, time permitting.
4. Keep an eye on the time. Make sure you allot enough time to the test and those sections with the highest value.
5. Save time at the end of the test to make sure you have answered all questions and your name is on the exam.

<b><i>After the Exam:</i></b>
1. Reward yourself-you did it!!!
2. If the instructor reviews the exam in class make sure you attend. The review process is important as it help to reinforce the information into the long-term memory. It can also help you on the next exam especially if it is cumulative in nature.
3. When you review your test determine your areas of strengths and weaknesses in your test taking skills. You can always learn from your mistakes.

<b><i>Other General Tips:</i></b>
1. Apply your class material to real life situations. Finding these applications will make your studying more exciting, and will help you to remember what you need to know
2. After class or each night, rewrite or type the notes you took in that day's class, reinforcing key concepts. Make corrections to sloppy writing, change abbreviations to whole words and adjust shortened sentences to full-length ones. Make sure to answer any questions you had from class.
3. Set personal deadlines on major assignments and write them down in your calendar. Write a reminder of the assignment at least a week early. This will not only help you remember, but will also encourage you to complete the task on time or early.
4. Use any supplementary instruction such as interactive CD or website that your textbook may provide. Often these materials include chapter study guides and sample tests.
5. Reward yourself whenever you finish something that was hard to undertake.
6. Break big jobs down into smaller steps; tackle short, easy-to-accomplish tasks first.
7. Organize a dependable study group. Declare to each other what you intend to accomplish before each meeting. Compare your notes to be sure you didn't leave out any pertinent information.
8. Divide information into chunks! Your mind will remember small chunks of related information better than it would remember an entire list.
9. Use free academic support on campus. Your professors, The Student Success Centre, the Writing Center, the Math Centre, Teaching Assistants, and tutoring can help you succeed academically.

Content partially adapted from handout by Gregory Wells,  
 NACADA Conference. 1987  
 Also Adapted from Academic Centres of Excellence -  
<http://www.housing.sc.edu/ace/students.html>