

# STEPS WHEN STUDYING FOR EXAMS

- I. Long-term study plan
  - A. Develop a realistic weekly & daily schedule
  - B. Study regularly in a place with few personal distractions
  - C. Review immediately after studying & after class (most rapid forgetting takes place right after reading & listening)
  
- II. Plan to review, both systematically and consistently
  - A. Set aside frequent review time
    1. Review daily (material just learned & material to be memorized)
    2. Review every two or three days (assigned reading, lecture notes, study questions)
    3. Plan major reviews before exams (concepts & their relationships)
  - B. Organize your review time (when to determine main points for study, when to write out answers to predict questions, when to work in study groups)
  - C. Identify what to learn
    1. List major topics from course outline, lecture notes, & textbook markings
    2. Note specific emphases in lectures and text headings
  - D. Connect & synthesize the course material
    1. Gain understanding of what is important
    2. Look for relationships among ideas, patterns of thought, progression from one concept to the next
    3. Interpret & evaluate
    4. Create study sheets (including maps, diagrams, charts, etc.) on the following aspects of the course:
      - a. Theories & principles (best to learn any subject from general to specific)
      - b. Complex events with many causes & effects
      - c. Controversial issues, with pros & cons
      - d. Summaries of concepts & philosophical issues
      - e. Trends in ideas or data
      - f. Groups of related facts & ideas, to be placed under broad headings
  - E. Learn, memorize, & then overlearn

1. Recite & repeat
2. Try to predict exam questions
3. Write out sample answers to predicted questions
4. Ask your professor what he or she suggests for preparation
5. Work (for only a portion of study time) in study groups (limit to 4 or 5 students).
  - a. Choose involved students with whom you feel comfortable, as opposed to friends
  - b. Test each other
  - c. Practice teaching each other concepts, etc.
  - d. Compare lecture notes, etc.
  - e. Brainstorm possible exam questions
  - f. Profit from group support
  - g. Plan material to be covered in each session

III. Organize your pre-exam time

- A. Get a good night's sleep
- B. Eat well
- C. Don't hurry
- D. Stay calm & relaxed

Adapted from the following texts:

Becoming a Master Student, fifth edition (Rapid City: College Survival, Inc., 1985) by David B. Ellis

Developing Textbook Thinking, (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath & Co., 1985) by Sherrie L. Nist

How to Prepare for and Take Examinations, (New York: Association of American Publishers, Inc., 1987), produced by AAP Student Services