

Study Tips and Study Skills

Preparing for the Test

- It is best to review the material right after class when it's still fresh in your memory.
- Don't try to do all your studying the night before the test. Instead space out your studying, review class materials at least several times a week, focusing on one topic at a time.
- Have all of your study material in front of you: lecture notes, course textbooks, study guides and any other relevant material.
- Find a comfortable and quiet place to study with good lighting and little distractions (try avoiding your own bed, it is very tempting to just lie down and take a nap).
- Start out by studying the most important information.
- Learn the general concepts first, don't worry about learning the details until you have learned the main ideas.
- Take notes and write down a summary of the important ideas as you read through your study material.
- Take short breaks frequently. Your memory retains the information that you study at the beginning and the end better than what you study in the middle.
- Space out your studying, you'll learn more by studying a little every day(45-60 minutes per session/per subject) instead of waiting to cram at the last minute. By studying every day, the material will stay in your long-term memory but if you try to study at the last moment, the material will only reside in your short-term memory that you'll easily forget.
- Make sure that you understand the material well, don't just read through the material and try to memorize everything.
- If you choose to study in a group, only study with others who are serious about the test.
- Test yourself or have someone test you on the material to find out what your weak and strong areas are. You can use the review questions at the end of each chapter or practice tests the teacher may give out as well as other materials.
- Listening to relaxing music such as classical or jazz on a low volume can relieve some of the boredom of studying.
- Don't study later than the time you usually go to sleep, you may fall asleep or be tempted to go to sleep, instead try studying in the afternoon or early evening. If you are a morning person try studying in the morning.

Memorizing Specifically

- When trying to memorize something, first determine what it is that must be memorized and take the time to write down the items. The process of writing down the items is an essential way to commit these aspects to memory. Use short sentences and underline or highlight the key words that are to be remembered.
- Next, have these items on a piece of paper and be ready to commit these to memory. It takes a quiet environment with no distractions in order to commit these terms to memory.
- Use the three step memory technique to commit the item to memory. Use the technique to read the word, read the words or the item out loud and then read the items or the sentence without actually looking at the page. This will enable you to commit it to memory for visual, as well as auditory learners.
- Ensure that you are well rested through the learning process to ensure that the list has been committed to memory.
- Use this process to learn everything that you must on the list and commit these to memory, use this to learn each item on the list by gradually adding new items which must be learned to the list.

Create an acronym for the list

Associating a list or a concept with a certain word that can be used as an acronym to remember the terms which must be recalled is an effective way to commit something to memory. Chances are that once you have associated a certain word with the list to be memorized; you will be able to recall this list for years to come.

Sing it

As silly as this may sound, signing something that you have to remember is an essential way to learn a set of words, phone numbers and even a grocery list. The song can be silly and funny – as the sillier and funnier the song, the more likely that you are going to remember it.

Practice, Practice and Practice some more

This is one of the oldest techniques of memorization which will include practice and repetition to remember the items which are on the list or the concepts which are an effective way to commit these terms to memory. If you are able to spend up to fifteen minutes practicing these items, saying them aloud and reading over the items it can be simple to remember the items in the case that they need to be recalled.

Remember by Using flash cards

Flash cards are an effective way to learn a large amount of information in a short period of time. Flash cards can be used to learn complex concepts by developing words which are associated with the concepts. Flash cards are also known to improve the memory and learn concepts as they can be used to learn terms which are associated with learning a new language, or learning something new in class. Flash cards are cheap and effective and can be used whenever you have five minutes to learn. Studies have shown that the majority of students use this method to learn information for classes.

Creating sentences with the terms

Creating sentences with the terms that are required to commit to memory with new words, using the first letter of each word. This way, when you are trying to remember a list of terms, the sentence can be used to remember all of the terms and easily recall what can be remembered.

Chunking

Chunking is used most often to remember long term groups of numbers. This way, the memorizer can remember from five to eight numbers at one time, which can be completed in three to four sets of a longer number which must be recalled through the memory.

Use Patterns to remember sets of words or numbers

Are there any patterns within the words that are being memorized? Finding these patterns can help to remember more, as well as help to associated words with another. This way, rather than focusing on remembering one word – the person trying to remember can make use of remembering one word, rather than remember three to four words. The first word can jog the memory and remind the person trying to remember the other three terms which are associated with the first.

Association

Learning to associate the list or concept that you are trying to remember are effective ways to boost your memory power. Think about something that is easily associated with the list or item that you are trying to remember, something familiar that you come into contact with every single day. This makes the recalling process of the list easier.

This association can come from word association, as well as image association. When trying to remember simple or complex concepts words can be used to associate each word with concepts.

Visualization

Visualizing the aspect that you are memorizing is an important part of memorizing something. If you are able to Visualize the item in forms of a picture it can make is easier to recall the item later.

Visualization is another form of association and can include visualizing an image that becomes engrained in our mind in combination with the words and concepts which are trying to be learned.

Associated the memory with something Unforgettable

There are certain things in life that are unforgettable like the people that we love and the fears that we hold. If we learn to associate these items with something that we are trying to remember it can be easy to commit something to memory.

Teach it

Teaching it is one of the best ways to memorize something as you are able to use all of the learning types in the process.

Reducing Test Anxiety

- Try to maintain a positive attitude while preparing for the test and during the test.
- Exercising for a few days before the test will help reduce stress.
- Get a good night's sleep before the test.
- Show up to class early so you won't have to worry about being late.
- Stay relaxed, if you begin to get nervous take a few deep breaths slowly to relax yourself and then get back to work.
- Read the directions slowly and carefully.
- If you don't understand the directions on the test, ask the teacher to explain it to you.
- Skim through the test so that you have a good idea how to pace yourself.
- Write down important formulas, facts, definitions and/or keywords in the margin first so you won't worry about forgetting them.
- Do the simple questions first to help build up your confidence for the harder questions.
- Don't worry about how fast other people finish their test; just concentrate on your own test.
- If you don't know a question skip it for the time being (come back to it later if you have time), and remember that you don't have to always get every question right to do well on the test.
- Focus on the question at hand. Don't let your mind wander on other things.

Specific Test Taking Tips

Multiple Choice

- Read the question before you look at the answer.
- Come up with the answer in your head before looking at the possible answers, this way the choices given on the test won't throw you off or trick you.
- Eliminate answers you know aren't right.
- Read all the choices before choosing your answer.
- If there is no guessing penalty, always take an educated guess and select an answer.
- Don't keep on changing your answer, usually your first choice is the right one, unless you misread the question.
- In "All of the above" and "None of the above" choices, if you are certain one of the statements is true don't choose "None of the above" or one of the statements are false don't choose "All of the above".
- In a question with an "All of the above" choice, if you see that at least two correct statements, then "All of the above" is probably the answer.
- A positive choice is more likely to be true than a negative one.
- Usually the correct answer is the choice with the most information

True or False

- Usually there are more true answers than false on most tests.
- If there is no guessing penalty, then guess. You have a 50% chance of getting the right answer.
- Read through each statement carefully, and pay attention to the qualifiers and keywords.
- Qualifiers like "never, always, and every" mean that the statement must be true all of the time. Usually these type of qualifiers lead to a false answer.
- Qualifiers like "usually, sometimes, and generally" mean that if the statement can be considered true or false depending on the circumstances. Usually these type of qualifiers lead to an answer of true.
- If any part of the question is false, then the entire statement is false but just because part of a statement is true doesn't necessarily make the entire statement true.

Short Answer

- Use flashcards, writing the key terms, dates and concepts on the front and the definition, event, and explanations on the back.
- Try to anticipate questions that will be asked on the test and prepare for them. Usually what your instructor emphasizes in class will be on the test.
- Try not to leave an answer blank. Show your work/write down your thoughts, even if you don't get the exact answer, partial credit is usually awarded.
- If you don't know the answer, come back to it after you finish the rest of the test and make an educated guess. Other parts of the test may give you clues to what the answer may be.
- If you can think up of more than one answer for a question, ask the instructor what to do.
- Read the question carefully and make sure that you answer everything that it asks for. Some short answer questions have multiple parts.

Essays

- Read the directions carefully. Pay close attention to whether you are supposed to answer all the essays or only a specified amount (i.e. "Answer 2 out of the 3 questions).
- Make sure that you understand what the question is asking you. If you're not, ask your instructor.
- Make sure that you write down everything that is asked of you and more. The more details and facts that you write down, the higher your grade is going to be.
- Budget your time, don't spend the entire test time on one essay.
- If the question is asking for facts, don't give your personal opinion on the topic.
- When writing your essay, try to be as neat as possible, neater papers usually receive higher marks.
- Make an outline before writing your essay. This way your essay will be more organized and fluid. If you happen to run out of time, most instructors will give you partial credit for the ideas that you have outlined.
- Don't write long introductions and conclusions, the bulk of your time should be spent on answering the question(s) asked.
- Focus on one main idea per a paragraph.
- If you have time left at the end, proofread your work and correct any errors.
- Budget your time. If you have an hour to write 3 essays, spend no more than 20 minutes on each essay, then if you have time left over at the end go back and finish any incomplete essays.
- If you aren't sure about an exact date or number, use approximations i.e. "Approximately 5000" or "In the late 17th century."
- If you make a mistake, simply draw a line through it, it is much neater and quicker than erasing it.