

## EXAM STUDY TIPS

1. **Be prepared.** No matter how many helpful hints you employ, nothing works as well as making sure you studied enough.
2. **Do your homework.** It gives you practice where needed. Often exam questions will parallel a homework assignment.
3. **Review regularly.** This will ensure that your final studying will be a review and not an attempt to learn the entire semester's work.
4. **Study your weakest subject first.** You are fresher and can deal with any difficult areas better.
5. **Understand vs memorize.** You will find the material easier to remember if you understand what you are learning rather than memorizing.
6. **Look at old exams.** These can be useful study tools if available but don't limit your studying to them.
7. **Attend end of the semester classes.** A lot of valuable information is given to you in the last few classes about exam format and potential exam questions.
8. **Don't study too long.** You will learn more if your study periods are short, frequent and include regular breaks.
9. **Eat well and get a good night's sleep.** Take care of yourself during exam week; you are going through a lot of stress.
10. **Do not cram.** Most of what you cram will be forgotten in one or two days. This is why regular review is much better.

### **11. Give yourself a good start.**

- Get a good night's sleep before exam day
- Be certain of the exam time and place - do not get into a last minute discussion with frantic classmates; this will only add to your anxiety
- Do not sit next to your friends; it is too distracting. You will be checking if you are ahead and also you are likely to leave early if you see them walking out ahead of time.

## **HINTS FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF EXAMS:**

### **1. Multiple Choice**

- Try to answer the question yourself before looking at the answers given
- Answer the questions you know first
- Your first instinct is usually correct; don't change your answers unless you are sure you made a mistake
- Don't get caught up looking for tricks; there probably aren't any
- If there is no penalty for an incorrect answer, take a guess. Here is how to make your best guess: choose the longest answer or choose b). Studies prove that b) is the correct answer 40% of the time or if two answers are similar, choose one of them.

### **2. True and False Questions**

- There are generally more true than false questions. Read the statements very carefully. Remember all parts of the statement must be true for it to be true. Answers with 'all, most, sometimes, rarely' are more often true and answers with 'always and never' are usually false.

### **3. Short Answer Questions**

- This relies on recall and requires a short description or definition. If you do not know the answer, write down anything you do know that is related. You might get partial credit.

#### 4. Matching Questions

- Start with the easiest match and cross out each answer as you use it. Take an overview; you might not have an equal number of items to match.

#### 5. Essay Exam Questions

- Read all the instructions and questions; you might have a choice and do precisely what the question asks
- Keep your teacher happy by making your answer easy to read: double space and write legibly
- Answer the easiest question first; it will build your confidence
- Plan your answer: make a mini outline with the main points you want to cover
- Get to the point and keep to it
- Always write something and if you run out of time, jot down the last few ideas in point form - you will get partial marks for them

You will come across some of the words below when you are writing. Look them over so that you will understand what each question is asking you to do:

<b>Analyze</b>	examine in detail; involves judgment
<b>Compare</b>	show similarities and differences
<b>Contrast</b>	show differences
<b>Define</b>	explain the meaning in a short answer
<b>Describe</b>	tell all you know; include as many details as you can
<b>Evaluate</b>	examine the positive and negative aspects, draw a conclusion
<b>Illustrate</b>	use specific examples and details
<b>Justify</b>	give reasons to support a position
<b>Outline</b>	using the main ideas, give an overview
<b>Prove</b>	use facts and evidence to support a position
<b>Summarize</b>	give the main ideas in a short answer

## STUDY SKILLS

Five major problems for students who study:

1. Not studying enough
2. Wasting time when studying
3. Having trouble getting ready to study
4. Finding a good place for studying
5. Using a good learning strategy

### Answer to these problems?

1. Set up a schedule: allocate more time for the most difficult classes. Make sure you allot time for recreation and social activities - you need to reward yourself for hard work! And follow your schedule.
2. Start studying for 10 - 15 minutes at a time and then build up to longer periods of time. Just remember to be realistic. If you can no longer concentrate or remember what you have read, stop. There's no sense in wasting your valuable time.
3. Take breaks. Take breaks when studying. The average attention span for one task is approximately 20 minutes. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CRAM.** Study small portions of material, take a break and then study some more. We retain a great deal more if we learn in small manageable portions than when we attempt to learn a great deal of information at once. Even if you are enjoying your reading or studying, take some breaks. You do not want to get burned out.
4. Reward yourself. Reward yourself for studying, learning a difficult concept or completing a project. Go to a movie, spend time with your friends or do the things you put off in order to study.

5. Find a good location. Where you study can influence your concentration and your study habits as well. Make sure you are comfortable but not too comfortable. Sitting at a desk is preferable to lying in bed.
6. Use the same place for studying. This will help you associate that particular location with studying and will facilitate concentration.
7. Make sure it is a quiet place. Seeking a quiet well-lit study area is equally important. A radio blaring in the background, the sounds of an interesting conversation, a dog barking are but a few of the factors that disturb a study area.
8. Eliminate obvious distractions. Some of the more common distractions are telephone calls or friends and family stopping by to chat. Put away the newspapers, magazines and unfinished projects. Even the sight of a textbook from another class can serve as a reminder of how far behind you are the other class, causing you to waste time worrying.
9. Remember that memory is "context dependent". Studying in a physical situation similar to the one in which you will be tested increases your chances to recall information.
10. Memory is also "state dependent". Studying in an emotional mood similar to the one you experience during tests increases your chances to recall studied information. When studying, keep the same focus and enhanced attention you have in your tests. Being too relaxed during your study time would not match the level of stress you reach during your tests.