

Preparing For a Test

START EARLY!

An "all-nighter" is the least effective way to study for a test. Cramming for a test is like not eating for two weeks, then trying to eat all those missed meals in one sitting. You can't digest that much food at once. You can't digest that much information at once either. Schedule several study sessions before a test. Repetition is the key to remembering.

NEVER MISS THE CLASS BEFORE A TEST

The class period before a test is when you'll find out what the test will be like. Find out as much as possible:

- What will it cover?
- Will it be objective, essay or both?
- How much will each type of question be worth?
- How much time will you have to complete the test?

LEARNING THE IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1. Using your class notes and your highlighted textbook, make flash cards with facts, definitions, people, dates, events, lists, etc. The act of writing the information on the cards will help you remember it. Each time you go through the stack of cards, you are transferring the information from your short term memory into your long term memory. If you are an auditory learner, study with a partner who can ask you the questions or give the answers aloud to yourself.

2. Look for recurring themes in your text and in your notes. Essay questions will probably come from those themes. Make a list of possible essay questions and make a brief outline of how you would answer each one.

3. Don't forget charts, diagrams and captions to pictures in your textbook. They can contain lots of valuable information. If your professor has referred to a diagram in the text during his/her lecture, study it!

4. Use mnemonic (memory) devices for learning lists or parts of something:

- for items that do not have to be remembered in any particular order, take their first letters and see if you can arrange them into a word or an easily

- remembered order. (Ex: the first letters of the Great Lakes spell HOMES)
- for items that must be learned in order, make up a sentence using their first letters in order. (Ex: the first letters of the words in the sentence "My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas" will tell you the planets in order from the sun outward)
- if you like music, try setting information to a tune or rhythm

Any memory device that works is okay, and it doesn't have to make sense to anyone but you!

5. Study with a friend - compare notes, ask each other questions, do flash cards together, discuss themes that would make good essay questions.

6. Play the role of your professor. Make up the most difficult, objective test you can, and take it until you know the answers.

7. Make visual organizers - invent charts, diagrams, trees, drawings to help you remember.

8. Study past quizzes. Test question information tends to show up again and again.

9. Try to over learn the material, that is, study until the answers come to you easily.

10. Remember that repetition is the key to remembering, and this means starting your test preparation early enough so that many repetitions are possible.