

**HOW TO PREPARE FOR TESTS:
A KEY TO SUCCESSFUL PERFORMANCE**

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Review materials regularly after class.

Always review each unit or section as soon after class as possible. Use spaced-practice over a longer time period rather than massed-practice over a shorter time period. In other words, stretch out your study over several days or even weeks.

Study where you will be tested.

Just as athletes have a home-field advantage and perform better when they compete at the same location where they train, students perform better on tests when they are tested at the same location where they study. If possible, either an hour before or after class, spend some time studying in the classroom where you will be tested.

Avoid cramming at the last minute.

Your test score will depend on how much you prepare for a test. Cramming will help before an exam, but it will give you only a short-term memory. After several days, you won't recall very much of what you've studied. Furthermore, cramming is not good if you do it as a last minute effort to learn something for the very first time.

Get enough rest and relaxation.

For several days before an exam, try to get extra rest and relaxation. The night before an exam, be sure to get a sufficient amount of sleep.

Avoid the use of alcohol or drugs.

Never use alcohol, marijuana, or other psychoactive drugs when studying or before a test. Drugs and medications may affect your brain's efficiency and reduce your learning ability. Some over-the-counter medications such as cold preparations can also reduce alertness and bring on drowsiness.

Take a practice test at home.

If you feel particularly insecure about the subject, predict

questions you think might be asked. Practice answering the questions at home. Put some pressure on yourself by timing yourself. This is especially helpful for math problems you might encounter.

Practice with flash cards.

Many students who perform well on short answer tests practice with flash cards. Simply use a deck of 3x5 index cards, writing a question on one side and the answer on the back.

Learn definitions of key terms.

Use a proven technique known as *double sided learning*. Learn to recall the definition of key terms when you see the terms, and learn to recall the key terms when you see the definition.

Learn from your old tests.

Don't throw away old tests. Review them as study aids and analyze them to find and correct your weaknesses. Consider any good test a learning experience and part of your overall education.

Approach the test without interruptions.

On the night before a test, don't allow any activities to intervene between the time you finish studying and the time you go to sleep. This includes reading, watching television, listening to the radio, having prolonged conversations, and using the telephone. This rule also applies to the day of the exam itself. Try to go directly to the test without any interruptions.

Get to know your teachers.

Social psychology research has shown that people are often judged and evaluated more favorably if their facial identities are known rather than if they are masked or anonymous. Getting to know your teachers will keep you from being only a number. Besides, you may be able to learn something.

Discuss your results with your teacher. If you are not satisfied with your test performance, ask your teacher for some impressions about what you might do to improve your scores. Remember, it's not what you know in your mind, but what you let your teacher know that counts on a test.

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