

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

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Review materials after class each day. Review each unit or section as soon as possible after class. Use shorter *spaced-practice* sessions over several weeks rather than longer *massed-practice* sessions over several days. Stretch out your study over several days rather than hours.

Avoid cramming at the last minute. Your test score will depend on how much you prepare for a test. Cramming may help before an exam, but it will provide only short-term recall. 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.

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.

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.

Take practice tests at home and at school. If you feel insecure about a subject, predict questions you think might be asked. Practice answering the questions at home—and at school. 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.

Use double-sided learning. 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 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 videos, texting others, or surfing the internet. 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. Research has shown that people are often judged and evaluated more favorable if their facial identities are known rather than if they are anonymous or masked. Getting to know your teachers will keep you from being only a number.

Discuss your test results with your teacher. Ask your teacher for some impressions about what you might do to improve your performance on tests. It's not what you know in your brain, but what you let your teacher know that counts on a test.

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

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Doverspike, W. F. (2012, May 10). *Learning how to prepare for tests: A key to successful performance*. <http://drwilliamdoverspike.com/>

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Workshop Presentation Deck: N/A

Webinar Presentation Deck: N/A

Workshop Handouts: N/A

Published May 10, 2012 | Last updated Nov. 01, 2023

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Content was last updated 2023.

The correct citation for this article is Doverspike, W. F. (2012, May 10). Learning how to prepare for tests: A key to successful performance. Retrieved from <http://drwilliamdoverspike.com/>