

Preparing for Tests

- ▲ Tests measure how well you performed on one test, in one subject, on one day. They do not measure your intelligence, creativity, worth, ability to contribute to society, or your capacity for success in life.
- ▲ The key to successful test preparation is managing your review time. The biggest advantage of early review is that you will have plenty of time to rehearse and create associations between what you already know and new material.
- ▲ Daily reviews:
 - Pre-class, to focus on the key issues to be discussed that day.
 - Post-class, to keep new information from being lost from short-term memory.
 - Concentrate on new material and material that involves memorization.
- ▲ Weekly reviews: Go over everything covered in the past week of class. Allow about one hour per subject.
- ▲ Major reviews: Usually conducted a week or more before an exam. Allow about 2 to 5 hours per subject. Some typical study tools: study checklists, mind map summaries, flash cards.
- ▲ Strategies for taking Multiple Choice tests:
 - Prepare by making sure you have learned the distinctions between various key concepts that are similar.
 - Read each question, answer it in your head, and look for the choice that confirms your answer. Circle the questions you can't answer and come back to them later.
 - If you must guess, first eliminate the choice that couldn't possibly be correct.
- ▲ Strategies for taking Essay tests:
 - Essay exams require the comprehensive understanding of a large amount of information, pulled together in an organized way. You must be able to identify fundamental ideas and the central themes that tie these ideas together.
 - Determine what the question is asking. Watch for key words such as "compare," "describe," or "analyze," etc.
 - Before you begin to write, make a quick outline of your answer.
 - Write clearly. Use simple sentences that communicate your ideas clearly and briefly. Write on only one side of the page.
 - Leave space on either margin to add items when you review.
 - Leave time to review your answers. Check spelling and grammar as well as content.
- ▲ True/False questions: If any part of the statements is false, the statement is false. Qualifiers like "always" or "never" generally indicate a false statement.
- ▲ Open Book Tests: Prepare in advance by taping tabs to important pages. Be thoroughly familiar with your book so you can readily find important information. The professor will expect a lot more accuracy on an open book test.
- ▲ What to do during the exam:
 - Arrive early. Bring necessary items (watch, pencils, scantrons, blue books). Be calm and centered so you can analyze what the test is asking for.
 - Scan the whole test immediately. Notice how many points each part of the test is worth so you can spend your time accordingly. Jot down the time you think will be needed at the beginning of each section.
 - Read the directions slowly. Then re-read them.
 - If the directions call for short answers, give short answers. Otherwise you may end up spending more time than the question is worth, taking away time from test items requiring more depth.
- ▲ General strategies:
 - Answer the easiest and shortest question first. Next answer the harder, but not hardest, questions.
 - When you're stuck, use a memory technique. What is associated with what you do recall? Go from the general to the specific. Draw a small mind map to stimulate recall.
 - Pace yourself.
 - Leave lots of space between answers in a blue book. You can then add items that you recall later.
 - With a multiple choice or true/false question, your first impulse is probably correct. Don't change your answer unless you are completely sure your second choice is correct, or you've misread the question and now realize a different answer is correct.
 - Review the questions and your answers and make corrections and additions if necessary.