

Midterm & Final Exam Tips

Preparation for Exams



START EARLY

Preparation should begin at least a week before your exams to allow for adequate study time. Attending all classes, reviewing notes, and staying on top of your readings up until the exam is crucial for continued success.

PLAN AHEAD

Eliminate other responsibilities if possible and schedule study times into your calendar when you know you'll have several exams, papers, or projects. Do your best to stick to the plan!

PRIORITIZE

Determine which exams need your attention the most. Consider your current grades, whether or not your exams are cumulative, and what percentage of your final grade will be from your exams. Don't forget to pace yourself.

STUDY ACTIVELY

Find what works best for you, but consider the following tips:

1. Use study guides if available, and attend all review sessions. If no study guide is provided, consider making your own.
2. Form effective study groups of three to six people. Share ideas, learn from one another, and set a time limit to help the group stay focused. Try explaining the material to each other.
3. Ask your professors for help by visiting office hours, emailing questions, and speaking to them before, during, or after class. Consider on-campus tutoring as well if you still have questions.
4. Do not completely re-read the textbook and other class materials. Instead review your notes in the margin and the material you highlighted previously for key points. See where there is overlap between your notes from class and notes from reading.
5. Focus on your notes from class. Make sure you are not missing any key information. If you are, consult with a classmate.
6. Review previous exams if they are available. Ask yourself what you did well, and what you need to do to be more successful on this exam.

TEST YOURSELF

Before taking the exam, create questions from the material that you think could be on the exam, do practice problems, and “retake” past exams if available. Try to complete the study guide again without referencing your notes or the textbook, and practice writing essays to determine what you still need to study.

Strategies for the Day Before and the Day of the Exam

COMBAT STRESS

Be sure to eat healthy and avoid food with high sugars and high caffeine content. Sleep at least seven hours each night, exercise (even if it is just a short walk), and take a 10-15 minute break every hour or so while studying.

VISUALIZE SUCCESS

If you are starting to feel anxious: pause, close your eyes, take a deep breath, and imagine yourself taking the exam and feeling confident that you know all of the information. Picture an “A” on your exam.

DON'T CRAM

Confirm the time, location, and anything you need to bring to the exam the day before. Use the time immediately before the exam to relax, take a deep breath, and take a minute to get focused.

TAKING THE EXAM

Arrive to class on time, review the entire exam before beginning, plan your time accordingly, and answer all of the questions you know first. Remember to pause and take a deep breath if you start to feel overwhelmed.