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STUDY SMARTER

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Notes

Study Tips for Final Exams

Final exams are fast-approaching, so here are some tips to help you succeed:

Study Tip #1 – Be informed about the exam.

- When and where will it be held? How much time will you have to complete the exam?
- How much is the exam worth in the context of your overall grade for the class?
- What will be covered (lectures, labs, readings), and is it cumulative?
- How will the exam questions be formatted? True/false, matching, multiple choice, short-answer, essay, problem solving?

Study Tip #2 – Make a plan: What do I need to study?

- Use your syllabus to determine the material that you will need to review.
- Gather all of your notes, handouts, textbooks, assignments, quizzes, exams, etc., and sort them by subject. Organize your materials for easy reference.
- Set priorities, and budget your time based on your priorities and your prior level of preparation.

Study Tip #3 – Make a schedule: When and where will I study?

- After gathering and organizing all of the materials that you will need to review, make efforts to realistically estimate the amount of time that it will take you to complete a thorough review of the material.
- Using a calendar, make a schedule of what you will study, when you will study, and where you will study. Be specific. Designate a specific time and location to review a certain chapter, problem set, lecture notes, etc.
- Structure your time to maximize your learning. Your brain needs time and sleep to effectively process information into long-term memory. It is more beneficial to schedule shorter, more frequent study sessions.
- Decide where you will study. Choose locations that give you the greatest control over environmental factors that can make it difficult to study efficiently (e.g., lighting, extreme temperatures, interruptions, etc.).

Study Tip #4 – Study ACTIVELY.

- Spend a few minutes at the beginning of each study session developing your “mental set.” Clear a space physically, mentally, and emotionally, where you are able to learn.
- Learning takes time and requires meaningful repetition. This is why active study techniques (such as writing or typing answers to study guide questions, creating flash cards, reading and repeating material aloud, etc.) are so important.
- Leave time during your study session for “output” (i.e., ways of processing and reproducing the information). For example, output could include testing your ability to do math problems, making a summary of major topics, developing a “compare and contrast” chart, labeling a blank diagram, etc.
- Test your knowledge early and often. Testing yourself early provides you with valuable feedback. Your self-test may indicate that you know a particular topic fairly well, so you can spend your valuable time studying another topic or subject that you may not know as well.

Study Tip #5 – Take care of yourself.

- Make a study plan, and begin preparing for final exams in a timely manner. This can ease distractions and decrease stress.
- Make certain that you are able to maintain a regular schedule of healthy eating, sleeping, and exercising.
- Study when you are most alert, and tackle the most difficult tasks first.
- Build in moments of relaxation – schedule in study breaks effectively (e.g., taking a five- or ten-minute break every hour).
- Recognize when you are feeling overwhelmed, and seek support from a friend, family member, advisor, counselor, or professor.

Intense Study Sessions

- **2 – 5 minutes:** Set goals for each session (be specific and realistic).
- **30 – 40 minutes:** Study with FOCUS and ACTION.

****Distraction-limited environment required!****

- Read text more selectively and highlight
 - Summarize reading material and create margin notes
 - Work examples, develop own examples
 - Work practice problems
 - Recite lecture and text notes out loud
 - Summarize notes in own words
 - “Teach” the information to assess comprehension
 - Develop concept maps to organize material
 - Discuss material with study group
 - Construct and answer possible exam questions
 - Quiz yourself (without referencing notes, book, etc.)
- **5 minutes:** Review material just studied.
 - **10 minutes:** Take a break.
 - **Repeat**

Adapted from *Get Students to Focus on Learning: Teach Them How to Learn*. Presentation by Dr. Sandra Y. McGuire, Center for Academic Success, Louisiana State University.

