PREPARE FOR EXAMS

Everything you need to know in order to prepare for taking exams in college

Presented by the Learning Resource Center
GOALS:

1. Learn useful study tips/strategies to prepare you for taking exams in college.

2. Apply one or two new strategies to improve your test-taking skills.
### Why High School Studying Won’t Work

<table>
<thead>
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<th>High School</th>
<th>College</th>
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<td>You’re typically told what to do (and study) in order to be successful.</td>
<td>You’re responsible for knowing the material and what may appear on the test.</td>
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<td>Mistakes are highlighted and corrected.</td>
<td>You’re expected to read and understand materials <em>prior</em> to class sessions.</td>
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<td>Facts and skills are taught and can often be memorized.</td>
<td>Applying what you learn is expected, not simply mastery of concepts.</td>
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<td>Mastery of a subject is the ability to solve the problems as you were taught.</td>
<td>Analysis and synthesis of concepts and ideas are the goals.</td>
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And, if the differences between HS and college weren’t enough, your professors expect a different standard as well . . .

**Students & Studying**

- It’s all about the time I’ve put in (even if it’s not a lot).
- I know “A,” “B,” and “C” (or identification).
- I know what “A,” “B,” and “C” mean (or definition).
- I can work the problems like those in the text.

**Professors & Studying**

- It’s not the time you put in, it’s the results of that time.
- Students need to distinguish “A” from “B” from “C.”
- Students must see why “A” is “A,” “B” is “B,” and “C” is “C.”
- Students must draw connections between and among concepts and ideas.
Bloom’s Taxonomy: The Process of Learning

This pyramid depicts the different levels of thinking we use when learning. Notice how each level builds on the foundation that precedes it. It is required that we learn the lower levels before we can effectively use the skills above.

Knowledge:
- Memorizing information. Being able to remember, but not necessarily fully understanding the material.

Comprehension:
- Identifying connections and relationships and how they apply.

Application:
- Identifying components; determining arrangement, logic, and semantics.

Analysis:
- Making decisions and supporting views; requires understanding of values.

Synthesis:
- Combining information to form a unique product; requires creativity and originality.

Evaluation:
- Restating in your own words; paraphrasing, summarizing, translating.
Before we can comprehend a concept we have to know (learn) it.

Before we can apply the concept we must comprehend (understand) it.

Before we can analyze it we must be able to apply it.

Before we can synthesize it we must have analyzed it.

Before we can evaluate it we must have synthesized it.

True education means we must have learned, understood, applied, analyzed, synthesized, and evaluated a concept.
THE TAKE-AWAY?

- College-level academics will challenge you to dig deeper and to push beyond simple knowledge accumulation (rote learning) in order to analyze, synthesize and evaluate concepts (meaningful learning).

- Understanding the use of higher order thinking skills will enable you to master your coursework and achieve the academic success you want!
**THE SUCCESSFUL STUDY CYCLE**

**Phase 1: Preview**
- Read or preview chapters to be covered in class...before class.
- Look over highlighted content, headings, outlines, formulae, graphs.
- Read the summary and what else appears at the end of the chapter.
- Think of questions you might want or need answered by the professor.

**Phase 2: Class**
- Attend class.
- Actively listen and participate.
- Take meaningful notes.
- Reflect on your preview...are you missing anything?

**Phase 3: Review**
- Review, process and summarize class notes as soon as possible after class.
- Are your notes complete and accurate?
- Note anything you find confusing or that you need more information about in order to understand.

**Phase 4: Implement Intense Study Sessions**
What's an Intense Study Session?

An intense study session is a process where you are dedicating approximately one hour, or more, of your time to specific and focused subject matter with limited distractions and a goal in mind.
2-5 minutes: Set specific and realistic goals for the session.

30-40 minutes: Study with focus and action....read text and highlight; summarize readings; work practice problems; develop concept maps; “teach” the material to a partner; what do you actively do to understand the material?

5 minutes: Review the material just studied.

10 minutes: Take a break to refresh your mind.

Make sure you are consistent with your studying to ensure the best understanding and preparation.
Percentage Remembered

with regular review

with no review

30 mins 1 hr 12 hrs 1 day 10 days 1 month
Taking the Test: Strategies for Success

- **Preview:** Look over the test for point distribution, types of questions, etc. Without previewing, you might find that essay too late!

- **Unload Your Memory:** Jot down equations, formulae, facts, mnemonic devices, whatever it is you use to tackle the subject matter.

- **Start Wherever:** Build your confidence by completing those questions that you are comfortable with – whether that’s the essays or the multiple choice.

- **Answer What You Know:** Seems intuitive, huh?

- **Look for Clues:** You may find clues or even answers to questions in the information provided in another portion of the test...be observant and take advantage of that when it does happen!

- **Watch Your Watch:** Pace yourself, keep your time, and budget wisely. An essay question worth half the grade deserves more than that seven minutes left at the end of the test time.
DIFFERENT TESTS, DIFFERENT STRATEGIES

**Multiple Choice**
- Read instructions carefully.
- Try to figure out the answer BEFORE you read the choices.
- Answer all of the questions you know.
- For remaining questions, use the process of elimination.

**True/False**
- Answer what you know.
- If part of statement is true, and part is false, the entire statement is false.
- Absolute statements that contain “never,” “always,” or “none” are often false. Conversely, qualified statements are often true.

**Matching**
- Always answer by reading the definition or phrase first and then looking for the correct word.
- Begin by making the matches you are certain about.
- Cross out items as you make matches.

**Essay**
- If there is more than one essay, adjust and monitor the time you spend on each one.
- Look for key words (next slide) and underline so you grasp the intent of the question.
- Jot down an outline and frame your question.
- Never leave an essay blank...write something, even if it's just bullet pointed items.
**Key Words for Essay Tests**

- **Explain:** Tell about & give reasons for something.
- **Discuss:** Give reasons behind points of view.
- **Describe:** Present a detailed picture of something.
- **Compare:** Describe similarities.
- **Contrast:** Compare differences.
- **List:** Present information in an order.
- **Trace:** State a series of events in logical order.
- **Criticize:** Make judgments; analysis is often necessary.
- **Evaluate:** Give your opinion or cite the opinion of an expert. Include evidence.
- **Summarize:** State the major points.
- **Prove:** Give arguments, facts and details to support a statement or theory.
- **Illustrate:** Give concrete examples.
- **Relate:** Show the connections between ideas or events.
Planning your work, classes, fun, and study times can help provide direction and allow you to set realistic goals.
But don’t forget… all the strategies in the world only go so far. **Successful** test taking requires these things:
Questions?

If you have unanswered questions or need further assistance, please contact us at the Learning Resource Center, Jordan Hall – Room 136!