



Preparing for Tests

What is the best way to prepare for tests?

There are three stages of test preparation:

- **Long-Term:** From the beginning of the semester to the test.
- **Short-Term:** From the time leading up to the test when study and review become crucial (often the week or so before).
- **Immediate:** The day or night before.

Long-Term Preparation

Right from day one, keep the final exam or test in mind. Asking yourself, "What do I need to know?" while in class or reading texts. Useful strategies:

- Look at the objectives and outcomes stated in your course outlines.
- Review regularly.
- Look at old tests/exams if available.
- Try to understand the material (as opposed to memorizing it) and understand how and why you need to apply the material.



Short-Term Preparation

Use these strategies as you begin your test studying in earnest:

- Organize and combine related information to help you understand it.
- Study actively - do something (e.g. paraphrase your notes - say them in your own words).
- Pace/schedule your study.
- Use memory aids such as acronyms to aid recall of hard-to-remember lists or other pieces of information.

Immediate Preparation

By the time you get to the day/night immediately before your test, the key to success is that your studying should be review rather than re-learning. Keep these guidelines in mind as you refresh your knowledge the day before:

- Get enough sleep.
- Eat properly.
- Take breaks, relax, exercise.
- Focus your attention.
- Keep a positive attitude.



Cramming

Cramming is not true studying... it is remembering over the short term. If you have time to study for a subject, always choose studying now over cramming later.

However, when time is short, you may have to cram, so keep these things in mind:

- Make choices - don't attempt to remember everything.
- Turn what you're studying into questions.
- Recite what you've studied.
- Relax (being nervous and upset won't help).