

ULTIMATE EXAM GUIDE



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GETTING STARTED

- The first step to success is **attending all of your classes!**
- Approximately one week prior to exams, ensure that all back-due assignments and reviews are completed.
- Cramming is not the answer!
 - Not only do you lose sleep, but you will not remember the information.
 - It's for emergencies only.
 - You retain only the thin surface layer of information.
 - According to Judy Fishel, "It's for survival, not success" (p. 82).
- **Create your own study guides/summary sheets** for each class when one isn't provided.
 - Do this as you learn new information, not just the week before the exam!
 - Simply reorganizing and reviewing your notes can help.
 - This acts as a final review too.
 - Categorization makes remembering information easier.
 - Pick the most important facts from lecture, and then from your book.
 - Don't be afraid to rearrange information!
 - Instead of chronological, try separating by location or theme.
- Create a study schedule, write it down and actually stick to it! This allows you to manage your time, pace yourself, and avoid cramming.
- Starting your studying earlier provides you with enough time to ask questions of your TA, professor, tutor, or classmate.
- Attend review sessions, whether formal or for a study group.
- **Prioritize your study time:** definitely need to know, probably need to know, unsure if I need to know information.
- **JUST GET STARTED.**

HOW TO STUDY FOR EXAMS

- Study for the style of exam:
 - Multiple choice means definitions and concepts.
 - Essays will focus on analysis and application of the concepts that include not only the definitions, but examples.
- Find out what material is actually going to be on the exam. Is it cumulative for the term or just the last few weeks of material?
- If the exam is cumulative, make sure you have questions you missed on previous exams answered.

S cene of story
E nvironment
T ime
T emperature
I nside
N ature
G eographic location

Acrostic Sample

- Use mnemonic devices, like acrostics, rhymes, or acronyms to help you remember information.
- Make sure you can answer the questions at the end of the chapter.
- Quiz yourself by covering your notes and trying to explain them.
- Create flashcards or other aids to help you review materials. Try Quizlet.com, studystack.com, and goconqr.com.
- Practice makes perfect: If there are practice exams available, make sure to take them in similar conditions to the actual exam so you can be prepared.
- Examples, examples, examples.
- Check your textbooks to see if there are any online study aids.

OBJECTIVE/MULTIPLE CHOICE TESTS

- These tests are recognition exams, where you see the answer. Recalling is answering from your brain, like fill in the blanks and essays.
- Watch out for qualifiers within the statement.
 - 100% Words to Avoid
 - No, none, never, every, always, all, entirely, only, invariably, best and worst
 - In-between Words
 - Usually, seldom, sometimes, few, often, many, most, some, generally, frequently, and ordinarily
- As sentences in the answer choices become longer, the more likely they are to be correct.
- Look for grammar clues:
 - If the subject in the question doesn't agree with the verb or tense, it's usually incorrect.
- When in doubt, eliminate at least two answers.
- Always choose an answer!
 - You may guess correctly and gain points. Not answering gets you zero points.
- When all of the above is available as an option, and you are confident at least two of the choices are correct, it is usually correct.
- Check for look-alike answers, and look at their differences. One is usually correct.
- In a matching section:
 - Read all of your options before choosing.
 - Don't just cross out your answers, match the number of the problem to the letter of the answer.

TRUE-FALSE STATEMENTS

- More often than not, these will contain more "true" answers because your professor wants you to know this information!
- Watch out for no, non-, and il-, which turn statements negative.
- If any part of the statement is negative, it will be false!

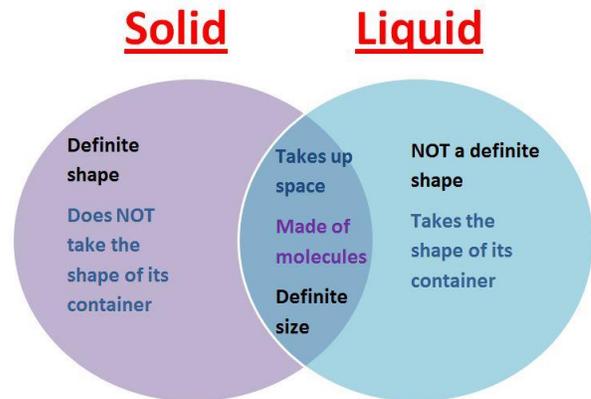
SHORT ANSWERS AND ESSAYS

- Common essay themes and indicators:
 - **Write about main ideas:**
 - Summarize, outline, describe, state, list, enumerate, explain, and organize
 - **Causal:**
 - Outline, list, and describe
 - **Opinion:**
 - Discuss, reflect, comment, illustrate, critique, evaluate, or give an example
 - **Compare and Contrast:**
 - Differentiate, cause and effect, detail
- Start your essay by **studying the question**—analyze it, find all components being asked, and think about how you want to approach it.
 - What kinds of questions does the professor usually ask?
 - What do I want to accomplish in this exam, and how does the time limit affect me?
- Write a **game plan!**
 - A brief outline
 - A concept map
 - A compare and contrast chart
 - Some form of information organization
- **Write an essay** that demonstrates your reasoning, knowledge, and writing.
- If you have a small amount of space to write, make sure you have:
 - Your topic sentence
 - Three to five supporting argument points
 - A concluding sentence
- For longer essays, follow the **Five Paragraph Model:**
 - The first paragraph is an introduction with a topic sentence.
 - Next, the paragraphs will begin with the main idea in the first sentence, and then provide examples.
 - The final paragraph is a conclusion where you restate your main points, **restate your topic**, and explain your supporting argument.
 - Leave the back of the paper blank in case you remember any additional information to add.
- Make it easy on the grader! Make clear statements in the first sentence, show all your work, and most of all, write neatly!

STUDY TIPS

- Are you an early bird or a night owl? Study the most difficult classes at your best times!
- Using your own words help you assess your comprehension.
 - Teach your classmates, your stuffed animal, or your reflection in the mirror!
- Switch it up!
 - Do this before your eyes glaze over or when you feel yourself getting frustrated: Go to a different subject, take a walk, get a snack, or talk to a friend.

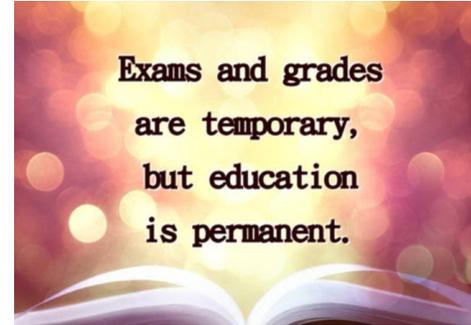
- Color code: **what's most important**, **less important**, etc. This helps you to prioritize.
- MAKE IT FUN:
 - Reward yourself with candy, a sip of coffee, a lap around the library, etc. after you accomplish a task.
 - Reward yourself with activities you enjoy, like x-box, social media, exercise, watching Netflix, etc. when you're finished studying for the day.
- Link new information to things you already know.
 - These associations will help you remember it later.
- Adding 20 minutes of cardio in your day can not only improve your memory, but increase you energy level while reducing stress!
- Create diagrams, tables, mind maps etc. to help organize information.
- Study in an area that has the least amount of distractions around you.
 - Turn off your phone, TV, e-mail notifications, Facebook notifications, and even text notifications (there are apps for that).
- Choose music without words (movie soundtracks, EDM, classical) that will help you focus on the subject rather than on outside distractions.
- Overlearn the material—even when you think you're done, **keep going!**
- Review your notes in threefold: **read** them, **rewrite** them, and **say** them aloud.
- Shake up your study spots!
 - Alternating your location can help improve your memory simply by remembering where you studied the information.
- Actually put off procrastination. Try using a pomodoro timer (marinaratimer.com) to break up studying.
- *Finish your papers the week before mid-terms and finals so you can focus on the exams!*



EXAM TIME

- Get there early to get settled and prepared.
 - Get a good location where you can see the clock.
- Be awake for the test—don't just roll out of bed and go.
- Eat before the test so you're not focused on how hungry you are rather than the exam.
- Bring additional writing utensils in case a pencil breaks or a pen runs out of ink.
 - Pack all the essentials the night before. (a calculator, notes (if an open note test), water bottle, etc.)

- Wear comfortable clothes.
- Review your notes before the exam to stay fresh.
- When you get the exam:
 - Read the instructions and make a plan—circle, underline, or summarize the question if needed.
 - Skim the entire exam.
 - **Get a game plan!**
 - Pace yourself.
- Do the easy questions first.
- Don't leave questions blank! You still have a shot.
- Remember, your answers are the most important: Notes, false starts, and unapplied formulas won't give you the answer, so make sure you use them!
- Stay until the end of the exam.
 - You may be finished, but use that time to check for errors, especially on essay or short answer portions.
 - Every correction you make in that time is a point gained.
- Last but not least, remember it's just a test! **You've studied hard, you've got this.**



AFTER THE EXAM

- Reward yourself!
- Study the instructor's feedback to review your errors.
- Correct your mistakes and incorrect answers.
- Analyze your errors:
 - Did you study the wrong material?
 - Did you not study enough?
- Get help! Contact the TA, a tutor, your professor, or your classmates.

STRATEGIES COMPILED FROM THE FOLLOWING SOURCES:

Downing, Skip. *On Course: Strategies for Creating Success in College and in Life*. 2nd ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2013. Print.

Fishel, Judy. *Straight A's Are NOT Enough*. Stuart, FL: Flying Heron, 2015. Print.

Pauk, Walter. *Essential Study Strategies*. H & H Pub. Co.: Clearwater, 2000. Print.

Sherfield, Robert M., Rhonda J. Montgomery, and Patricia G. Moody. *Cornerstone: Building on your Best*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2005. Print.

Tardiff, Elyssa and Brizee, Allen. "Welcome to the Purdue OWL." *Purdue OWL: Developing an Outline*. N.p., 01 Mar. 2013. Web. 07 June 2017.