

Before You Prepare

Find out about the test.

- What will be covered on the test?
- What type of test questions will be used? (Such as: true/false, multiple choice, essay, etc)
- What do you need to bring to the test? (Such as: pencils, paper, calculator, etc.)
- Will there be a time limit on taking the exam?
- Will there be a penalty for guessing?

Develop a plan to study for the exam.

- Separate review time from time spent on daily assignments.
- Spend no more than two hours studying at any given time.

Take care of yourself.

- Eat healthy food, drink water, get physical exercise, get proper rest, and resist panic.

6 Steps of Preparation

Step 1

Pull out old tests, homework, sample problems, review material, the textbook, class notes, etc. Review them for key points.

Step 2

Develop a set of condensed notes that include the key points, acronyms, terms, and formulas so that the information can be quickly reviewed many times. Kinesthetic learners will benefit from rewriting notes. Visual learners will benefit from making charts. Auditory learners will benefit from reading the notes aloud. Try to memorize the list.

Step 3

Organize a study group. Try to come up with exam questions and answer them. Ask if the instructor could provide you with some sample questions.

Step 4

Practice transferring your memorized notes to paper without benefit of any study materials. This will help you recall the material during the test.

Step 5

Make sure you go to class the day before the test. Instructors will often provide additional insight on the format of the test, clarify the content covered, or answer questions that you or your peers might have.

Step 6

Arrive at least 5 minutes before the test will start. Go to the bathroom before walking into the exam room. You don't want to waste anytime worrying about your bodily needs during the test.

Strategies to Use During the Test

- **Relax and sit away from people who can distract you.**
- **Stay calm and deal with test stress.** If you start to feel nervous take a few deep breaths to relax. Tell yourself that you're prepared and that you'll do well. Don't listen to negative thoughts.
- **Come prepared.** Bring at least two pens/pencils with good erasers, a calculator and any other resources that your instructor allows. Bring a watch so that you can pace yourself. If you tend to go too fast, try to slow down. If you tend to be slow, watch the time.
- **Look at the whole test first.** Read all directions carefully. Underline the important words. Ask the instructor for clarification if you don't understand what is being asked on the test. What areas have the greatest point value? Spend more time in that area. Decide how you will use your time.
- **Answer questions you know first.** Put a mark by those questions you skip or are unsure of your answer. This will make it easier to return to those questions if time allows.
- **Write legibly.**
- **Keep your eyes on your own paper.**
- You don't want to appear to be cheating and cause unnecessary trouble for yourself.
- **When you are finished, make sure that you have answered all the questions.**
- **Only change an answer if you misread or misinterpreted the question.** Usually the first answer that you put is usually the correct one.
- **Watch out for careless mistakes.**

What to Do After the Test

- **Try not to dwell on the mistakes that you might have made.**
- **Indulge in something relaxing or follow through on a promise that you made to yourself.**
- **When you get your test back, look at *what* you missed and *why*.** Make sure that there aren't grading mistakes. Look for patterns like incomplete answers or not following the directions. Look at what you did right. Talk with your instructor if you have any questions.
- **If you aren't satisfied with your grade, go to your instructor** and see if there's a make-up exam or any extra credit you can do.
- **Save the test** to study for future cumulative tests.