

STUDY SKILLS: PREPARING FOR FINALS

+Make a plan:

- know when your test dates and due dates are
- give yourself *at minimum* a week for preparation
- allow more time for difficult classes or projects
- start with what's most difficult

Set goals:

- write down your goals and post them in a place you see them multiple times a day
- tell people about your goals
- make specific goals: what grade will you get on your paper? what cumulative GPA will you achieve this semester? what day will you finish your paper?
- have in mind rewards to give yourself for when you achieve your goals

Prioritize your actions:

- use an ABC To-Do List to designate what items are most urgent and important
- break major studying and assignments down into smaller portions that you can check off (consider – it's not helpful to put on a to-do list "write paper" ... it is helpful to put "research sources," "draft an outline," "write introduction," "write 1st draft," "take 1st draft to a Writing Tutor," "write 2nd draft," etc)
- Review past performance – correct any patterns of error and duplicate any patterns of success

Stay healthy:

- take breaks from studying or working – for every hour at work, take 5 minutes away
- positivity and anxiety are both contagious – surround yourself with people who promote success
- communicate with your roommate(s) about sleep, noise, relaxation, etc
- find the best work environment for you by eliminating distractions
- SLEEP! Eat (healthily)! Control caffeine intake!

How to Prepare for In-Class Exams:

- Use study tools:
 - Flash cards – portable, easy to test and mix ideas
 - Mind maps – shows relationships
 - Summary Sheets – include the most important and most difficult concepts
 - Essay Questions
 - Old Exams
- Understand the difference between understanding something and reciting it in your own words – get to the point of recitation – you *know* material when you could teach it to someone else
- Don't cram until the last possible second – give yourself at least 10 minutes before starting the exam to breathe and relax
- Try a "brain dump" at the beginning of the exam – on a piece of scratch paper, write down everything you can remember

How to Prepare Take Home Essays and Exams:

- Understand the assignment in great detail – recite it back to yourself in your own words
- Set yourself time limits and achievement goals – "I will finish my first draft of 4 pages in 3 hours" – then reward yourself
- Prepare ahead of time – read your sources, take notes, have conversations
- Make an outline or mind map to organize your ideas
- Use multiple drafts
- Use Writing Tutors

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