

GENERAL EXAM PREP GUIDE



DURING THE SEMESTER

- Do your best to attend class, pay attention, and take good notes. Professors usually emphasize what they consider to be the most important, and those things will probably be on the exam. Listen for tips they might give about what you should study.
- Review material soon after you learn about it in class. Integrate new material with what you already know and organize your notes. This will help you remember what you learned and make it easier to review later.



KNOW WHAT IS EXPECTED

- Find out what will be covered in the exam: for example, does the exam cover the whole semester, only since the last exam, only certain chapters, etc.
- Find out what format the exam will be in, whether multiple choice, short answer, essay questions, or a combination of formats.



IDEAS FOR STUDYING

- Brainstorm possible questions that may be on the exam and answer them.
- Review out loud. It is more likely that you will remember the material if you read it, speak it, and hear yourself say it.
- Use colour, and format your notes creatively. For example, you could put the information you need to know into charts or you could colour-code different kinds of information.
- Use memory devices to help you remember. You could use symbols, pictures, or acrostic words/sentences to remember key points.
- Practice the skills that will be required on the exam. If the exam uses essay questions, practice by writing out essay outlines. If the exam uses short answer questions, invent possible questions and try answering them.
- Studying in small groups can be helpful, but only study with other students who are serious about studying and will not distract you.
- If you are unable to cover all of the necessary material, select important portions that you can cover well.



IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Avoid cramming for a test. It will not help you learn the material well, and it will produce anxiety.
- Follow a moderate pace as you study, vary your work, and take breaks when needed. Sixty minutes of studying in three groups of twenty minutes is more effective than sixty minutes straight.
- Continue to have good nutrition and exercise, and continue with social activities. All of these contribute to your emotional and physical well-

- being, and being healthy is the best way to be prepared for an exam.
- Get plenty of sleep the night before an exam.
 Sleep is more effective in increasing performance in exams than using the same number of hours to cram.
- Do not overplay the importance of grades or think of yourself in all-or-nothing terms. Life will carry on after your exam.



ON EXAM DAY

- Do something relaxing the hour before a test cramming won't help.
- Arrive early for the exam, and bring everything you need: pencils, pens, a water bottle, etc.
- Avoid classmates who generate anxiety.



DURING EXAM

- Use natural stimulants, such as caffeine and sugar, during an exam. Bringing chocolate to an exam can boost your energy and your mood.
- Begin by looking through the whole exam, and listen carefully to all instructions.
- Be aware of the available time, and budget your time accordingly.
- Do not leave blanks! Give your best guess, even if you think you do not know the answer.
 Sometimes our gut instinct is right.
- Do not judge your own performance level based on how slowly (or quickly) others finish the exam.
- If you get writer's block or blank on a question, do not spend too much time waiting for inspiration.
 Instead, move on and come back to troublesome items at the end.



AFTER EXAM

 Reward yourself after the exam, and do something relaxing. Do not start studying for the next exam right away.