

Test Preparation

- Create a **5-day study plan**. Use the attached blank 5-day plan form to fill in different daily activities you can do to prepare for your upcoming test. Examples could include – read the chapter and take notes, highlight key concepts in notes, make flashcards of key concepts, review flashcards, recite answers to flashcards/key questions, write and re-write key terms or concepts in your own words, practice writing answers to essay questions, do practice problems, create and do a practice test, answer questions at the end of a chapter, make formula cards and practice recalling them, etc...
- Find out as much about the test as you can from other students or the instructor. It doesn't hurt to ask about format or what you should focus on. Find out if the test is mostly from the book or notes or both. Figure out if the test is primarily recognition (T/F and Multiple Choice), recall (short answer or essay), process (knowing steps in a process), application (taking ideas you learn and applying them to novel problems), etc...
- Review past tests for patterns of errors. Look at them on your own or go over them with your instructor for greater insight.
- Rework your notes – highlight key concepts, summarize content, simply write them again, put like terms together.
- Instead of making typical flashcards with a concept on them, make question cards. Think about the material. On the front of a card put a question that you think will be asked. On the back write the answer. Have someone rehearse these with you.
- Work on integrating the information from the chapter and notes rather than memorizing isolated facts or details. Think of the bigger picture and how it all fits together.
- Create self-tests from the most relevant information. The task of simply isolating key information is good for review as well as the actual act of taking the test.
- Use mnemonics and visuals to chunk more information into your brain.
- Make a crib sheet or cheat sheet that you'd like to take into the exam (but of course you really wouldn't). The act of condensing key information will likely help you remember it without even needing the card.
- Study to the point where you can look away from your notes and write or say the answers. You don't know the information until you can do this.
- Recite your information to someone. Great quote – “The person who does the talking is the one who does the learning.” (Von Blerkom book, 289).
- Create a study sheet. Pick a key topic you know will be on the exam. Write a card full of key related information underneath this term (dates, key people, details, definitions, etc...)
- Put in small chunks of information over a series of days. Practice pulling the information up repeatedly, even if it's difficult. That's where learning occurs.
- Look away from what you're trying to recall; make sure you've got a “picture” of the information in the head you need to recall.
- For math tests, create **math study cards**. See handout for details.