Tips: Preparing For the Big Test

• Before you sit down to study, gather up all your materials (lecture notes, books, articles, homework, problem sets for math/chemistry, etc., quizzes). If you keep these items organized as the semester goes along, this will be easy to do!

• Remove unnecessary items from your study area so they won’t be a distraction.

• Triage your time (Kornhauser, 1993): sort and use your study time based on the grade you’re getting in each course (if you know) and on where you think your study resources can be most useful because no one (no matter how smart) has infinite time to study. Find out which parts of the test are worth more points (if any) and spend more time studying for these parts of the test (Jacobs & Hyman, 2006).

• Don’t get worn out by studying constantly with no breaks. Research shows it is better to space out your study sessions (Kornhauser, 1993).

• Each session should actively review material you’ve already studied and cover new material as well.

• About a week before the test, spread out your review over 3-5 study sessions lasting about 1 hour each.

• Find out what exactly is going to be on the test! Take notes about anything the professor says about the test.
• Usually, the main points that will be on the test are the ones the professor spent a good deal of time discussing and explaining.

• If the professor lets you keep the first test in a course, use it as a guide to the format of the next test (multiple choice, short answer, true/false, etc.). Think about what type of questions the professor likes to ask (comparison, contrast, describe, evaluate, summarize, mere memorization, etc.) and study as if this type of question will be asked on the next test. If you can anticipate what the professor will ask on the exam, you are ahead of the game! 😊 You can focus on and try to answer the kinds of questions that will be on the test. Plan how you would answer some of the questions you think will be asked (Jacobs & Hyman, 2006).

Sources


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