

## PART 4: TIPS FOR TEST SUCCESS

### TEST PREPARATION TIPS

- Budget your time. Make sure you have sufficient time to study so that you are well prepared for the test.
- Go to review. Pay attention to hints that the instructor may give about the test. Take careful notes and ask questions about items you may be confused about.
- Ask the instructor to specify the areas that will be emphasized on the test.
- Make sure you go to the class right before the test; it's another prime time for the instructor to give out more hints or the format of the test.
- Go over any material from old tests, HW's, sample problems, review material, the textbook, class notes... that might be on the test.
- Eat before a test, having food in your stomach will give you energy and help you focus, but avoid heavy foods which can make you groggy.
- Don't try to pull an all nighter, get at least 3 hours of sleep before the test.
- Put the main ideas/information/formulas onto a sheet that can be quickly reviewed many times, this makes it easier to retain the key concepts that will be on the test.
- Try to show up at least 5 minutes before the test will start.
- Set your alarm and have a backup alarm set as well.
- 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

### TIME MANAGEMENT: PLANNING YOUR SUCCESS

#### Review, Repeat, Review, Repeat, Review ... {You Get the Idea}

- **Plan Your Entire Semester or Course in Advance:** Make sure you understand the 'Big Picture' for the semester or term and plan each course with this in mind. This involves mid-terms, major projects, papers, and final exam schedules. With the big picture in mind, tailor your weekly and daily schedule accordingly.
  
- **Daily Reviews:** Conduct short reviews of lecture notes before and after class. Begin reviewing after your first day of class. Re-copy your lecture notes each evening as a study exercise. This is especially helpful in courses that require you to memorize. Look over examples done in class for courses like Math and Science. Daily review seems time consuming but really only take a few minutes each night. Small amounts each day will save you from huge study sessions later in the course.
  
- **Weekly Reviews:** Dedicate at least one afternoon or entire evening during the weekend to review all of your courses. Make certain you have an understanding of where each course is going and that your study schedule is appropriate.
  
- **Periodic Tactical Reviews:** On your calendar, schedule special reviews. The week before a mid-term or final exam should be blocked out for "special tactical review" ~ a larger study session spread over a few days so you don't have to cram it all into the night before the test. If you have kept a good daily and weekly schedule, studying for a test or exam should only be reaffirming what you already know.

## HOW TO STUDY EFFECTIVELY

Studying in an effective manner not only improves grades but can also help test anxiety.

### GENERAL STUDY TIPS

- Minimize distracting noise. Some people need some sound while some prefer silence. Find what works for you.
- Consider a "do not disturb sign" and turning off your phone. Let voicemail take your calls for a while. You can catch up with people later.
- Use proper lighting. It's hard to feel motivated sitting in the dark! If you use a desk lamp, place it opposite the dominant writing hand and don't have it too close to you.
- In terms of temperature, it is better to be cool than warm. Warm rooms tend to make people sleepy.
- Have plenty of room to work; don't be cramped. Your study time will go better if you take a few minutes at the start to straighten things up and organize your materials.
- A desk and straight-backed chair is usually best. Don't get too comfortable ~ a bed is a place to sleep, not study.
- Have everything (book, pencils, paper, coffee, dictionary, laptop, calculator, tape recorder, etc.) close at hand. Don't spend your time jumping up and down to get things.
- Studying requires the correct attitude. Be calm and patient with yourself as you review the material. Beating yourself up will do no good. Try to open your mind as much as possible by putting other things aside and letting go of frustration.
- Focus on the areas that need the most attention. Many students feel that any time studying counts as real studying, but studying is less effective if you do not target the areas that need study. For example, if you know how to do all the math or science questions of one type, do not focus your attention on those questions. Instead work on the questions or concepts you find the most difficult. That way you are work on improving your knowledge instead of just reinforcing what you know.
- Good class notes are important as they make studying and review much easier. Don't expect to learn everything later on your own. Pay attention in class and make your own good notes wherever possible. If you've been absent, ask the teacher or a friend if there are notes you could photocopy. Taking good notes familiarizes you with the material; further review and study solidifies it up.
- Use your class materials when studying. Good notes can often help you work on the material you find most difficult. If your teacher has given you worksheets, data booklets, quizzes, etc. during class, use those to help you study. Effective studying uses all the resources you have, not just an open text book.