

Tips for Preparing for Exams

Make an Exam Study Schedule!

See Mrs. Perkins or your advisor if you need help making your schedule.

Your study schedule might include the following steps:

- Attend work periods for classes in which you need extra support.
- Review all tests and quizzes.
- Reread and underline class notes.
- Make flash cards, a mind map, a list, or an outline.
- If your class uses a textbook, look through the table of contents and re-read only the material you don't remember well.
- Make up a quiz to test your knowledge or have someone quiz you.
- Discuss the material with a small study group.
- Use your last hours for a final review of your notes, flash cards, outline, etc.
- Include exercise, sleep, and time with friends and family!

Use Spaced Retrieval Practice to Study! Don't cram!

See the two documents, Spaced Practice and Retrieval Practice, that detail how to study using this method.

Short Explanation of Spaced Retrieval Practice:

- Begin exam review 4 to 6 days before the exam.
- Shorter review sessions spread over 4-6 days are much more beneficial than six hours of intense study the day before.
- Divide your study sessions into periods of 30 minutes to an hour, followed by a 15 minute exercise break.
- After a study session, put your class materials away and write or sketch everything you can remember, take a practice test, or work through flashcards and PRACTICE RECALLING the information. This might be difficult, but that means your study method is working...the harder it is to recall, the more likely you will remember the information during the exam!

More Detailed Advice:

- Use your work periods, review days, and extra help sessions to meet with teachers before exams. Gather your materials for studying and look to see where you have gaps in your notes or understanding. Prepare questions and concerns to go over with your teachers during work periods/extra help sessions. Use the time to ask teachers for specific advice on how to study and prepare for their particular exam.

- **Schedule the most time for your harder subjects** and the least time for your easier subjects. Study your harder subjects every day and your easier subjects every other day.
- **Think about the time of day that you are at your best**, your “prime time,” and try to study for difficult subjects then.
- **Space your study sessions for each subject** so that the information you learned in the first session remains just barely retrievable. Study, wait, and then study again. The longer you wait, the more you will learn and retain after this second study session.
- **Concentrate on what is most important to learn.** Focus on general principles, concepts, big ideas, and comparisons/contrasts. Focus on understanding rather than memorization. Pay attention to material that is emphasized by boldface type, repetition, or questions.
- **Write a summary or outline** of the course material in your own words.
- **Review by creating questions from your class material.** Try to predict what questions will be on the exam. Make sure you are not just creating the easy questions.
- **Review the course material by reorganizing it into divisions** that are logical and easy to remember (ex. formulas, vocabulary, chronology, etc.).
- **Be sure to review question “terminology” and question “reading.”** Make sure you know the meaning of what a question asks for. Look at chapter review questions to help you become familiar with the terminology.
- Research supports the following techniques to help you remember more of what you have learned:
 - **Do a final review** of the material right before you go to sleep. Take a few minutes to review again in the morning.
 - **Take a brief wakeful rest** after learning something new. Sit and rest quietly with your eyes closed for a few minutes after a period of learning.
 - **Incorporate exercise** into your study time: go for a brisk walk, a short run, or just play outside. Exercise before you sit down to study and during your study breaks.