

## **Preparing for Exams**

### **I. Introduction** Start Poem by David Harrison – Last Night

#### **Last Night**

Last night I knew the answers.  
Last night I had them pat.  
Last night I could have told you  
Every answer, just like that!

Last night my brain was cooking.  
Last night I got them right.  
Last night I was a genius.  
So where were you last night?

How many have felt like that during a test?

### **II. Test Formats.**

A. There are 3 different types of examinations.

1. Objective. True/False, Multiple Choice, Matching.
2. Subjective: A subjective test or essay exam requires you to provide a written response to the questions totally from your mind. Essay exams may also include short answer questions, fill-in-the-blank, math & science problems. We will be discussing essay tests in more detail later.
3. Combination of the two: A combination test includes both objective and subjective questions.

B. Discuss recall (Subjective tests) versus recognition (Objective tests).

C. (Courtesy of Kim Mills, 1997.) Each type of examination has advantages as well as disadvantages.

1. The advantages of an objective test include:
  - a. the ability to test students over a lot of material(actually both kinds of tests can do this),
  - b. they are fast and easy to grade,
  - c. objective tests are less subjective and involve less decision making when grading. The answers on an objective test are either right or wrong,
  - d. if you do not know the correct answer, guessing is an option,
  - e. recognition rather than recall memory.
2. Disadvantages of an objective test include:

- a. you may know more info than the question assumes making answering difficult,
  - b. you are either right or wrong – no in between,
  - c. often machine scored – bubbles must be done properly, easy to skip one,
  - d. may not show what you know.
3. Subjective tests are often feared by students but they do offer some advantages.
  - a. Subjective tests really test knowledge because students are required to write a detailed answer.
  - b. Subjective tests are and faster to compose.
  - c. Because essay tests are subjective students can earn partial credit for answers that are not exactly correct. The problem of choosing between confusing options is eliminated.
4. There are also disadvantages to essay exams.
  - a. Recall of material required.
  - b. Essay exams are difficult and time consuming to grade.
  - c. A professor may base your grade on more than just your answer.
  - d. Grammar, punctuation, spelling, handwriting, neatness and writing ability may hurt your grade.
  - e. The test taker may run out of time or experience fatigue while taking the exam.
  - f. Perhaps the main problem for the student is not knowing the answer.
  - g. There are fewer guessing options for a subjective test.
5. The combination test may be the solution because it gives a student all types of questions and both the advantages and disadvantages.

#### D. Getting Ready for the Test.

1. Use Cornell – study some from day one.
2. 5-day Exam Preparation Strategy.

Sometimes the biggest problem in studying is knowing what to study when and where to begin. I'm sharing with you a 5-day plan to get you started. If you know that the material is extra difficult or you learn things slowly, you may want to spend even more time.

## **Five-day Exam Preparation Strategy**

Most students learn more if they follow a long-term plan for review before an exam. Below is a five-day plan for exam preparation. Each day is devoted to specific activities. You may need to increase the time necessary to review each day. If so, do not schedule more 20-30 minutes each session.

### **Before beginning the five-day countdown, you should**

1. Collect all materials needed to review. This includes textbooks, class notes, handouts, study guides, 3 x 5 cards – anything and everything pertaining to the information to be included on the test.
2. Schedule at least three 20-30 minute review sessions for each of the five days preceding the exam.
3. Plan the content of each review session. What materials will you cover? How long to spend on each part? What method will you use to review the material?
4. Make a calendar with specific times, activities, subject matter to be covered and materials needed.

### **Day 5 – Reading assignments: This is the first day of the five-day countdown.**

1. Set a timer or alarm clock for 20-30 minutes so you can work without interruption. Schedule a 5-10 minute break between each study session.
2. Reading must be completed on this day because time is scheduled for other review activities on the following days.

### **Day 4 – Textbook material: This day is devoted to textbook material. This includes reviewing textbook questions and answers, textbook notes, and instructor-made study guides.**

1. Set a timer or alarm clock for 20-30 minutes. Schedule a 5-10 minute break between each review session.
2. Review all textbook reading material using a textbook mastery review technique.
3. Review questions at the end of the chapters.
4. Review each instructor-made study guide.

### **Day 3 – Vocabulary: This is the vocabulary you previously identified while reading and/or taking notes as needing attention.**

1. Set a timer or alarm clock for 20-30 minutes. Schedule a 5-10 minute break between each review session.
2. Study the vocabulary words systematically, using either a self-made glossary or 3 x 5 cards. Try to recall the definition by looking at the word and then try to recall the word by looking at the definition. Do not study the words in the same order each time.
3. Be sure you can give the definition, recall the term from the definition, spell the word correctly, and give an example of each term. This is important.

### **Day 2 – Lecture notes:**

1. Set a timer or alarm clock for 20-30 minutes. Schedule a 5-10 minute break between each review session.
2. Review all lecture notes and handouts.
3. Make outlines or use mapping techniques to organize material.

### **Day 1 – Problem areas: Concentrate on areas that have been a problem for you. This day's activities should be completed individually. Plan to review all information on this day.**

1. Set a timer or alarm clock for 20-30 minutes. Schedule a 5-10 minute break between each review session.
2. Review & concentrate on “Trouble” areas of past 4 days:
  - a. all lecture notes
  - b. all textbook notes
  - c. all instructor-made handouts and/or study guides
  - d. all vocabulary words
3. Plan to complete these activities early so the evening before the exam is free for relaxation.

At this point you should feel confident that you are prepared for the exam. Relax and prepare your test-taking procedures. Sometimes a last minute review before bedtime can make you feel more confident.

3. Write in your 5-day study time in your planner – ahead of time.

4. This 5-day plan can easily accommodate 2 tests. Three-30 minute sessions with 10 minutes in between is only 120 minutes or 2 hours. This could allow you to study for one test say 6-8 p.m. & another 8:15-10:15 p.m.

- E. Test-taking Strategies. Go through handout – Test Taking Strategies. Discuss how they will want to take notes on the handout itself – just put date on sheet and fill in comments/highlight, etc as we go along. I will just pull out some highlights of this handout, but you will want to read it in more detail tonight. This info is a good test source.

### **Before the exam**

1. Eliminate the panic caused by being over prepared. Keep up with the readings, take good lecture notes, and study in a systematic way throughout the course.
2. Ask the teacher about the test format to guide study. Objective tests may include true-false, multiple choice, and matching. Objective tests may also include sentence completion, fill in the blanks, and short written answers such as making lists or briefly explaining. Essay tests may require short written answers of a few sentences or require development of a topic with main ideas and supporting statements.
3. Get a good night's sleep before the exam.
4. Take to the test all needed tools—paper, pens or pencils, erasers, calculator, books.
5. Arrive at the test site early to allow time to relax before the test begins.
6. Accept some anxiety as natural as it can help provide the energy needed.
7. Do some breathing exercises such as slowly exhale.
8. Don't associate a test score with your self-worth. What does this mean?

### **As you start the exam—Take control**

1. Listen closely to oral directions given.
2. Look over the entire test and read carefully directions in each section. Follow directions exactly.
3. Look for total number of questions and make sure all pages are attached.
4. Ask for time allotment and budget time accordingly.
5. Begin with the questions you know to build confidence.
6. Mark questions you're unsure of and recheck later. Your first guess may not always be the best. Other questions may jog memory or provide answers to other questions.
7. Know what the question asks for before selecting an answer. Pay close attention to portions of questions that are underlined or printed in capital letters or italics.
8. If you note what appears to be a typo, ask the teacher about it; it may not be a typo.
9. Briefly scan any text, figures, charts, or drawings that accompany a question; then read the questions and options to see what information you will need. Next, return to the drawings for a more careful reading.
10. Answer every question. A blank answer is always wrong; a guess may be right. The one exception is when there is a penalty for guessing as when the number of incorrectly marked answers are subtracted from correctly marked answers. In this case answer only the questions you are sure of the answers.

## **True-False questions**

1. Watch for the following qualifiers: All, most, some, none, no, always, usually, sometimes, never, great, much, little, more, equal, less, good, bad, is, is not.
2. Absolutes (100% words) are generally false: No, never, none, every, always, all, only, entirely, invariably, best, worst. Be careful in math and science, however, where these words may be part of a definition.  
Example: A square always has 4 sides.
3. Qualifiers that are generally true: seldom, sometimes, often, frequently, most, many, few, some, usually, generally, ordinarily.
4. Watch for statements with two parts; both must be true for the question to be true.  
Example: Studying notes is a good idea and will always get you a 100%.
5. Watch for negatives & remember that 2 negatives always make a positive. An unhealthy habit is not getting enough exercise.
6. Think true. Most teachers want to leave true information in your head.

## **Multiple Choice**

1. Read directions carefully noting how many correct answers for each question.
2. If there is only one correct answer, you are looking for the one best answer.
3. Read the stem and all answers before marking an answer.
4. The more choices you eliminate, the better the chance of a correct guess.
5. Be reasonable. Some answers make more sense than others.
6. Watch for negative words such as not or except.
7. Note absolutes (100% words) such as all, no, best... Except in math and science, these are more often incorrect choices.
8. Foolish options are usually wrong.
9. "All of the above" is often used when all statements are correct unless it is a choice for every question. If you can find two correct answers to a question, then "all of the above" is correct unless you can mark more than one answer.
10. Dates—if you don't know, eliminate the high and low and make an intelligent guess.
11. Watch for look alike answers. It indicates focus, and usually one is correct.
12. Often the correct answer is longer or more inclusive.
13. Watch for clues such as an/a; is/are.

## **Matching**

1. Read the directions, noting if an answer may be used more than once.
2. Run down both columns to see what you are dealing with. Count choices in each column to see if every choice will be used.
3. Start with the left column and then read down the right. Consider all possibilities before making a final choice.
4. Fill in all you are sure of, skipping those you are unsure of. If you can write on the test, mark off the answers selected.
5. Don't guess until you have answered all you are sure of.
6. To study for a matching test, make lists of possibilities and associated facts and ideas.

## **Open Book**

At times you have open book and note tests. The question comes up, "How do I prepare for it?" The best help is to first prepare your book and notes using study systems such as Cornell, TRQR and EQRT as you go along. Highlight selectively. Then as you study, mark your book and notes so you can find information fast. You need to be comfortable about the information, but don't need to know all the little picky facts. Look for lists, pros & cons, comparing things/relationships. In math – open book for formulas. Paper clips, post-its that have labels, etc. are good way to mark. (Show my textbook.) If you're using a tape recorder, you'll want to note on your counter where information is located. Open book tests are often much harder than closed book tests as teachers can add much more detailed questions. Open book tests are actually preparation for the work world. Ex – Family Services – shelves of laws for eligibility – one can't know every detail – but there are reference books to look up.

## **Math and science tests**

1. To save time, look over the answer choices before beginning to figure out the answer to see how exact you need to be. Example: Instead of an answer carried to 3 decimal places, the options may simply represent whole numbers.
2. Draw figures or pictures to help understand the problem.
3. Be sure to read and study thoroughly any formulas, charts, graphs or pictures. They are usually put on a test either as a part of the question or as a help in solving the problem. If you're not using the information given, ask yourself if you've really understood the question.
4. Check your answer to see if it "makes sense." For example, if your calculations show a bag of carrots cost \$89, be alert that the answer doesn't make sense.
5. Use personal experiences to help solve problems. For example, if a problem requires you to compute weekly earnings, think, "How would I figure my weekly earnings?"
6. Watch for two part questions or answers that require several steps. Ask, "Have I found what was asked or do I need to continue solving?"

## **Practice Questions – Show questions, ask them to answer & then discuss how to tackle each.**

1. Guidelines for planning time schedules include all of the following, except:
  - a. Planning your time blocks.
  - b. Planning time to study during your "prime time."
  - c. Planning time to study before lecture classes & after recitation classes.
  - d. All of the above.
  - e. None of the above.
2. Strategies that encourage concentration do not include:
  - a. Making lists.
  - b. Taking breaks.
  - c. Maintaining a balance between your goal(s) & your skills.
  - d. All of the above.
  - e. None of the above.
3. When answering true/false questions, it is important to pay close attention to:
  - a. Absolutes such as "always" and "sometimes." - incorrect – not absolute.
  - b. Qualifiers such as "usually" and "seldom."
  - c. All of the above.
  - d. None of the above.
4. Lack of sufficient sleep adversely affects learning in the following ways, except for:
  - a. Impairing short-term memory.
  - b. Impairing ability to make decisions.
  - c. Impairing ability to concentrate.
  - d. None of the above.
5. Test-anxious students often sabotage their efforts by:
  - a. Cultivating false confidence.
  - b. Checking through old exams.
  - c. Relying too heavily on recitation.
  - d. Mentally preparing for failure.
6. Playing distracting music while studying can help concentration?  
True/False (By definition of distracting)

### **III. Test Anxiety –**

#### **A. Two Tense.**

#### **TWO TENSE**

A woman was working very, very hard at her new job [and studying for tests]. She had recurring dreams. In one dream she turned into a teepee. In another dream, she turned into a [yurt or domed tent]. After many nights of these strange dreams, she went to a doctor whose specialty was dream interpretation. After she told the doctor about the dreams, the doctor sat thoughtfully for a few moments. Then he explained, “You have been working too hard. You are just two tense.” (Per student, this is from movie: Mo Money per TV)

#### **B. To see where you stand in relation to test anxiety, please take & score the Test Anxiety Questionnaire.**

#### **TEST ANXIETY QUESTIONNAIRE**

*Nist and Diehl* (1990) developed a short questionnaire for determining if a student experiences a mild or severe case of test anxiety. To complete the evaluation, read through each statement and reflect upon past test experiences. You may wish to consider all testing experiences or focus on a particular subject (history, science, math, etc.) one at a time. Indicate how often each statement describes you by choosing a number from one to five as outlined below.

<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Half-time</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
1	2	3	4	5
_____	I have visible signs of nervousness such as sweaty palms, shaky hands, and so on right before a test.			
_____	I have “butterflies” in my stomach before a test.			
_____	I feel nauseated before a test.			
_____	I read through the test and feel that I do not know any of the answers.			
_____	I panic before and during a test.			
_____	My mind goes blank during a test.			
_____	I remember the information that I blanked on once I get out of the testing situation.			
_____	I have trouble sleeping the night before a test.			
_____	I make mistakes on easy questions or put answers in the wrong places.			
_____	I have difficulty choosing answers.			

Now add up your score on all the statements. Scores will range from 10 to 50. A low score (10-19 points) indicates that you do not suffer from test anxiety. In fact, if your score was extremely low (close to 10), a little more anxiety may be healthy to keep you focused and to get your blood flowing during exams. Scores between 20 and 35 indicate that, although you exhibit some of the characteristics of test anxiety, the level of stress and tension is probably healthy. Scores over 35 suggest that you are experiencing an unhealthy level of test anxiety. You should evaluate the reason(s) for the distress and identify strategies for compensating.

C. Test Failure – Way to cure it is to have success on tests! What is it that gives tests so much power? GRADES! You need to keep tests in perspective—yes, they are important—what used to give you most of your grades in college, but they are only scores. If someone were to ask you to give the major events leading up to the Civil War, you would be too bothered if you couldn't do it, right? BUT, if you asked to do the same on a HST 122 test, then you feel a little more anxiety. A test is simply a measure of what you scored on that particular day—but the scores do matter, so what can you do to get ready? OVERPREPARATION!! Studying to the point of recall Kim Mills.

D. *Suggestions for Students to Effectively Deal with Test Anxiety* “Test Anxiety is a learned behavior - you can learn test confidence if you are willing to work on it.” by Cheryl McAllister.

Be prepared mentally to succeed on your exam. Prepare for exams like athletes prepare for competition. Part of athletic training is to visualize the performance. **Try this exercise.**

Close your eyes and imagine the testing situation. You come in early so you can get a good seat, away from the door where people leaving the exam may distract you. You then go out of the room, get a drink of water, use the restroom, and relax a minute or two. You take several deep, cleansing breaths which force the tension and nervousness out of your body. You imagine feeling confident and ready. The instructor passes out the exam. Your pencils are sharp, your calculator has a new battery and you are ready. You look over the exam. You smile to yourself because now you will get a chance to show the instructor how much you have learned. You work the test carefully and with confidence. You have time to check it over for careless mistakes, then turn it in knowing you've done the best job you can.

Perhaps you may feel silly doing this exercise, but it will help. You should do it several times before the exam to help form a positive attitude toward the testing situation. Concentrate on breathing & hush negative thoughts.

#### E. Controlling Test Anxiety.

1. Some is needed.
2. Overprepare – test anxiety can be an excuse when one didn’t study enough.
3. Become desensitized to test environments & test formats. Develop & practice various kinds of tests & test questions. Take practice tests.
4. Change/stop negative thoughts, “I can’t, I always go blank.”
5. Prepare body – enough sleep, food before test for brain fuel, and exercise.
6. Breathing & relaxation exercises before & during exam. Your brain can only fully concentrate on one thing so if you are concentrating on your breathing, it can stop the fear thoughts for a moment & this may be all that is needed to get your brain functioning on the test.
  - a. Breathe.

b. Drop head and chin gently toward chest.

- Very slowly rotate neck around, without letting head fall back.
- Allow mind to focus on neck, breathing into any tight or sore places.
- Repeat several times in one direction, then an equal number of times in other direction.
- Notice your neck and head beginning to relax.

Using the flats of the second finger joint, form a fist and rap lightly along the upper trapezius muscle, especially at the angle where the neck meets the shoulder. (An acupuncture point embedded in that muscle is used for the treatment of shoulder stiffness or pain, as well as easing colds and flu and reducing fever).

Shoulder Shrug

- Inhale slowly, gradually drawing shoulders up toward the ears. Pause.
- Exhale forcibly, dropping shoulders all at once. (Note: Let shoulders drop, do not push down. Keep arms and hands free, so usually best done standing).

Close your eyes, and travel in your mind to a familiar or imagined place of comfort and beauty. Notice the sounds....smells....sights....any tactile sensations. Take several minutes to breathe comfortably and enjoy your spot.

7. Once test is distributed, take control of exam: count pages, read directions, do an easy question first to build confidence. People in control tend to feel less anxious.
8. If you have tried the above suggestions to no avail, you may need professional help. The Testing & Counseling Center offers free help with overcoming test anxiety.

#### **IV. Conclusion.**

#### **Applying Your Learning**

# **TEST TAKING STRATEGIES, Part I**

(General, Open Book, Objective)

## **Before the exam**

1. Eliminate the panic caused by being underprepared. Keep up with the readings, take good lecture notes, and study in a systematic way throughout the course.
2. Ask the teacher about the test format to guide study. Objective tests may include true-false, multiple choice, and matching. Subjective tests may also include sentence completion, fill-in-the-blanks, essay, and short written answers such as making lists or briefly explaining. Essay tests may require short written answers of a few sentences or require development of a topic with main ideas and supporting statements.
3. Get a good night's sleep before the exam.
4. Take to the test all needed tools—paper, pens or pencils, erasers, calculator, books.
5. Arrive at the test site early to allow time to relax before the test begins.
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7. Do some breathing exercises such as slowly exhale.
8. Don't associate a test score with your self-worth.

## **As you start the exam—Take control**

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2. Absolutes (100% words) are generally false: No, never, none, every, always, all, only, entirely, invariably, best, worst. Be careful in math and science, however, where these words may be part of a definition.  
Example: A square always has 4 sides.
3. Qualifiers that are generally true: seldom, sometimes, often, frequently, most, many, few, some, usually, generally, ordinarily.
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Example: Studying notes is a good idea and will always get you a 100%.
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Example: An unhealthy habit is not getting enough exercise.
6. Think true. Most teachers want to leave true information in your head.

## **Multiple Choice**

1. Read directions carefully noting how many correct answers for each question.
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3. Read the stem and all answers before marking an answer.
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7. Note absolutes (100% words) such as all, no, best... Except in math and science, these are more often incorrect choices.
8. Foolish options are usually wrong.
9. “All of the above” is often used when all statements are correct unless it is a choice for every question. If you can find two correct answers to a question, then “all of the above” is correct unless you can mark more than one answer.
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4. Fill in all you are sure of, skipping those you are unsure of. If you can write on the test, mark off the answers selected.
5. Don’t guess until you have answered all you are sure of.
6. To study for a matching test, make lists of possibilities and associated facts and ideas.

### **Open Book**

1. While many students think, “Good, I don’t have to study,” open book tests can be some of the hardest tests you’ve ever taken.
2. Prepare books & notes using Cornell, note cards, & highlighting.
3. Mark books & notes so you can find info quickly. (Post-its, paperclips, etc.)
4. Know the information.

### **Math and science tests**

1. To save time, look over the answer choices before beginning to figure out the answer to see how exact you need to be. Example: Instead of an answer carried to 3 decimal places, the options may simply represent whole numbers.
2. Draw figures or pictures to help understand the problem.
3. Be sure to read and study thoroughly any formulas, charts, graphs or pictures. They are usually put on a test either as a part of the question or as a help in solving the problem. If you’re not using the information given, ask yourself if you’ve really understood the question.
4. Check your answer to see if it “makes sense.” For example, if your calculations show a bag of carrots cost \$89, be alert that the answer doesn’t make sense.
5. Use personal experiences to help solve problems. For example, if a problem requires you to compute weekly earnings, think, “How would I figure my weekly earnings?”
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## TEST ANXIETY QUESTIONNAIRE

*Nist and Diehl* (1990) developed a short questionnaire for determining if a student experiences a mild or severe case of test anxiety. To complete the evaluation, read through each statement and reflect upon past test experiences. You may wish to consider all testing experiences or focus on a particular subject (history, science, math, etc.) one at a time. Indicate how often each statement describes you by choosing a number from one to five as outlined below.

Never <b>1</b>	Rarely <b>2</b>	Half-time <b>3</b>	Often <b>4</b>	Always <b>5</b>
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- I have visible signs of nervousness such as sweaty palms, shaky hands, and so on right before a test.
- I have “butterflies” in my stomach before a test.
- I feel nauseated before a test.
- I read through the test and feel that I do not know any of the answers.
- I panic before and during a test.
- My mind goes blank during a test.
- I remember the information that I blanked on once I get out of the testing situation.
- I have trouble sleeping the night before a test.
- I make mistakes on easy questions or put answers in the wrong places.
- I have difficulty choosing answers.

Now add up your score on all the statements. Scores will range from 10 to 50. A low score (10-19 points) indicates that you do not suffer from test anxiety. In fact, if your score was extremely low (close to 10), a little more anxiety may be healthy to keep you focused and to get your blood flowing during exams. Scores between 20 and 35 indicate that, although you exhibit some of the characteristics of test anxiety, the level of stress and tension is probably healthy. Scores over 35 suggest that you are experiencing an unhealthy level of test anxiety. You should evaluate the reason(s) for the distress and identify strategies for compensating.

# Test Anxiety

Test anxiety is an issue that many students face at one time or another. It is important to learn to recognize test anxiety and learn how to deal with the anxiety more effectively. Anxiety is a normal human feeling that is part of life and typically triggers an adrenaline release (e.g., butterflies before making a speech or performing on stage). The anxiety can help by providing alertness and readiness, however, excessive anxiety can result in stress and hinder one's performance (e.g., Test Anxiety!!!).\*

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## Symptoms of Test Anxiety

- Fear of failing before arriving to take the exam.
  - Feeling tension as exam is being passed out.
  - Physical symptoms such as: increased heart rate, shortness of breath, perspiring, etc.
  - Negative thinking such as: "I am going to fail," "I am dumb," "I shouldn't even bother taking the exam."
  - "Blanking out" on information that you studied.
  - Recalling information, upon leaving the classroom or a short period later, that you "blanked out on" during the exam.
  - Frustrated with your grade on the exam because you know you were well prepared. \*
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## Tips for Reducing Test Anxiety

- Prepare for the exam ahead of time. "Cramming" is a big culprit of test anxiety.
- Get plenty of rest and sleep the night before the exam.
- Don't forget to eat the day of the exam, preferably something nutritious.
- Avoid arriving too early or late to the exam.
- Avoid last minute studying; remember you are already prepared.
- Avoid listening to others or discussing the exam with others, while you are waiting for the exam. The anxiety of others can "rub off" and suddenly you begin to doubt yourself.
- Don't forget to breathe! Take deep breaths to help you relax, don't worry nobody will notice!
- While you are taking deep breaths, replace any negative thoughts with positive thoughts. For example, you may find it useful to repeat positive statements to yourself such as the following: "I am relaxed", "I am prepared", "I am a good student". Make up your own!!
- Don't get bogged down and worry about questions you don't know, move on. Later, the answer may come to you or you may get clues from other exam questions.
- Reward yourself when you are finished with the exam.

## **Five-day Exam Preparation Strategy**

Most students learn more if they follow a long-term plan for review before an exam. Below is a five-day plan for exam preparation. Each day is devoted to specific activities. You may need to increase the time necessary to review each day. If so do not schedule more 20-30 minutes each session.

### **Before beginning the five-day countdown you should**

1. Collect all materials needed to review. This includes textbooks, class notes, handouts, study guides, 3 x 5 cards – anything and everything pertaining to the information to be included on the test.
2. Schedule at least three 20-30 minute review sessions for each of the five days preceding the exam.
3. Plan the content of each review session. What materials will you cover? How long to spend on each part? What method will you use to review the material?
4. Make a calendar with specific times, activities, subject matter to be covered and materials needed.

### **Day 5 – Reading assignments: This is the first day of the five-day countdown.**

1. Set a timer or alarm clock for 20-30 minutes so you can work without interruption. Schedule a 5-10 minute break between each study session.
2. Reading must be completed on this day because time is scheduled for other review activities on the following days.

### **Day 4 – Textbook material: This day is devoted to textbook material. This includes reviewing textbook questions and answers, textbook notes, and instructor-made study guides.**

1. Set a timer or alarm clock for 20-30 minutes. Schedule a 5-10 minute break between each review session.
2. Review all textbook reading material using a textbook mastery review technique.
3. Review questions at the end of the chapters.
4. Review each instructor-made study guide.

### **Day 3 – Vocabulary: This is the vocabulary you previously identified while reading and/or taking notes as needing attention.**

1. Set a timer or alarm clock for 20-30 minutes. Schedule a 5-10 minute break between each review session.
2. Study the vocabulary words systematically, using either a self-made glossary or 3 x 5 cards. Try to recall the definition by looking at the word and then try to recall the word by looking at the definition. Do not study the words in the same order each time.
3. Be sure you can give the definition, recall the term from the definition, spell the word correctly, and give an example of each term. This is important.

### **Day 2 – Lecture notes:**

1. Set a timer or alarm clock for 20-30 minutes. Schedule a 5-10 minute break between each review session.
2. Review all lecture notes and handouts.
3. Make outlines or use mapping techniques to organize material.

### **Day 1 – Problem areas: Concentrate on areas that have been a problem for you. This day's activities should be completed individually. Plan to review all information on this day.**

1. Set a timer or alarm clock for 20-30 minutes. Schedule a 5-10 minute break between each review session.
2. Review the following:
  - e. all lecture notes
  - f. all textbook notes
  - g. all instructor-made handouts and/or study guides
  - h. all vocabulary words
3. Plan to complete these activities early enough that the evening before the exam is free.

At this point you should feel confident that you are prepared for the exam. Relax and prepare your test-taking procedures. Sometimes a last minute review before bedtime can make you feel more confident.

## **Relaxation Exercises**

### Drop head and chin gently toward chest

- Very slowly rotate neck around, without letting head fall back
- Allow mind to focus on neck, breathing into any tight or sore places
- Repeat several times in one direction, then an equal number of times in other direction
- Notice your neck and head beginning to relax

Using the flats of the second finger joint, form a fist and rap lightly along the upper trapezius muscle, especially at the angle where the neck meets the shoulder. (An acupuncture point embedded in that muscle is used for treatment of shoulder stiffness and pain, as well as easing colds and flu and reducing fever).

### Shoulder Shrug

- Inhale slowly, gradually drawing shoulders up toward the ears. Pause.
- Exhale forcibly, dropping shoulders all at once. (Note: Let shoulders drop, do not push down. Keep arms and hands free, so usually best done standing.)

Close your eyes, and travel in your mind to a familiar or imagined place of comfort or beauty. Notice the sounds....smells....sights.....any tactile sensations. Take several minutes to breathe comfortably and enjoy your spot.

## Controlling Test Anxiety

- \* Some is needed.
- \* It can be excuse for not being prepared – Overprepare!
- \* Get used to test rooms & test formats.
- \* Change negative thoughts.
- \* Prepare body – sleep, food, & exercise.
- \* Breathing exercises – before & during – Relaxation exercises.
- \* Take control of exam
  1. Count pages.
  2. Read directions.
  3. Do easy question first.
- Professional help.

## **Five-day Exam Preparation Strategy**

Most students learn more if they follow a long-term plan for review before an exam. Below is a five-day plan for exam preparation. Each day is devoted to specific activities. You may need to increase the time necessary to review each day. If so, do not schedule more 20-30 minutes each session.

### **Before beginning the five-day countdown, you should**

5. Collect all materials needed to review. This includes textbooks, class notes, handouts, study guides, 3 x 5 cards – anything and everything pertaining to the information to be included on the test.
6. Schedule at least three 20-30 minute review sessions for each of the five days preceding the exam.
7. Plan the content of each review session. What materials will you cover? How long to spend on each part? What method will you use to review the material?
8. Make a calendar with specific times, activities, subject matter to be covered and materials needed.

### **Day 5 – Reading assignments: This is the first day of the five-day countdown.**

3. Set a timer or alarm clock for 20-30 minutes so you can work without interruption. Schedule a 5-10 minute break between each study session.
4. Reading must be completed on this day because time is scheduled for other review activities on the following days.

### **Day 4 – Textbook material: This day is devoted to textbook material. This includes reviewing textbook questions and answers, textbook notes, and instructor-made study guides.**

5. Set a timer or alarm clock for 20-30 minutes. Schedule a 5-10 minute break between each review session.
6. Review all textbook reading material using a textbook mastery review technique.
7. Review questions at the end of the chapters.
8. Review each instructor-made study guide.

### **Day 3 – Vocabulary: This is the vocabulary you previously identified while reading and/or taking notes as needing attention.**

4. Set a timer or alarm clock for 20-30 minutes. Schedule a 5-10 minute break between each review session.
5. Study the vocabulary words systematically, using either a self-made glossary or 3 x 5 cards. Try to recall the definition by looking at the word and then try to recall the word by looking at the definition. Do not study the words in the same order each time.
6. Be sure you can give the definition, recall the term from the definition, spell the word correctly, and give an example of each term. This is important.

### **Day 2 – Lecture notes:**

4. Set a timer or alarm clock for 20-30 minutes. Schedule a 5-10 minute break between each review session.
5. Review all lecture notes and handouts.
6. Make outlines or use mapping techniques to organize material.

### **Day 1 – Problem areas: Concentrate on areas that have been a problem for you. This day's activities should be completed individually. Plan to review all information on this day.**

5. Set a timer or alarm clock for 20-30 minutes. Schedule a 5-10 minute break between each review session.
6. Review & concentrate on “Trouble” areas of past 4 days:
  - i. all lecture notes
  - j. all textbook notes
  - k. all instructor-made handouts and/or study guides
  - l. all vocabulary words
7. Plan to complete these activities early so the evening before the exam is free for relaxation.

At this point you should feel confident that you are prepared for the exam. Relax and prepare your test-taking procedures. Sometimes a last minute review before bedtime can make you feel more confident.