

# ***Finals Prep Packet***

**This packet is intended to help students create an effective study plan leading up to Finals Week.**

The packet provides instructions and space to:

- Detail expectations of finals
- Brainstorm what materials you need to gather or create to aid you in studying for finals or complete final projects/papers
- Prioritize and break down your study time in a way that makes the most sense for you/your finals.

You'll have a choice of formats for how you'd like to create your study plan.

The packet is also meant to provide you with additional tips and resources to support you through this process.

If you'd like assistance in using the packet/creating a study plan for finals, you can make a Peer Academic Skills Coaching appointment with a coach from the ASC. You can meet our coaches and check their availability by going to this webpage and selecting the coach you'd like to meet with: <https://asc.dso.iastate.edu/coaching-team> or you can simply choose the soonest available appointment via Navigate.

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# Instructions

## STEP 1:

Before you begin getting organized, read through the first 7 pages of this packet (including these instructions and the previous page) to gain an understanding of:

- who to go to for assistance with this process
- what you'll be doing
- what things to keep in mind as you're creating your plans
- where to find additional helpful resources.

## STEP 2:

To begin preparing for your finals, **go through your list of courses and determine what finals you have** (regardless of whether they are final exams or final assignments).

- **To determine which of your courses have finals:**
  - **Utilize each course's syllabus along with details from any recent** (in-class or on-Canvas) **announcements regarding the final.**
  - **Don't skip any courses as you go through the list**, even if the professor hasn't mentioned a final-- you want to be sure there aren't any end of the semester expectations you may have missed or not been aware of.
  - *If you're unsure whether or not a course has a final of some kind, you should reach out to your professor or TA immediately.*
- As you're figuring out which classes have some kind of final, **write the course name on one of the "Final Details" pages**-- each course will have its own page. There are 6 pages included in this packet, feel free to print more or less as needed.
  - Use a color-coding system to easily organize your finals prep; **choose a unique color to associate with each class and use that color to either write or highlight the course name on its Final Details page** (if you already have a color code for your classes, stick to it). This color code will come in handy later on.
- **As you write out your course names**, you can also **fill in the boxes for: "Format," "Date," "Time," "Location," "Current Course Grade," and "Final Counts for What % of Grade."**
  - *If you're unsure about the format of a final, you should reach out to your professor or TA immediately.*
  - If your professor hasn't provided you with the location and time for your final, visit: [www.registrar.iastate.edu/students/exams](http://www.registrar.iastate.edu/students/exams) and select the Final Exam Schedule for the current semester.
  - If you need a tool to help you with calculating your current course grade you may find these resources helpful: <https://gpacalculator.io/final-grade-calculator/> and <https://libraries.ou.edu/content/assignment-calculator>.

### STEP 3:

One by one, fill in the "Course Content Covered on Final (with approx. time estimates & study materials):" boxes for each final. We encourage you to follow these suggestions:

- **Determine a short-hand for each topic or portion of content** (i.e. Ch1, U1 for Unit 1, W1 for Week 1, or W1-5 for Weeks 1-5-- whatever makes the most sense for this course/final). This will keep things neater and save you time/effort.
- **Determine what study aids/materials you already have, and what you still need to locate or create** (lecture notes for each topic, textbook notes/questions, concept maps, diagrams, Quizlets, flashcards, study guides, etc.).
  - **Use the Study Materials list and the codes provided to easily/neatly indicate what you have and what you still need for each portion** of content.
- **Determine an approximate time estimate for how long you think you'll need to spend studying or working on each portion of content** you list out. Consider the following factors when determining your approximate time estimates for each portion of content:
  - How well did you understand the content when it was covered in class?
  - How much time have you already spent on the content?
  - How well can you recall important/key points/information from the content?
  - Has the professor emphasized the importance of certain content over others in regard to the final?
  - How many portions of the content do you have in total (being mindful of needing to disperse your time across multiple portions)?
- Remember that you should spend the *most* time on the material you're *least* confident about.

### STEP 4:

Once you've completed Step 3 for every final, **go through and prioritize them.**

- **First, fill in these boxes:**
  - **Target Course Grade**
  - **Target % on Final**
  - **How far in advance should you start studying?**
- If you aren't sure about what to put for the grade and percentage information, you may find these resources helpful:  
<https://gpacalculator.io/final-grade-calculator/> and  
<https://libraries.ou.edu/content/assignment-calculator>
- **Consider the following factors when you are prioritizing:**
  - Date of the final / order/sequence of your finals
  - What percent of your grade the final counts for, paired with your current grade and your target course grade
  - Total amount of time you'll likely need to spend on each final (by adding up the time estimates).

## STEP 5:

Now that you've prioritized your finals and determined when to begin studying, **it's time to build your Study Plan:**

- After the "Final Details" pages, you'll find 3 weeks worth of **Timeline** and 3 weeks worth of **Calendar** spaces.
  - *You do not have to use all 3 weeks if it's not necessary for you.*
  - *You may choose to use only the Timeline or only the Calendar.*
    - Do what makes the most sense for you/your finals.
- **Before you begin filling in your Timeline or Calendar pages, fill in the correct dates and days of the week for the current semester.**
  - We left this open so that you can adjust to suit your preferences.
  - Keep in mind that finals are only held Monday - Thursday of finals week.
- **Starting with the final you decided to start studying for/working on earliest,** find the corresponding date/day you want to start.
  - **Using the color you chose for the course and the short hand you determined for each portion, fill in the portions of the course content you plan to cover and/or the study materials you'll be using or creating on each day.**
  - If you'll be *studying* material (rather than *creating* material), you should also **include codes for a Study Activity for each Study Material.** Refer again to [page 7](#) for the list of Study Activities and their codes.
  - If you use the Timeline, you should be sure to **include your time estimates** to keep yourself on track.
- **Repeat this step for each final.**

## STEP 6:

Now that you have *made* your Study Plan, **it's time to follow-through on your Study Plan.**

- You should put the plan somewhere you will see it daily and be able to easily refer back to it.
- If you've decided on designated times to complete the work in your plan, you should set digital calendar reminders for those times using whatever application you would usually put important meetings and appointments.
- If you utilize the **Timeline**, as you get to the end of each week consider using the Reflection space at the end to make notes about how you have (or haven't) managed to follow your plan so far, and consider whether you need to make adjustments to your plan or your routine going forward to set yourself up for success on your finals.
- After finals week has passed and you've received your final grades back, consider writing a reflection for yourself about what worked well and what didn't in your approach to preparing for finals.

# ***Study Tips + Additional Resources***

## **Create a Productive Study Environment**

Figuring out what environment is best suited to promote your productivity is extremely important. Here are some things to consider when creating your productive environment:

- Location
- Noise level
- Noise content - voices vs. instruments for example
- Alone or with others?
- What distracts you? Where are these distractions limited or prevented?
- What days/times are you usually most productive? Where have you been really productive in the past? (See our ***Leveraging Yourself*** packet for more on this).

## **Take Study Breaks**

It can be easy to lose motivation while studying for finals if you are pushing yourself for long hours at a time. It's important to take breaks throughout your study time.

You may want to break up your study time into intervals of time (time-oriented), or you may prefer to break up your studying by task completion (task-oriented).

### **Time Oriented vs. Task Oriented strategies**

- One of the most popular **time-oriented strategies** for breaking up studying is the Pomodoro Technique.
  - Traditionally with this technique, you select a goal or a task to focus on, set a timer for 20 minutes and work productively toward that goal/on that task until the timer goes off. Once it goes off, take a short 5 minute break to stretch, have a snack, check your phone, etc., and then get back to work for another 20 minutes. After you complete the cycle four times give yourself a longer break (20-30 minutes) and utilize a personal reward. Below are some timers built for this technique you may find useful:
    - Be Focused - Focus Timer (app)
    - Engross - [engrossapp.com](http://engrossapp.com) (app)
    - Aesthetic Pomodoro Timer - [studywithme.io](http://studywithme.io) (web)
    - Tomato Timer - [tomato-timer.com](http://tomato-timer.com) (web)
    - Pomotodo - [pomotodo.com](http://pomotodo.com) (web & app)
- **Task-oriented strategies** are for those who may struggle to listen to timers if they're in the middle of a task, or may struggle getting refocused/restarted if they take a break before a task is complete.
  - This approach is less clear-cut. It depends on you breaking larger tasks into smaller ones, focusing on one of these smaller tasks at a time, and implementing the same process of taking short breaks with small in-between activities a few times and then a longer break and a personal reward later on.

## ***Study Tips + Additional Resources***

### **Reward Yourself**

One of the best ways to maintain your motivation through days of studying is to reward yourself for your hard work! You should promise yourself a suitable (and manageable) reward for whenever you finish a study session or have worked really hard.

- Some examples of rewards include:
  - going for a walk
  - talking to or spending time with friends or significant others
  - treating yourself to a food or beverage from some place you like
  - watching an episode of your favorite show
  - playing a video game for a level or a specified amount of time
  - spending some time on an art project
  - playing with your pet

### **Practice Self-Care**

Prioritizing self-care is always important, but especially during particularly stressful times. Finals can be an extremely stressful time for students. It is so important to take care of yourself during this time.

You can't put your best self forward and perform to the best of your abilities on your finals if you aren't taking care of yourself.

- Here are some general tips to practice self-care during finals:
  - Try your best to maintain your normal routine.
  - Eat well - don't skip meals and do your best to eat nutritiously.
  - Sleep - try your best to keep your regular sleep schedule and get an adequate amount of rest.
  - Be active - within your abilities, try to incorporate some physical activity into your days.
  - Mindfulness and/or meditation - try some exercises to recharge, regulate, and refocus.
  - Be kind to yourself - remind yourself of the things you are doing well and how far you have come.
- For additional support or resources in self-care, visit:  
<https://www.cyclonehealth.iastate.edu/>

# **Study Materials & Study Activities**

Below are some examples of Study Materials and Study Activities for you to refer to/choose from. We recommend using the codes (i.e., M1., A1., etc.) as shorthand throughout your study plan and referring back to this page as needed.

You should have/choose at least one of each for every topic– be sure the activity you choose is compatible with the material.

## **Study Materials:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| M1. Instructor-provided study guide        | M9. Learning Objectives from the textbook, written as questions |
| M2. Self-made study guide                  | M10. Learning Objectives from instructor, written as questions  |
| M3. Vocabulary flashcards                  | M11. Quizlet(s) made by other students                          |
| M4. Concept/process description flashcards | M12. Important diagrams &/or conceptual flowcharts (specify)    |
| M5. Quiz/question flashcards               | M13. Reference sheet of major formulas                          |
| M6. Notes on textbook content              | M14. Practice test(s)   |
| M7. Lecture notes (from instructor)        | M15.- Other: _____  |
| M8. Lecture notes (self-written)           |   |

## **Study Activities:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| A1. Fill out study guide <i>from memory</i>   | A8. Answer Learning Objective questions from memory.   |
| A2. Finish filling out study guide with notes/book  | A9. Practice using Quizlet(s), make note of concepts that need review.   |
| A3. Practice flashcards   | A10. Draw or label diagrams from memory.   |
| A4. Recite/Explain to someone key points/main ideas from your lecture notes <i>from memory</i> (then double check)                                  | A11. Do practice problems of the formulas (if needed, ask TA or instructor for practice problems, or simply google search the formula + "practice problems") --check your work |
| A5. Rewrite key points/main ideas from your lecture notes <i>from memory</i> (then double check)  | A12. Complete practice tests in a test-like setting--check your work   |
| A6. Recite/Explain to someone key points/main ideas from your textbook <i>from memory</i> (then double check)<br>Rewrite key points/main ideas from | A13. Visit office hours with questions   |
| A7. your textbook <i>from memory</i> (then double check)  | A14. Study in groups and "grade" each others practice.   |
|   | A15.- Other: _____   |

Additional study activities can be found in our **Exam Prep: How to Study with Bloom's Taxonomy** resource.





# Final Details

<b>Course:</b>			
<b>Format:</b> (circle all that apply)	Cumulative	Regular Exam	
	True/False	Multiple Choice	Problem Solving
	Essay/Short Answer	Paper	Project
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Time:</b>	<b>Location:</b>	
<b>Course Content Covered on Final (with approx. time estimates &amp; study materials):</b>			
<b>How far in advance should you start studying?:</b>			
<b>Current Grade in Class:</b>	<b>Final Counts for What % of Grade?</b>		
<b>Target Course Grade:</b>	<b>Target % on Final:</b>		

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<b>Target Course Grade:</b>	<b>Target % on Final:</b>		

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<b>How far in advance should you start studying?:</b>			
<b>Current Grade in Class:</b>	<b>Final Counts for What % of Grade?</b>		
<b>Target Course Grade:</b>	<b>Target % on Final:</b>		

# Timeline; Week 1 Plan:

## Day 1:

Time Estimate

Content to Focus On:

Materials to Gather/Create:

Study Activities to Do:

Total Time Estimate:

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## Day 2:

Time Estimate

Content to Focus On:

Materials to Gather/Create:

Study Activities to Do:

Total Time Estimate:

# Timeline; Week 1 Plan:

## Day 3:

Time Estimate

Content to Focus On:

Materials to Gather/Create:

Study Activities to Do:

Total Time Estimate:

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## Day 4:

Time Estimate

Content to Focus On:

Materials to Gather/Create:

Study Activities to Do:

Total Time Estimate:

# Timeline; Week 1 Plan:

## Day 5:

Time Estimate

Content to Focus On:

Materials to Gather/Create:

Study Activities to Do:

Total Time Estimate:

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## Day 6:

Time Estimate

Content to Focus On:

Materials to Gather/Create:

Study Activities to Do:

Total Time Estimate:



# Timeline; Week 1 Plan:

## Day 7:

Time Estimate

Content to Focus On:

Materials to Gather/Create:

Study Activities to Do:

Total Time Estimate:

---

End of Week 1 Reflection Space:

**Calendar; Week 1 Plan:**

<b>DAY 1:</b>	<b>DAY 2:</b>	<b>DAY 3:</b>	<b>DAY 4:</b>	<b>DAY 5:</b>	<b>DAY 6:</b>	<b>DAY 7:</b>

# Timeline; Week 2 (Prep Week) Plan:

## Day 1:

Time Estimate

Content to Focus On:

Materials to Gather/Create:

Study Activities to Do:

Total Time Estimate:

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## Day 2:

Time Estimate

Content to Focus On:

Materials to Gather/Create:

Study Activities to Do:

Total Time Estimate:

# Timeline; Week 2 (Prep Week) Plan:

## Day 3:

Time Estimate

Content to Focus On:

Materials to Gather/Create:

Study Activities to Do:

Total Time Estimate:

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## Day 4:

Time Estimate

Content to Focus On:

Materials to Gather/Create:

Study Activities to Do:

Total Time Estimate:

# Timeline; Week 2 (Prep Week) Plan:

## Day 5:

Time Estimate

Content to Focus On:

Materials to Gather/Create:

Study Activities to Do:

Total Time Estimate:

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## Day 6:

Time Estimate

Content to Focus On:

Materials to Gather/Create:

Study Activities to Do:

Total Time Estimate:

# Timeline; Week 2 (Prep Week) Plan:

## Day 7:

Time Estimate

Content to Focus On:

Materials to Gather/Create:

Study Activities to Do:

Total Time Estimate:

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End of Week 2 (Prep Week) Reflection Space:

# Calendar; Week 2 (Prep Week) Plan:

DAY 1:	DAY 2:	DAY 3:	DAY 4:	DAY 5:	DAY 6:	DAY 7:

# Timeline; Week 3 (Finals Week) Plan:

Final(s) Today:

## Day 1:

Content to Focus On:

Time Estimate

Materials to Gather/Create:

Study Activities to Do:

Total Time Estimate:

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## Day 2:

Final(s) Today:

Content to Focus On:

Time Estimate

Materials to Gather/Create:

Study Activities to Do:

Total Time Estimate:



# Timeline; Week 3 (Finals Week) Plan:

Final(s) Today:

## Day 3:

Content to Focus On:

Time Estimate

Materials to Gather/Create:

Study Activities to Do:

Total Time Estimate:

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## Day 4:

Final(s) Today:

Content to Focus On:

Time Estimate

Materials to Gather/Create:

Study Activities to Do:

Total Time Estimate:

# Timeline; Week 3 (Finals Week) Plan:

Final(s) Today:

## Day 5:

Content to Focus On:

Time Estimate

Materials to Gather/Create:

Study Activities to Do:

Total Time Estimate:

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End of Week 3 (Finals Week) Reflection Space:

# Calendar; Week 3 (Finals Week) Plan:

DAY 1:	DAY 2:	DAY 3:	DAY 4:	DAY 5:	DAY 6:	DAY 7: