



Final Exam Preparation

This workshop is intended to help students create an effective study plan leading up to Final Exam week. Participants will explore the logistics of planning and prioritizing their study time through Prep Week and Finals Week and will learn about different review strategies and tips for a successful finish to the semester.

Packet Contents:

- Finals Week Logistics
- Prioritizing Your Finals
- Creating a Study Schedule
- Other Study Tips & Tricks

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Finals Week Logistics

Because courses can be structured in many ways, the first step in getting prepared for Finals Week is making sure you know what final exams and assignments you have. Use the space below to list which of your classes have a final, and if that final is a project/paper or an exam.

| Which of your classes have finals? (List Below) | Exam or Project/Paper? (Circle One) |
|---|--|
| | Exam or Project/Paper |
| | Exam or Project/Paper |
| | Exam or Project/Paper |
| | Exam or Project/Paper |
| | Exam or Project/Paper |
| | Exam or Project/Paper |
| | Exam or Project/Paper |

The next step is to look at the details and expectations for each of these exams or assignments. Use the section below to create a “snapshot” of each final, including the date, time, and location of each final exam. Other details to look for include whether or not your finals are cumulative, the weight of the final (percentage of your overall grade), the exam format, and what material will be covered on the exam.

For more information about finals, you can visit:

www.registrar.iastate.edu/students/exams

| | | |
|---|--------------|--|
| Final #1: | | Cumulative? Yes or No |
| Date: | Time: | Location: |
| Format: Multiple Choice True/False Essay/Short Answer Problem Solving Paper/Project (circle all that apply) | | |
| Material Covered on Final: (List topics or chapters below) | | |
| Current Grade in Class: | | Final Counts for what % of Grade? |

| | | |
|---|-------|-----------------------------------|
| Final #2: | | Cumulative? Yes or No |
| Date: | Time: | Location: |
| Format: Multiple Choice True/False Essay/Short Answer Problem Solving Paper/Project (circle all that apply) | | |
| Material Covered on Final: (List topics or chapters below) | | |
| Current Grade in Class: | | Final Counts for what % of Grade? |

| | | |
|---|-------|-----------------------------------|
| Final #3: | | Cumulative? Yes or No |
| Date: | Time: | Location: |
| Format: Multiple Choice True/False Essay/Short Answer Problem Solving Paper/Project (circle all that apply) | | |
| Material Covered on Final: (List topics or chapters below) | | |
| Current Grade in Class: | | Final Counts for what % of Grade? |

| | | |
|---|-------|-----------------------------------|
| Final #4: | | Cumulative? Yes or No |
| Date: | Time: | Location: |
| Format: Multiple Choice True/False Essay/Short Answer Problem Solving Paper/Project (circle all that apply) | | |
| Material Covered on Final: (List topics or chapters below) | | |
| Current Grade in Class: | | Final Counts for what % of Grade? |

| | | |
|---|-------|-----------------------------------|
| Final #5: | | Cumulative? Yes or No |
| Date: | Time: | Location: |
| Format: Multiple Choice True/False Essay/Short Answer Problem Solving Paper/Project (circle all that apply) | | |
| Material Covered on Final: (List topics or chapters below) | | |
| Current Grade in Class: | | Final Counts for what % of Grade? |

| | | |
|---|-------|-----------------------------------|
| Final #6: | | Cumulative? Yes or No |
| Date: | Time: | Location: |
| Format: Multiple Choice True/False Essay/Short Answer Problem Solving Paper/Project (circle all that apply) | | |
| Material Covered on Final: (List topics or chapters below) | | |
| Current Grade in Class: | | Final Counts for what % of Grade? |

| | | |
|---|-------|-----------------------------------|
| Final #7: | | Cumulative? Yes or No |
| Date: | Time: | Location: |
| Format: Multiple Choice True/False Essay/Short Answer Problem Solving Paper/Project (circle all that apply) | | |
| Material Covered on Final: (List topics or chapters below) | | |
| Current Grade in Class: | | Final Counts for what % of Grade? |

Prioritize Your Finals

Once you have an understanding of what is going to be expected of you for each of your finals, then you can start to prioritize your finals. We want to emphasize that all of your finals are important, but it can be helpful to prioritize your finals before you create a study plan. There might be some classes that have higher stakes for the final, and there may be some classes that you feel more confident in. This is not an exact science and there is no “right” way to go about prioritizing, but here are some things to consider:

Here are some factors to consider when you are prioritizing:

- Challenge level of the class or final
- What percent of your grade does the final count for?
- Your current grade or knowledge level in the class
- The order/sequence of your finals
- How much time do you think you’ll need to feel prepared?

Use the space below to list your finals by priority. The final that will require the most time or effort should be your #1 priority. In the space next to the final, you should also indicate how far in advance you would like to start studying for this exam.

Some Tips:

| Finals Priority List | How far in advance do you want to start studying? |
|----------------------|---|
| #1 | |
| #2 | |
| #3 | |
| #4 | |
| #5 | |
| #6 | |
| #7 | |

- A lot of times, students will gravitate toward studying material that they already know or feel comfortable in. Try your best to prioritize finals that you feel the *least* confident in and that will require the *most* study time
- The order/sequence of your exams might influence your priority list. For example, your most challenging final might not be until Thursday of finals week, but you have a couple finals on Monday. It might make sense to prioritize your earliest exams because you’ll have more time to study for your most challenging final throughout finals week

Creating a Study Plan

Now that you have prioritized your finals, it is time to create a Finals Study Plan. It is important to note that there is no single “right” way to create a study plan. Everyone has different preferences and processes for focusing and staying motivated. In this section, we will give you a few tools or strategies to help you get started in creating your Finals Study Plan.

Divide Study Material into Smaller Chunks:

One of the best ways to start your study plan is to divide your class material into smaller study units. You can do this by looking at what course material will be covered on the exam and chunking the material into subunits. The number of subunits will depend on how many days in advance you choose to study. For example, if your final covers Chapters 1-20 and you want to study 5-days in advance, you might group chapters 1-4, 5-8, 9-12, 13-16, 17-20.

Once you have created your smaller study units, you will plan out which days you are going to study each unit. For example, the first day I will study chapters 1-4, the second day I will study chapters 5-8, and so on. This strategy helps break down the large amounts of material on final exams so that studying is less intimidating.

See the ASC’s 5-Day Study Plan for additional guidance:

[Microsoft Word - Exam Prep- 5 Day Study Plan.doc \(iastate.edu\)](#)

Finals To-Do List:

Once you have identified the material you need to study, it can be helpful to create a daily to-do list. The resource on the next page helps you plan out what you need to get done each day and estimate the amount of time you need. For this resource, we suggest being as specific as possible when writing down what to do. For example, instead of writing “Study for BIO 101” you should write “Study BIO 101 Chapters 1 and 2”.

See the ASC’s Due vs. Do for additional guidance:

[Microsoft Word - Due_v_Do FORMAT TEST.docx \(iastate.edu\)](#)

Week at a Glance:

This weekly calendar can be used to block time for your study plan through Prep Week and Finals Week to make sure you have dedicated time to prepare for each of your final exams or projects. To fill it out, we suggest starting with your non-negotiables (classes, exams, work, etc.). After you have filled in your non-negotiables, we suggest filling in times for meals, sleep, and other self-care activities. Finals can be a very stressful time, and it is important for you to take time to meet all of your needs. Finally, you will fill in the gaps in your schedule with dedicated study time for each final exam or project. This will give you a detailed plan of when and how long you will be studying each day.

Tip: When you are filling in your study time, it is much more effective to be specific. Instead of writing “study” for two hours, it is much more effective to write “Study Bio chapters 1 and 2”. The more specific you are, the easier it will be to keep yourself accountable!

Prep Week at a Glance

| Time | Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|------------------------|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| 6:00 AM | | | | | | | |
| 7:00 AM | | | | | | | |
| 8:00 AM | | | | | | | |
| 9:00 AM | | | | | | | |
| 10:00 AM | | | | | | | |
| 11:00 AM | | | | | | | |
| 12:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 1:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 2:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 3:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 4:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 5:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 6:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 7:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 8:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 9:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 10:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 11:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| To-Do List → | | | | | | | |

Finals Week at a Glance

| Time | Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| 6:00 AM | | | | | | | |
| 7:00 AM | | | | | | | |
| 8:00 AM | | | | | | | |
| 9:00 AM | | | | | | | |
| 10:00 AM | | | | | | | |
| 11:00 AM | | | | | | | |
| 12:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 1:00 PM | | | | | | | |
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| 7:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 8:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 9:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 10:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 11:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| To-Do List → | | | | | | | |

Study Tips and Tricks

This section outlines some general study tips and tricks. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but these are some things to try or keep in mind as you study for your final exams.

Prepare + Review

When you create your study plan, you should plan time to go back and review information you have already studied. Looking over and reviewing material more than once is ideal and will help you recall information during the exam. You should plan time to prepare material to study and time to review that material. Here are some ideas for preparation and review:

| Preparation Strategies: | Review Strategies: |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making flashcards• Taking notes from textbook• Creating a study sheet/guide• Organizing and summarizing class notes• Predicting essay questions and their answers• Drawing a mind map/diagram• Listing practice problems and/or formulas• Answering study guides | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practicing flashcards• Reciting main ideas from notes without looking; writing from memory• Quizzing yourself on the predicted essay or multiple-choice questions• Re-creating mind maps/diagrams from memory• Completing practice problems and reciting formulas from memory• Explaining concepts to study group members or classmates, etc. |

Adapted from ASC's 5-Day Study Plan

Taking Study Breaks – Pomodoro Technique

This technique uses a timer to break down work into intervals, traditionally 20 minutes in length, separated by short breaks. This technique helps you manage distractions and keep track of your time. It can also help increase your motivation and accountability to get your tasks done.

To follow the Pomodoro Technique, set a timer for 20 minutes and select a goal or task to focus on. During that time, work productively on only your selected tasks. After the timer goes off, give yourself a short 5-minute break to check your phone, stretch, have a snack, etc., and then get back to work for another 20 minutes. After you complete this cycle four times, take a longer break (20-30 minutes) and utilize a personal reward.

Below are the following free apps you can download and websites you can visit that follow the Pomodoro technique:

- Be Focused – Focus Timer (App)
- Engross (App) – engrossapp.com
- Pomotodo (Web & App) – pomotodo.com
- Aesthetic Pomodoro Timer (Web) – studywithme.io
- Tomato Timer – tomato-timer.com (Web)

Study Tips and Tricks

Create a Productive Study Environment

Finding your personal productive study environment is an important step to effectively studying that often gets overlooked. Before you start studying, you should be mindful of **your** ideal study environment. When we put ourselves in our “Productive Environment,” we are giving ourselves environmental cues that help us get focused and get our tasks done.

Here are some things to consider when creating your productive environment:

- What is your ideal study environment?
 - Location
 - Noise level
 - Music vs no music
 - With or without people?
 - What distracts you? Where are these distractions limited or nonexistent?
- When are you most productive?
 - Time of day?
 - Day of the week?
- Where are some of your favorite places to study on or off campus? Where have you been really productive in the past?

Reward Yourself

It can be easy to lose motivation while studying for finals if you are pushing yourself for long hours at a time. One way to keep yourself motivated is to reward yourself for your hard work! Promise yourself a suitable reward whenever you finish a study session or after you have worked really hard. Some examples of rewards you could give yourself: buy yourself a coffee or treat at the library café, hang out with friends, go for a walk, watch an episode of your favorite show.

Take Care of Yourself!

Finals can be an extremely stressful time for students. It is VERY important for you to take care of yourself during this time. You cannot give your best self to studying and taking your exams if you are not taking care of yourself. Here are some tips to practice self-care during finals:

1. Try your best to keep your normal routine
2. Eat well – Don’t skip meals and do your best to eat nutritiously
3. Sleep!! – Try your best to keep your regular sleep schedule and get adequate amount of rest
4. Be active – go for a walk or to the gym if you are able
5. Mindfulness or Meditation – try some exercises to recharge and refocus
6. Be kind to yourself – remind yourself of the things you are doing well and how far you have come

Prioritize your self-care - even during stressful times