



**ACADEMIC
COACHING
& OUTREACH**



Exam Preparation

This workshop focuses on helping students effectively prepare for an upcoming exam. Participants will learn more about the 5-day study plan, different review and study strategies, and how to structure their study time before an exam.

Packet Contents:

- 5-Day Study Plan
- Review & Study Strategies
- Structuring Study Time
- Quick Tips & Tricks



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5 Day Study Plan

When you have a large amount of material to study for a test, commit yourself to about 2 hours per day of very structured study time.

FIRST → GET ORGANIZED

The 5-Day Study Plan begins with dividing the material you need to study (i.e. chapters in your text and corresponding lecture notes) into 4 equal parts: A, B, C, D (with “A” being the older material and “D” being the most recently covered material). For example, if chapters 1-8 of your Psychology text will be on your upcoming test, you can divide them as follows: A= Ch. 1-2, B= Ch. 3-4, C= Ch. 5-6, D= Ch. 7-8.

List your four groups of study materials here:

A: _____

B: _____

C: _____

D: _____

Next → SELECT PREPARATION AND REVIEW STRATEGIES:

For each of your four groups of study materials (A, B, C, D), you will need to select 2-3 PREPARATION and REVIEW strategies. Take a look at the examples below (feel free to add your own!):

Preparation:

Each day you will prepare ONE section of material to review the following day.

Preparing includes tasks such as:

- Making flashcards
- Taking notes from your textbook
- Creating a study sheet
- Organizing & summarizing class notes
- Predicting essay questions & their answers
- Predicting multiple choice questions
- Drawing a mind map/diagrams
- Listing practice problems and/or formulas
- Reviewing study guides

Review:

Each day (except for day 1) you will review the material you prepared previous.

Reviewing includes tasks such as:

- Practicing flashcards
- Reciting main ideas from your notes without looking; writing notes from memory
- Quizzing yourself on the predicted essay or multiple choice questions
- Re-creating mind maps/diagrams from memory
- Completely practice problems and reciting formulae from memory
- Explaining concepts to study group members or classmates etc.

Create Your 5-Day Study Plan

Select 2-3 PREPARATION and REVIEW strategies for each of your four groups of study materials, and list them in your 5-Day Study Plan chart. Make sure that your review strategies complement your preparation strategies. EX: PREPARE strategies: create outline, make flashcards. REVIEW strategies: review flashcards, self-quiz on outline. Then, follow the plan, noting the rotation of the different groups of materials (A, B, C, D) and how much time is spent on each one.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Prepare Part A: 2 hrs	Prepare Part B: 2 hrs Review Part A: 30 min	Prepare Part C: 1.5 hrs Review Part B: 30 min Review Part A: 15 min	Prepare Part D: 1 hr Review Part C: 30 min Review Part B: 15 min Review Part A: 15 min	Review Part D: 25 min Review Part C: 15 min Review Part B: 10 min Review Part A: 10 min Self-test on A, B, C, D: 1 hr
TOTAL: 2 hours	TOTAL: 2.5 hours	TOTAL: 2 hours, 15 min	TOTAL: ~ 2 hours	TOTAL: ~ 2 hours
Prepare:	Prepare: Review:	Prepare: Review:	Prepare: Review:	Prepare: Review:

Review & Study Strategies

General Strategies

- Make flashcards and practice them until you know the info in both directions (Side A to B, and vice versa)
- Explain concepts out loud or try to teach them to someone else
- Describe connections between the main ideas, names, dates, vocabulary, etc.
- Work through practice problems without looking at the answer or process
- Redraw information from memory or practice explaining the concepts they illustrate
- Quiz yourself
- Fill out existing study guide or create your own study guide
- Give yourself a pre-test before studying (answer test-like questions without looking up any answers)
- Make up a practice exam based on sample problems or ideas from across all course material
- Read the textbook and test your knowledge with the questions at the end of each chapter
- Look at the chapter objectives for a potential study guide
- Take the practice exam in test-like conditions, analyze your results, and refocus on material you missed
- Utilize your instructor or TA as a resource – attend office hours and ask questions you have
- Attend Supplemental Instruction or Tutoring sessions (if applicable)
- Attend class, actively participate, and take notes
 - Read and outline chapter before class
 - Take notes in the margins of your textbook (questions, relate to personal experience, etc.)
 - Summarize notes and textbook content
 - Review notes from previous session before next class
 - Add illustrations to your notes (timeline, diagram, etc.)
 - Review your notes 10 minutes each day
- Create your own study group, follow these tips:
 - Have a goal - decide what you want to study, how much, and how long
 - Come prepared - come to the study group with your own goal in mind
 - Have a focus – take turns having one person pose questions or problems to the group
 - Quiz each other – if they are struggling, give hints. If they still don't get it, explain in your own words
 - Challenge each other – have group members explain their reasoning and how they arrived at it
 - Review – at the end of each session, take 10 minutes to review what you went over
- Space out your study time
 - Try the [Pomodoro Technique](#) or [Intense Study Sessions](#)

Strategies for STEM Courses

- Complete homework to learn the *concept*, not the specific problem
 - Can you read a problem and understand what kind of question it is asking? Can you identify the formula in the problem? Before solving problems, study the concepts and make sure you understand them. Understanding the concept is crucial for working through a difficult problem

- Homework as a learning aid:

Sample Technique:	Steps of Problem	Explanation of Each Step
Take a piece of paper and draw a line down the middle. On the left side, work through one step of the problem, and on the right side, explain what you are doing.	$P_1 \times V_1 = P_2 \times V_2$ $P_2 = P_1 \times V_1 / V_2$	Rearrange to solve for P_2 Plug in numbers to solve

- Use homework as a test of the concepts you have learned in class. Try your best to not look up the answers to a problem before trying it first without help.
 - Find similar example problems in your textbook
 - Try to read through a group of problems and see if you can identify their similarities
 - Start your assignments early, and do a couple of problems each day
- Make a reference sheet
 - Write down the key information and formulas that are needed. You can refer to them as necessary. This will also be helpful if you are allowed to use a reference sheet on the exam.
- Practice tests are an important study material
 - Take the practice test in a test-like environment. Use only the resources you will have at the time of the test, and in the time you will be allowed. Don't look at the answers too quickly! Try to work through the problem yourself first
 - Use these tests to figure out what kind of information you are missing and which concepts you do not understand
 - Go through the practice tests and take questions to the TA or professor

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, you set a timer for 20 minutes. During those 20 minutes, you are working productively on your tasks. After the 20 minutes, you give yourself a 5 minute break to check your phone, get distracted, have a snack, etc, and then you get back to work for another 20 minutes. You complete this cycle four times, and then you take a longer break (20-30 minutes).

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

- Be Focused – Focus Timer (App)
- Engorss (App)
- Pomodoro.cc (Web)
- tomato-timer.com (Web)



Select a task
you want to
complete



Set timer to an
amount of time
(20-30 minutes)



Work until
timer rings



Take a short
5-10 minute
break



Repeat

Intense Study Sessions

INTENSE STUDY SESSIONS

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|--|
| 1. Set a Goal | (1 - 2 minutes) | Decide what you want to accomplish in your study session |
| 2. Study with Focus | (30 - 50 minutes) | Interact with material – organize, concept map, summarize, process, re-read, fill-in notes, reflect, etc. |
| 3. Reward Yourself | (10 - 15 minutes) | Take a break – call a friend, play a short game, get a snack |
| 4. Review | (5 minutes) | Go over what you just studied |

1. Set a Goal (1-2 minutes)

What do I want to accomplish in my study session?



2. Study with Focus (30-50 minutes)

How am I going to interact with the material? Will I re-read? Summarize? Fill in notes?



3. Reward Yourself (10-15 minutes)

What will I do to take a break and not get distracted?



4. Review (5 minutes)

What questions do I still have after going over what I just studied?



Quick Study Tips

- **Set a learning objective for each study session.** This way you will know when you can stop for the day.
 - Example: today I will master the process of photosynthesis
- **Make a content map to organize the knowledge you are learning.** This will help you move into the higher levels of learning discussed on the Learning Pyramid.
- **Three Questions to Reflect on Importance of Material**
 - Identify an important concept from your text or notes, then...
 - Describe why it is important
 - Write how it relates to your life
 - List one question you still have regarding this concept
- **Consolidating Notes**
 - Gather all of your lecture and text notes. Combine to 1 single page. Master material.
 - Once you have mastered all material, reduce information to 5x8 card.
 - Finally, reduce information to 3x5 card
 - Quiz yourself using the 3x5 card. You should now know all concepts and how they relate.
- **Create a highlighted color-coded note system to help remember important information.** For example: Yellow = people, Green = places, and Orange = dates.
- **Promise yourself a suitable reward** (a piece of candy, a phone call, a walk) whenever you finish something that was hard to undertake.

Pick 3 study strategies you will begin implementing today and write below:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____