

# Preparing for Tests

## Gathering information

- Ask the professor what to anticipate on the test if s/he does not volunteer the information.
- Pay particular attention to clues from your professors, such as when s/he:
  - Says something more than once.
  - Writes material on the board/overhead.
  - Pauses to review notes.
  - Asks questions of the class.
  - Says, "This will be on the test!"
- Know the format of the test and study, accordingly. Is it multiple-choice, essay, or a combination?
- Review previous tests, quizzes, papers, and projects graded by the professor. Look for a pattern and adjust your studying, accordingly.

## Preparing in Advance

- Read text assignments before lectures. This will “warm up” your brain to receive the lecture material.
- Review notes immediately after class. This will help you identify information that you do not understand while the lecture is still fresh in your memory. This is a good time to re-copy/re-type your notes and fill in any gaps.
- Begin reviewing early! When you review immediately and regularly, you'll have time to clarify information with other students, a tutor or professor.

## Organizing

- Create study checklists. Identify all of the material on which you will be tested- list notes, formulas, diagrams, text assignments, etc. This checklist will enable you to break your studying into organized, manageable chunks, which should allow for comprehensive review and minimal anxiety.
- Create summary notes and maps. These notes should display lists and hierarchies of ideas. Briefly map out the important ideas of the course and the relationships of these ideas.
- Create flashcards for definitions, formulas, or lists that you need to memorize. Flashcards will allow you to test your ability to recognize important information, as well as retrieve information from “scratch.”

## Reviewing

- Conduct short, daily review sessions. You can ease into more intense review session prior to major tests. This will get information from short-term to long-term memory.
- Review with a group. This will enable you to cover important material that you may overlook on your own. This is especially helpful for auditory learners.
- Conduct a major review early enough to allow for a visit to the professor or tutor. Don't allow yourself to “fall behind.”
- Break up the study tasks into manageable chunks, especially during major reviews prior to exams.
- Study the most difficult material when you are alert.
- Finish studying the day before a test.

*Adapted from: The Study Guides and Strategies web site, created and maintained by Joe Landsberger, academic web site developer at the University of St. Thomas (UST), St. Paul, Minnesota. <http://www.studygs.net/lrnstudy.htm>.*