

A STUDY STRATEGY FOR COLLEGE EXAMS

PRE-PLANNING STAGE

1. When is the exam? (date, day, time)
2. Specifically, what are my other obligations that week?
3. What does the exam cover?
4. How many items or questions will be on the exam?
5. What kind of exam will it be?
6. What type of questions will be asked? Factual or memory level questions? Inferential? Applied?
7. How much does the exam count in the total evaluation process?
8. What is my goal for a grade on this exam?
9. How much time do I need to spend studying, reciting, and reviewing?
10. How will the study change my regular schedule? (Explain how you will find this extra time.)

LISTING STAGE

1. List the recitation strategies that you will use for this particular exam. Then explain why you feel that the strategies you selected will be the most appropriate for this particular test.

Strategies: why they are appropriate.

2. Check your plan of study and ask yourself these questions:
 - A. Have I distributed my study time over several days?
 - B. Did I schedule blocks of time to review my annotations and preview again the chapter?
 - C. Did I schedule at least two blocks of time to test myself over the key concepts?
 - D. Did I schedule time for a friend to test me?

EVALUATION STAGE (Questions to ask myself once I see my exam's score.)

1. Was the exam what I expected?
2. Did I follow my plan for studying? If not, what events or situations interfered with my carrying out the plan?
3. How many hours did I study? Were those hours distributed or massed?
4. What types of questions did I miss? Detail and example? Key ideas? Vocabulary? Applications?
5. Did I miss any questions because I misread them? Now many?
6. Did I miss questions because I didn't know or recognize the information? If so, where did that information come from? Lectures? Textbooks? Handouts? Lab materials?

TIPS FOR MULTIPLE CHOICE TESTS

The following are guidelines to use when answering multiple-choice questions:

1. Consider all the answers given. Do not rush and choose and answer carelessly.
2. Be aware of key words. Answers that contain absolute words like "always" and "never" are seldom correct.
3. Be alert for negatives. A little word like "not" or a prefix like "un" completely changes the meaning of a sentence. "Except" is a negative.
4. Use information from other parts of the test. Other questions may give clues to correct answers.
5. Use common sense. You may be able to choose the correct answer with logical reasoning.
6. Anticipate types of questions. Science passages are often followed by questions of detail. Passages from literature are often followed by inference questions about emotions and motives.

Sometimes the following may be true:

1. Eliminate the ridiculous options. Jokes or insults are seldom the correct answers.
2. Eliminate the high and low numbers. They tend to be distractors.
3. Choose the more complete statement.
4. Choose the "all of the above" options.

TIPS FOR ESSAY EXAMS

1. Do not write information in your essay that does not answer the question. However, if you have studied, you should be able to write at least a partial answer to any question you may find on the exam
2. Be sure to write something, just stick to the subject.
3. Helpful hint: Write as legibly as you can. Most professors become frustrated when trying to grade essay exams if they cannot read your handwriting.

ESSAY CUE WORDS

Key word	Explanation
Apply a principle	Show how a principle works, through an example.
Comment	Discuss briefly.
Compare	Emphasize similarities, but also present differences.
Contrast	Give differences only.
Criticize	Give your judgment of good points and limitations, with evidence.
Define	Give meanings but not details.
Demonstrate	Show or prove an option, evaluation, or judgment.
Describe	State the particulars in detail.
Diagram	Show a drawing with labels.
Differentiate	Show how two things are different.
Discuss	Give reasons pro and con, with details.
Distinguish	Show main differences between two things.
Enumerate	List the points.
Evaluate	Discuss advantages and disadvantages with your opinions.
Explain	Give reasons for happenings or situations.
Give cause & effect	Describe the steps that lead to an event or a situation.
Identify	List and describe.
Illustrate	Give an example.
Interpret	State the meaning in simpler terms, using your judgment.
Justify	Prove or give reasons.
List	List without details.

Outline	Make a short summary with headings and subheadings.
Prove	Give evidence and reasons.
Relate	Show main points or events in summary form.
Show	List your evidence in order of time, importance, logic.
Solve	Come up with a solution based on given facts or your knowledge.
State	List main points briefly without details.
Summarize	Organize and bring together the main points only.
Support	Back up a statement with facts and proof.
Trace	Give main points from beginning to end of an event.

How to Study for College, 5th. Ed. Paulk, page 244.