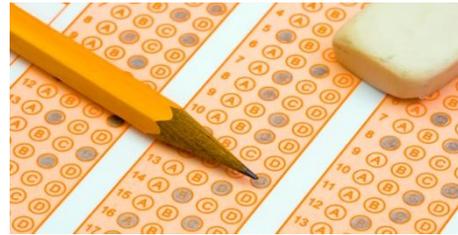
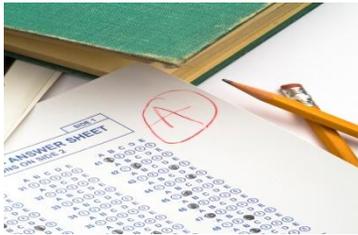




## Preparing for Final Exams



### **Before the Exams: Getting Down to the Nitty Gritty!**

**Predict:** Now that you've organized what will be on the test, sift through it and decide what you know and what you don't know. ***Predict test questions.*** Look at the main ideas from the class material as well as specific questions for key concepts. Use study guides, flash cards, acronyms, acrostics, and any other mnemonic devices that are appropriate to help in remembering the material.

**Organize:** As you study, constantly organize your materials and your time. ***Study in fairly short amounts of time.*** If your mind is wandering, jot down the distraction and return to the material. Don't waste time on information you know. Reduce the information you need to study. This will demonstrate progress.

**Rehearse:** Notice headings, boldface type, vocabulary terms, subtitles to tables and charts. Turn these headings into test questions and read to answer those questions. Say the questions/answers out loud. Some people find it productive to study with someone or in small groups. At times it helps to pace as you are learning new material. Write important concepts or make a semantic web. Be honest about yourself as to your preferred learning styles and implement what works.

**Practice:** Visualize what the day of the test will be like. Think of key concepts, dates, formulas, etc., that you know you want to remember. **Review and practice the material until it feels comfortable.** Memorize some information, but don't worry about memorizing too much and don't try to do it word for word. Put the information in your own words. Link new information to old knowledge. Making associations is very important for retaining information in your long term memory!

**Evaluate:** After rehearsing, how did you do? Could you redraw the concept map without looking at it? What parts were missing? Those would be areas to study. When you met in the study group, were there concepts mentioned that you need to review? If you have introductions or summaries to your chapters, reread them to see if there are gaps in your knowledge.



### **During the Exams: Keeping Your Cool**



**Timing:** Once again, timing is important. Don't try to cram at the last minute. Go to bed on time. Eat as normal before you go to the test. Arrive shortly before the test is to begin. Don't go too early; avoid putting yourself in a setting where people are stressed out and sharing rumors about the exam. **Take a minute to close your eyes and breathe deeply.** If you start to feel anxious during the test, take a short break by closing your eyes, and breathing deeply again.

**Guidelines:** If at all possible, do a "memory dump" when you begin the exam and write down this information. This will relieve some stress so you can concentrate better. **Read the whole test before you answer anything;** sometimes subsequent questions can trigger information to earlier questions. Go through the test again and answer the ones you know. Finally, go back to the ones you skipped and apply skills for being "test wise." (See the "test wise" tips below.) You may want to reread everything again to check your work and look for skipped questions. Don't leave anything blank; guess if need be. Certainly, it's preferred to know all the answers, but there are times when we need to make a best guess. The list below is based on research over time and will not hold true for every individual situation. "Test-wise" tips include:

*For Objective Exams –*

- When two out of four choices are opposites, select one of those two as the best guess.
- If two answers are very close in meaning, read them carefully and select one of them.
- Exaggerated or complex answers are generally "false" or incorrect.
- If two of the four choices are almost identical, pick the longer of the two.
- Check for "absolute" wording (all, must, always, never, inevitably, etc.); it is generally "false."

- Look for words that allow for exceptions (sometimes, frequently, occasionally, could, might, etc.); these are more apt to be “true.”
- If you must guess, try “B” or “C” rather than “A” or “D.”
- Look for inconsistencies with the grammar and wording of the questions (plural subjects should have plural predicates).

### *For Essay Exams –*

- Think before you write. Consider the wording of the question. “Compare/contrast” does not mean “Describe.” Also look for quantity cues. You may want to circle key words so they maintain your attention.
- Read all the questions before writing and make notes and an outline in the margin before you start writing your essays. *This is not a waste of time!* It will help you be accurate about what information belongs where and it will also help you move smoothly from one question to the next.
- Stick to your outline and notes. Don’t stray.
- Write your answers with a beginning (restatement of the question), middle (body of your answer), and conclusion (emphasize your response). If you find you are running short on time, write the main points from your outline as your answer. Remember, some points are better than no points.
- Writing in paragraph form, underlining key phrases, numbering or bulleting points also will make your work look more organized.
- Plan to have time at the end to reread your answers. Edit your work. Apply your writing skills to your essay tests. Writing in paragraph form, underlining key phrases, numbering or bulleting points also may make your work look more organized.

- Write legibly. Handwriting shouldn't count toward the grade but sometimes it inadvertently does. Length sometimes matters, too, with longer responses being given more value.

### **After the Exam: Yes, There's More**

**Check Your Grade:** Monitor your grades. If something doesn't make sense with what you expected, contact your faculty member. People make mistakes. You deserve to understand if a mistake was made or if there were other factors which affected your grade.

### **BEST WISHES!!!**

If you aren't sure when your exams are scheduled, see this link. Once you have this information, confirm it with your professor.

<http://cms.bsu.edu/About/AdministrativeOffices/AcademicSystems/UniversityCalendar.aspx>