

Test & Exam Strategies

Preparing for Tests and Exams:

Start early! “Cramming” the night before an exam only fills up your short-term memory. Rather than memorizing, you want to understand material so that you can apply it in an exam setting.

- ✓ **Review** your class and reading notes often. **Paraphrase** ideas and write out **summaries**.
- ✓ Make sure you **understand** all the concepts being covered; visit your professor and Teaching Fellows for any topic you’re unclear about.
- ✓ **Revisiting material often** helps move it to your long-term memory; better to work on material in four hour-long sessions over a week than for four hours the night before the exam.
- ✓ **Study in a group** so you can test each other and fill in any gaps in the material.

Making Effective Study Guides:

- ✓ Create **flash cards** with questions and answers, definitions, facts, dates, etc.
- ✓ As you review the flash cards, separate them into “know it” and “don’t know it” piles – keep reviewing until you know it all!
- ✓ **Writing out facts, vocabulary, or dates** will help you to memorize them: just reading isn’t enough!
- ✓ **Organize the material** using charts, outlines or concept maps.
- ✓ Find **connections**: look for themes and related issues between the material.
- ✓ Find out what you don’t know: Make up **test questions** and try to answer them.
- ✓ **Practice teaching** the material to others; this will show what you understand and remember, and what needs more work.

Writing the Exam:

- ✓ Get enough sleep the night before. Don’t pull an all-nighter!
- ✓ Review the whole test and read the directions **TWICE** before you start to write.
- ✓ Organize your time: look at the points attached to each question for clues about length, and the importance of the answer.
- ✓ Don’t rush: check your time frequently, and make sure you leave enough time at the end to go over your answers.

For multiple-choice tests:

- ✓ Don’t jump to conclusions! Read all the options first, then eliminate incorrect answers.
- ✓ Beware of tricky words like “only”, “always” or “most”.

For essay exams:

- ✓ Read through all the questions before selecting which ones to answer.
- ✓ After reading the question **TWICE**, make an outline of what you want to say.

*For more support with exam preparation and other study skills, visit the Study Mentors.
Make an appointment on StudyHub on the CTL website, call us at 3351,
or stop in to visit us on the second floor of the library.*