

EXAMS

Exams: Achieving Success

Writing an exam can be an extremely stressful experience because it reflects not only the knowledge and understanding that you have acquired over a period of time, but also your ability to perform under pressure. Given that a large percentage of a final grade is often obtained from an examination score, it is important to prepare thoroughly for exams and to remain calm as you write one! Here are some ideas to help you:

1. Draw up a plan of action. Determine how much time you will need to spend studying each day and determine exactly the amount of material that you can cover within that time frame. It is imperative that you do not leave everything to the last minute!
2. Set up a study group with a number of your classmates. Providing you can work cooperatively, a study group provides an opportunity to compare notes, discuss possible exam questions, and to test each other on subject matter.
3. Make sure that you read your class notes and the designated textbook carefully and meticulously. Summarize your notes by highlighting. Summarizing and resummarizing allow you to internalize the information more effectively than simply reading the material!
4. Employ mnemonic (memory) techniques when learning information. These are designed to help you recall specific kinds of information for exam purposes. For example, the names of the Great Lakes can be learned by associating them to the acronym HOMES (for Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior).
5. Test yourself. This allows you to see the subject matter from the point of view of an examiner. For example, you can create exam-type questions (e.g. fill-in-the-blanks, vocabulary check, etc.) that will give you the perspective of the teacher and thus help you learn the material more effectively.
6. Collect all required materials, such as pens, calculators, dictionaries, etc. the night before, so that you will not forget anything the day of the exam.
7. Get to the exam early to be in a more relaxed frame of mind and to give yourself the opportunity to review the material in your mind. Don't get into last minute discussion with your peers--it may cause you to panic if you think you don't remember every detail!
8. Read the directions carefully. It is important that you understand what the question wants you to do no more any less!
9. Read the whole exam through first. Begin with the easiest questions to calm your nerves and give you confidence.
10. Keep track of time. Set target time limits for each question, using the marking scheme as a guide. Attempt to do every question, but do not linger on difficult answers.

11. Always think positively! You can always learn from what you do incorrectly and correct it on the next exam. You can also learn how to strengthen your exam responses. Review and re-do tests and exams when they are returned to you.