

Studying for Tests

Tests are a way for you and your teacher to measure how well you have learned the material covered by the class. Think of them as a challenge! Here are some tips for studying for tests.

Before the Test

1. Be sure to find out ahead of time.
 - a. what material the test will cover
 - b. what type of test it will be (multiple choice, true false, short answer, essay)
 - c. how the test will be graded
 - d. how much the test will count toward the final grade
2. Study in a place that is free of distractions. Have ready all the things you will need, such as paper, pens, or a calculator.
3. Study at a time when you are alert and not hungry or sleepy.
4. Don't wait until the last minute to study! Short daily study sessions are better than one long session the night before the test.
5. Set a goal for each study period. If you are being tested on three chapters, set up four study sessions, one for each chapter and one for a review of the main ideas in all three chapters.
6. Repetition is key! Read and reread your class notes and the relevant chapters in the textbook.
7. While you are reviewing your notes, cover them up periodically and summarize them out loud. Pretend that you are explaining the material to someone else.
8. Create your own study aids.
 - a. Make an outline from your notes of just the main ideas.
 - b. Make a timeline of important dates or the order of events.
 - c. Make flash cards for studying vocabulary or events and important dates.
 - d. Make up your own quiz or test based on your notes and have a friend, parent or sibling test you.
9. Do any practice exams or study sheets provided by the teacher. These will help you focus your study session and give you confidence.
10. Get help from the teacher if you do not understand something.

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Studying in a Group

Experts say that studying in a group can be more effective than studying alone. Students say it can be more fun, too! Here are a few tips for organizing a study group.

1. It often works best to have just three to five people in a study group. That way, each person gets the time to talk and make sure she understands the material.
2. Schedule a few study sessions. Whether studying alone or in a group, a few short sessions are much more useful than one long “cram” session.
3. Have one person act as the leader. This can help a group to run smoothly. The main goal of the leader is to keep everyone focused on studying so that things don’t become too social.
4. Be prepared! A study group is a place to share your understanding of a subject. The other people in the group aren’t there to teach you facts you should already know. The more you can offer the group, the more you’ll get out of it.

Sticking to an agenda is important. Here is one plan for organizing your group time.

1. First, compare your notes and review old homework. If there is something you have had trouble understanding, write down your questions about it before meeting with your study group.
2. Next, drill each other on facts you need to memorize. For example, “What are the four stages of a butterfly’s life cycle?” You might want to give each other practice quizzes.
3. Lastly, take the time to discuss “why” questions. For example, “Why do monarch butterflies migrate?”

One way to handle “Why” questions is to make a list of the important ones you will want to review. Then divide the questions among the group. At your next meeting, have each person present a lesson about her question

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Ten Tips for Taking Tests

1. Read the instructions carefully. Never assume you will know what they will say! Ask the teacher if you are unsure about anything.
2. Read the entire test through before starting. Notice the point value of each section. This will help you to pace yourself.
3. Answer the easiest questions first, then the ones with the highest point value. You don't want to spend 20 minutes trying to figure out a two-point problem!
4. Keep busy! If you get stuck on a question, come back to it later. The answer might come to you while you are working on another part of the test.
5. If you aren't sure how to answer a question fully, try to answer at least part of it. You might get partial credit.
6. Need to guess on a multiple-choice test? First, eliminate the answers that you know are wrong. Then take a guess. Because your first guess is mostly likely correct, you shouldn't go back and change an answer later unless you are certain you were wrong.
7. On an essay test, take a moment to plan your writing. First, jot down the important points you want to make. Then number these points in the order you will cover them.
8. Keep it neat! If your teacher can't read your writing, you might lose points.
9. Don't waste time doing things for which you will not receive credit, such as rewriting test questions.
10. Leave time at the end to look over your work. Did you answer every question? Did you proofread for errors? It is easy to make careless mistakes while taking a test.

After the Test

1. When the test is returned, read the teacher's comments carefully and try to learn from your mistakes.
2. Save tests so you can later review for end-of-term tests.