

ACE IT: Exam Preparation Strategies that Work!

1. Get Organized

- At the beginning of the semester, find out when your exams are and plan your schedule accordingly.
- Get into a study routine. Same place, at the same time, every day.
- Do all of your assignments and keep up with the reading.
- Make chapter summaries and organize your notes.
- Use a planning sheet to identify the areas that you need to focus on while you are preparing for your exam.

2. Chunk

- Break the information down into smaller parts and focus on what is most important.
- Vary your study activities.
- Study in 50 minute intervals, with 10 minute breaks in between.

3. Active Learning

In order to move information into your long term memory you have to act on that information in some way. Here are some suggestions:

- Rewrite your material in your own words.
- Recite the information aloud, in your own words.
- Discuss the concepts with your study group.
- Teach the material to your friends.
- Categorize your notes.
- Create concept maps.
- Make diagrams.
- Self-test to make sure you know what you think you know!
Anticipate questions and practice them.

4. **Personalize**

You are more likely to remember information you find meaningful.

- Try to make connections to things you already know.
- Find personal relevance.
- Create imagery.
- Use mnemonics or number systems.

5. **Repeat**

Do steps 2 – 4 as many times as your schedule will allow or until you are satisfied that you know the information and you can retrieve it on demand. Self-test to find out for sure!

6. **Review**

- Conduct regular review sessions throughout the semester.
 - Review your notes after each class.
 - Review what you've covered in your classes for 20 minutes each week.
- One week before the exam, review material each day, using the active strategies listed above.
- Look for the big picture, key concepts and the important details.
- Do not try to learn or relearn any information 12 – 24 hours before the exam.

On exam day...

- Psych yourself up – be confident!
- Sleep, eat, exercise.
- Bring correct materials.
- Glance at your notes.
- Avoid talking about the test.
- Practice relaxation strategies – breathe!
- Sit where there are minimal distractions.
- Do your best!