

Study Skills

**Getting ready for another set of high-school exams? An exam is just another test!
Don't worry, just prepare and follow these tips and it will be no problem.**

Before You Start to Study – Anticipating Test Content

- ✓ **Pay particular attention to any study guides** that the teacher hands out in class before the exam, or even at the beginning of the course! For example: key points, particular chapters or parts of chapters, handouts, etc.
 - ✓ **Ask the teacher what to anticipate on the test** if he/she does not volunteer the information
 - ✓ **Pay particular attention - just prior to the exam** - to points the teacher brings up during classes
 - ✓ **Generate a list of possible questions** you would ask if you were making the exam, then see if you can answer the questions
 - ✓ **Review previous tests** graded by the teacher
 - ✓ **Talk with other students** to predict what will be on the test ... create a study group.
 - ✓ **Pay attention to clues** that indicate that a teacher might put a certain idea on a test, like when a teacher says something more than once, writes material on the board, pauses to review notes, asks questions of the class, or says, "This will be on the test!"
 - ✓ **Study early** so that you have time to get any missed notes or ask your teacher to clarify anything that you don't understand
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Studying – Don't Just Read Your Notes!

Create a good study atmosphere - Study in an area without distractions (in front of TV or computer isn't good). Turn your phone off or put it in another room. Don't study in bed. Set goals and reward yourself when you have completed them (ie. 'I will call my friend/ play a game/have a chocolate bar/spend time on my phone when I finish Unit 3'). Take breaks to refresh your mind.

Create study checklists - Identify all of the material that you will be tested on - list notes, formulas, ideas, and text assignments you need to know. This checklist will enable you to break your studying into organized, manageable chunks, allowing for a complete review plan with minimal anxiety.

Create flashcards - For definitions, formulas, or lists that you need to have memorized - put topics on one side of the card, answers on the other. Flashcards will enable you to test your ability to not only recognize important information, but also your ability to retrieve information from scratch.

Reducing Test Anxiety

Physical Preparation is an important area to consider in reducing test anxiety.

- **Before the exam** - Develop good study habits and techniques. Good nutrition and sleep are an important part of any study program, especially before an exam. When people are tired, they become frustrated easier and experience more anxiety.

- **Arrive early** - Bring all the materials you will need such as pencils and pens, a calculator, a dictionary, and a watch. This helps you focus on the task at hand.
 - **During the exam** - Find a place where you will have some privacy, that is well-lit and comfortable. Avoid locating yourself near doors or other high distraction areas. Wear comfortable clothes. Remember to bring materials to be returned to the teacher.
 - **Stay relaxed and confident** - Remind yourself that you are well-prepared and are going to do well. If you find yourself anxious, take several slow, deep breaths to relax. Don't talk about the test to other students just before it; anxiety is contagious.
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OTHER WAYS TO REDUCE ANXIETY

Before the exam, you can do several things:

- Be thoroughly prepared. A confident knowledge of course material is the first step in reducing test anxiety.
- Review material. Review should be spaced throughout the week. This aids memory development and retention.
- Don't cram. A final review is fine, but trying to cover two months of material in two hours is not an effective way to prepare for an exam. Begin your review process early to help reduce last minute anxiety.

During the exam, be test-wise and have a plan for taking the exam.

1. Some initial tension is normal. Generally, when you receive the test, stop for a moment, take a few deep breaths and exhale slowly, relax, and then start reviewing directions and test items.
 2. In a timed test, make a schedule for answering questions. Allow more time for higher point questions. Pace yourself to answer as many questions as possible.
 3. Don't spend too much time on any one question. If you can't come up with the answer, quickly move on. You can always come back if you have time. Higher scores will usually result from trying all items.
 4. If you get stumped on a question, move on to questions you can answer. This will get your mental process and concentration ready for more difficult questions.
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Test Taking – Writing the Exam

✓ **Read the directions carefully.** This may be obvious, but it will help you avoid careless errors.

✓ **If there is time, quickly look through the test for an overview.** Note key terms, jot down brief notes.

✓ **Answer questions in a strategic order:**

First easy questions to build confidence, score points, and mentally orient yourself to vocabulary, concepts, and your studies (it may help you make associations with more difficult questions).

Then difficult questions or those with the most point value.

With **multiple choice questions**, first eliminate those answers you know to be wrong, or are likely to be wrong, don't seem to fit, or where two options are so similar as to be both incorrect. With **essay/subjective questions**, broadly outline your answer and sequence the order of your points.

✓ **Review.** Resist the urge to leave as soon as you have completed all the items. Review your test to make sure that you have answered all questions, not mis-marked the answer sheet, or made some other simple mistakes. Proofread your writing for spelling, grammar, punctuation, decimal points, etc.

- ✓ **Do not "second-guess" yourself** and change your original answers. Research has indicated that your first hunch is more likely to be correct. You should only change answers to questions if you originally misread them or if you have encountered information elsewhere in the test that indicates with certainty that your first choice is incorrect.