



# Time Black Holes

Identify what takes up your time. The following are common problems or time “black holes” that prevent us from getting things done. Which ones affect you? You could also observe yourself over the course of a day or two, and tally what you find in the last column.

	Big problem	Often a problem	Seldom a problem	Not a problem	Actual tally
Cell phone, texting					
Internet, email					
TV, video games					
Reading (news, magazines, books)					
Transportation (traffic, car trouble)					
Socializing, social media					
Meals, snacking					
Shopping, errands					
Family					
Organized, Unorganized					
Losing focus					
Sleep					
Hobbies					
Other:					

## Discuss

Do your time black holes fall into any patterns? Are there things that at first appear uncontrollable, but that you can actually control? What can you do to reclaim your time from these black holes?

**What did you find? How can you manage your time differently?**

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# The Study Cycle: Study smarter, not harder

## Plan for Success

Know yourself: study when and where you are most alert.

Plan your time with a schedule and calendar.

## Preview

Identify relevant text or notes.

Scan chapter headings, keywords and diagrams; read chapter intro/summary.

Formulate questions you want to answer.

## A strategic approach to learning

### Test

Arrive early with all necessary materials.

Use appropriate test-taking strategies.

Analyze returned tests.

### Distribute practice

Spend 2-3 hours studying outside of class for every hour in class—but spread your studying out over time with shorter, more frequent sessions. Try to avoid study marathons!

### Balance input/output

How are you taking in information (by listening to lecture, reading)? Balance these activities with opportunities to produce the content you're learning (by writing, speaking, drawing). That will give you practice for the actual test.

### Review

Fill in gaps and correct misunderstandings; resources include your TA, professor, other students, and the textbook.

Put main ideas of lectures and readings into your own words.

### Re-organize

Organize your information into different formats: outlines, charts, diagrams, flashcards, timelines, flowcharts.

Use structures that show relationships within/between material: similarities, differences, comparisons, hierarchies, and chronologies.



# Motivation & Your Beliefs

Beliefs directly influence the goals we set and our motivation for achieving them. Analyzing your beliefs about academics and school can be useful in generating the motivation you need to be a successful student.

## Understanding your beliefs

Much of what we choose to do is determined by our underlying beliefs. You might be a math major because you believe you're good at math, or a journalism major because you believe you're good at writing. Even if the belief is based in fact (you really are good at math!), it's likely that your belief about that was influenced along the way. This handout discusses three categories of beliefs.

## Self-efficacy beliefs

This is our perception about how good we are at a specific task. In general, it's easier to maintain motivation for something we think we're good at than for something we think we're not good at.

## Enabling vs. self-sabotaging beliefs

Enabling beliefs motivate us, while self-sabotaging beliefs deter us. Students who practice enabling beliefs think their actions influence outcomes; students with self-sabotaging beliefs may feel their efforts will be fruitless. When coupled with self-efficacy beliefs, however, this becomes complicated.

## Attributional beliefs

Who—or what—do you attribute your successes and failures to? If it's yourself, you might think "I made a good grade because I studied hard." If it's the professor, you might believe "I didn't do well because the professor doesn't like me." If it's other circumstances, you might think "I only did well because I got lucky." Analyze the reasons for your successes and failures, and to take ownership of those reasons.

## Examples

Beliefs come from a number of places—our own experiences, teachers/professors, family, and friends. Below, there are examples of how beliefs about academic performance can relate to each another. Where do your beliefs come from, and how do they influence your actions?

Whether you are/aren't good at a subject	Why you do/don't need to study	Why you did/didn't do well
I'm good at physics, so ...	I don't need to study at all because I'm naturally talented.	I made an A because I got lucky.
	I need to start early because I want to reflect my knowledge and abilities on the test.	I made an A because I put so much effort into studying.
		I failed because I didn't study enough.
		I failed because the professor used trick questions.

Whether you are/aren't good at a subject	Why you do/don't need to study
I'm not good at physics, so ...	I don't need to study at all because it won't do any good anyway. I need to start early. It takes me extra time to study for a challenging subject.

## Think of something you're "just not good" at

What is it? Why do you think you feel this way? Did somebody tell you you're not good at the task? Did you make a bad grade? Anything else? How will these beliefs influence you the next time do a related task? Will you try harder to be successful, or do you think you'll not try as hard? Are your beliefs enabling or self-sabotaging? If so, how can you make them enabling? What beliefs have to change to make this happen?



# Different Exam Formats

	Preparing	Taking
Problem Solving	<p>The best way to prepare for problem-solving test is to solve problems—lots of them. Be sure to work problems not previously assigned. Work with a time limit. Aim to solve as many problems as you will have on the test within the test time limit (i.e., 30 problems in 50 minutes).</p>	<p>Start with the easier problems first. If you have no solution method, try the following: Try to write out an equation to express the relationships among all the givens and unknowns, accounting for all the data and facts in the problem. Work backwards. Ask yourself, “What do I need to get the answer?” Break a problem into a series of smaller problems, and then work each part.</p>
Objective	<p>List major themes and concepts. Make flash cards for frequent drills. Compare and contrast. Construct diagrams, tables or lists to summarize relationships.</p>	<p>Mark keywords in every question, especially ones that indicate how many answers there are. To find keywords, ask yourself what, who, where, when, and how. Stay on point! Avoid reading too much into the question. Do not make inferences about what is being asked - answer it as it is written.</p>
Essay	<p>Generate a list of main ideas or themes. Use relationship charts and summary sheets to generate a list of possible questions. Outline answers to as many as you can.</p>	<p>Pay attention to key words such as <b>compare, explain, justify, and define</b>. Make a rough outline of your answer. If you find yourself out of time on a question, quickly write an outline of the rest of your answer. The grader may give you partial credit for it.</p>
Short Answer	<p>Practice explaining concepts or diagrams out loud, to yourself, or a study partner. Without the help of your notes, recreate diagrams or graphs and explain what they mean. If you are expected to learn procedures and processes, memorize the number of steps.</p>	<p>Only answer what is being asked. Restate the question as a statement (on paper or in your head) and THEN write your answer. Reread the question and then your answer back to back and ask yourself: “Did I answer the question asked?” Use bulleted lists when writing out steps or stages. This will help you stay organized and make it easier for someone to grade your answer. Check the number of steps to make sure that you’re not missing something.</p>



# Test-Taking Strategies for Different Types of Questions

	Multiple Choice	True/False	Matching
Challenge	Answer choices could look the same	They often include tricky words	It's time consuming to read all the choices
Test-taking strategies	<p>Treat it like a short answer question.</p> <p>Read the stem (the statement or question). Cover the choices (the distractors) and formulate your own answer. Uncover each choice, one at a time and evaluate each choice against your formulated answer.</p> <p>Mark a +, - or ? to indicate match, non-match or uncertainty.</p> <p>Even if the first choice seems to match, repeat these steps with each answer choice, even if the first or second choice seems to match.</p> <p>Based on your marking system, choose your final answer. This can especially be helpful when there may be more than one right answer (e.g. a and b; a, b and c, etc).</p>	<p>Make all statements "true."</p> <p>Pay attention to and underline words that qualify and give specific meanings such as <b>some, usually, never, always, not</b>, and interpret them literally.</p> <p>In order for a statement to be true, it must be true 100% of the time, unless you're told otherwise with the words listed above.</p> <p>Statements containing absolute words such as always, never, or not only require one exception to be false.</p> <p>Consider approaching it like an editing task where your job is to make all the statements true. If any edits are required to make the statement true, you know it is false.</p>	<p>Read the column with the longest choices first in the next round.</p> <p>These questions tend to focus on relationships between information or ideas.</p> <p>To save time, read whichever column has the longest statements first and then look for the match in the column with the shorter statements. This way you'll spend less time re-reading long statements.</p> <p>To reduce mental distraction, cross out the items in <b>both</b> columns when you find a match (unless it's the kind of questions where more than one match is possible.)</p>



# Problem Solving Tests

Before the test	During the test	After the test
<p>Identify the major problem types and formulas from class notes and reading.</p> <p>Highlight topics and problems your instructor emphasized.</p>	<p>Before starting the test, jot down formulas, relationships, definitions, etc.</p> <p>Do a brain dump at the beginning of the test and create a cheat sheet for yourself that you can refer back to during the test.</p>	<p>Examine the points that you missed. Review your TA or professor's feedback on your essays. Investigate what areas you were not ready for.</p> <p>Determine from which chapters or lessons most of the questions appeared and create a strategy to tackle those areas in the next round.</p>
<p>Practice working problems out of sequence. This will reveal how problems relate to each other and simulate the test-taking experience.</p> <p>For example: <i>Work a problem from Chapter 7, Chapter 5, then Chapter 10.</i></p>	<p>Do not complete the test in chronological order. Begin with those for which you can identify a solution method quickly.</p> <p>Start with easier problems. Allow more time for high point value problems.</p>	<p>Determine the source of your errors and make a plan for next time.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> <i>Did my errors result from carelessness? Did I fail to carry a negative sign from one step to another? Could I produce the formulas, or did I recall them incorrectly? Did I consistently miss the same kind of problem? Was I unable to solve problems because I didn't practice similar ones before the exam? Did I fail to account for all the given data in my solution method?</i></p>
<p>Work with a time limit. Aim to solve as many problems as you will have on the test within the test time limit.</p> <p>For example: <i>Practice working 30 problems in 50 minutes.</i></p>	<p>If you get stuck on a problem, ask yourself some questions to get going.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> <i>What concepts, formulas, rules and methods can I apply? Have I seen this problem before? Could I work this problem another way or simplify what I did? How does my solution compare with examples from the book and class?</i></p>	<p>If you had difficulty completing the test, try timing yourself while practicing solving problems as you prepare for the next exam.</p>



# Objective Tests

Before the test	During the test	After the test
Make a list of main ideas or themes that your instructor covered in class. Highlight emphasized topics. Note why these topics are important. Note relationships between ideas; they may be clues to possible questions!	Review the entire test. Skim and develop a plan of attack. Allow time for questions that are worth more points. Reserve time to review your work and fix mistakes.	Analyze what types of questions you spent the most time on, or your pattern for taking the test.  For example: <i>Did you spend the most time on short answer questions? Did you get confused by complex multiple choice questions?</i>
Know how you'll be tested.  For example: <i>Will the test contain short answer, multiple choice, true/false or matching questions?</i>	Read carefully. Avoid over thinking. Interpret the questions literally and try to choose the answer you think the test maker intended.  For example: <i>Restate the question as a statement (on paper or in your head) and THEN write your answer.</i>	Determine the amount of content from each section or chapter that appeared on the test and create a strategy to tackle those areas in the next round. Gauge difficulty and amount of detail in the test questions.
Will you be asked questions that require you to recall specific facts? Understand concepts? Apply what you've learned to real-life scenarios?  For example: <i>Make flashcards and do frequent drills of the material. Construct compare and contrast charts, tables, diagrams or lists to summarize relationships. Prepare by using self-quizzing questions with "What If" scenarios, or real-world applications.</i>	Pay attention to key words. Make sure you understand the question. Stay on point when answering the question.  For example: <i>Compare, explain, justify, and define</i>	Determine the types of questions you should be creating while self-quizzing in preparation for the next exam.  For example: <i>Level 1: Remember Level 2: Understand Level 3: Apply Level 4: Analyze Level 5: Create</i>



# Essay Tests

Before the test	During the test	After the test												
<p>Make a list of main ideas or themes that your instructor covered in class. Note relationships between ideas; they may be clues to possible essay questions!</p>	<p>Pay attention to key words. Make sure you understand the question.</p> <p>For example: <i>Compare, explain, justify, and define.</i></p>	<p>Examine the points that you missed. Review your TA or professor's feedback on your essays. Investigate what areas you were not ready for.</p> <p>For example: <i>Determine from which chapters or lessons most of the essay questions appeared and create a strategy to tackle those areas in the next round.</i></p>												
<p>Generate a list of possible questions using your relationship charts and summary sheets.</p> <p>For example: <i>Compare and contrast President Bush's proposed private accounts for Social Security and the current system:</i></p> <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Issues</th><th>Private Account</th><th>Current System</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Social</td><td>Individual assumes risk</td><td>Society assumes risk</td></tr><tr><td>Political</td><td>Republicans</td><td>Democrats</td></tr><tr><td>Economic</td><td>Potentially gaining higher investment yields</td><td>Risks of the marketplace</td></tr></tbody></table>	Issues	Private Account	Current System	Social	Individual assumes risk	Society assumes risk	Political	Republicans	Democrats	Economic	Potentially gaining higher investment yields	Risks of the marketplace	<p>Brainstorm and make an outline. If you don't know much about a question. Try to recall your reading, lectures, and discussions; this may trigger memories relevant to the question.</p> <p>For example: <i>Quickly list the ideas and facts you want to include. Number the points in the order you want to present them. Be sure to distinguish main topics from supporting examples.</i></p>	<p>Learn why the correct answer was more appropriate than yours. Did you answer the question?</p> <p>For example: <i>Look to see whether you covered the what, who, where, when, and how.</i></p>
Issues	Private Account	Current System												
Social	Individual assumes risk	Society assumes risk												
Political	Republicans	Democrats												
Economic	Potentially gaining higher investment yields	Risks of the marketplace												
	<p>If you're still blank, move on to a different question and come back to it later. If you run out of time, write an outline for the rest of the answer. The grader might be able to give you partial credit for what you have written.</p>	<p>Did you have difficulty completing the essays? Try timing yourself while practicing writing essays or at the very least, essay outlines.</p>												



# Fall 2016 Deadline Calendar

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
AUGUST	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
				1st class day			
	28	29	30	31	1	2	3
SEPTEMBER	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30	1
OCTOBER	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
NOVEMBER	30	31	1	2	3	4	5
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
DECEMBER	27	28	29	30	1	2	3
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
					Finals	Finals	Finals
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17



The University of Texas at Austin  
**Sanger Learning Center**  
School of Undergraduate Studies

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

	Saturday, ____	Sunday, ____	Monday, ____	Tuesday, ____	Wednesday, ____	Thursday, ____	Friday, ____
8							
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Month:

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