

1. Get informed

Don't walk into your test unprepared for what you will face. Before you start studying, find out:

- textbook chapters and topics the test will cover
- test format

Will there be multiple-choice questions or short answers? Will you write an in-class essay? The goals and layout of the test will determine how you tackle learning the material.

2. Think like your teacher

Your homeworks assignments, quizzes, handouts, [daily notes](#), and classwork are all indicators of what your teacher thinks is important about the information and what might appear on the test.

3. Make your own study aids

When it comes to learning, [a 2013 study](#) showed that practice tests work BETTER than simply highlighting or re-reading your notes. So, turn your notes into flashcards or use a flashcard app for memorizing [Spanish](#) vocab. Ask your friends to quiz you or write your own practice test.

4. Practice for the inevitable

Outline essays ahead of time. For math tests, do plenty of practice problems similar to ones that you KNOW will appear. Make a list of questions that you think might show up on the test (and then make sure you can answer them!).

5. Study every day

If you have a test in a week, studying a little each day will help you identify tough concepts or weak areas in your knowledge in advance. Can't figure out factoring? Log on to [Homework Help](#) and get your questions answered.

6. Cut out the distractions

[Distractions](#) make it difficult to pay attention to what you're doing, which in turn makes it harder to commit facts to memory. Give yourself a leg up by turning off the notifications on your phone, temporarily blocking your favorite websites, or sticking to instrumental music while you study (so you're not tempted to sing along!). Taking a break every 45 minutes or so will also help you stay focused.

7. Divide big concepts from smaller details

If you're studying a big topic—like the Civil War for [history](#) or cellular processes for [biology](#)—try breaking the material you need to study into chunks. Study one battle at a time or one chapter section at a time—and then quiz yourself. Ask yourself questions about what you've just studied, and even write your answers down.

8. Don't neglect the “easy” stuff

Even if you've been acing a certain subject or concept all year and think the test will be a breeze, you should still give it a review before the big day. You don't want to lose points for careless errors or forget to memorize a key [geometry](#) formula.

9. Don't skip school

Missing classes automatically puts you at a disadvantage. Make sure you go to class (especially during the week leading up to the test) and attend any review sessions your teacher holds. Did you have to miss an important class? You can always ask your teacher or one of [our tutors](#) for help catching up.

10. Review the day of the test

Before you take the test, give yourself time for a quick review. Shuffle through those flashcards a couple of times or re-read your chapter outline. This will ensure the material is fresh in your mind.

Use the association learning concept. Attempt, as nearly as possible, to study the same subject at the same time in the same place each day. You will find that, after a very short while, when you get to that time and place, you are automatically in the subject "groove."

Train your brain to think math on a time-place cue, and it will no longer take you 10 minutes a day to get in the math mood. Not only will you save the time and emotional energy you once needed to psych yourself up to do math, or whatever else, it will also help you remember more of what you are studying.

Do not study more than an hour at a time without taking a break. In fact, if you are doing straight memorization, do not spend more than 20 to 30 minutes at a time. Here is the rationale behind taking such small bites out of study time.

First, when you are under an imposed time restriction, you use the time more efficiently. Have you noticed how much studying you manage to cram into the day before big exams? That is why it is called "cramming."

Separate the study of subjects that are alike. Brain waves are like radio waves. If there is not enough space between input, you get interference. The more similar the kinds of learning taking place, the more interference. So, separate your study periods for courses with similar subject matter. Follow your studying of math with an hour of Spanish or history, not chemistry or statistics.

Do not study when you are tired. Psychologists have found that everyone has a certain time of day when he or she gets sleepy. Do not try to study during that time (but do not go to sleep either – it hardly ever refreshes). Instead, schedule some physical activity for that period, such as recreation. If you have a stack of schoolwork, use that time to sort your notes or clear up your desk and get your books together or study with a friend.

Memorize actively, not passively. Researchers have found that the worst way to memorize – the way that takes the most time and results in the least retention – is to simply read something over and over again. If that is the way you memorize, forget it. Instead, use as many of your senses as possible.