



Sixth College Academic Advising Preparing for exams

Rule #1: The more active your review process, the better you will learn.

REVIEW TOOLS

1. Study checklists

- Identify and make a list of all material you will be tested on (notes, formulas, ideas or concepts, reading assignments)
- Organize studying into manageable chunks
- Plan time for each task

2. Create summary notes and “concept mapping”

- Map out important ideas and relationships between concepts
- Make summary notes which display lists and hierarchies of ideas
- Create a visual framework to help recall ideas and details

3. Create flashcards

- Make flashcards for formulas, definitions, vocabulary (esp. in foreign languages), or lists you have to memorize—put topics on one side of card, answers on the other
- Use flashcards to test your ability to recognize important information, AND, more importantly, to retrieve information from scratch
- Shuffle flashcards to change the sequence in which you test yourself; pick two cards randomly and try to make connections between the ideas or concepts (that is, try to explain one idea by using the other)

4. Record information for rote memorization

- Make audio tapes of notes or portions of text that you must commit to memory
- Play tapes while walking to class or relaxing, to reinforce material

ORGANIZING FOR TESTS

1. Begin reviewing early-use your syllabus to help you plan ahead.

2. Make weekly “study checklists”

- At the end of each week, compile your “study checklists” (at least for your most demanding or difficult courses)
- Review weekly concepts that were presented in lectures (or reading)
- Make your review “active” by mapping ideas or testing yourself with flashcards

3. Read (or at least preview) text assignments before lectures

- Make checklists of key concepts to listen for in the lecture
- Note questions that you’d like to ask in class (or after class)

4. Review with a group and/or join a study group

- Certain classes especially lend themselves to study groups
- Most students tend to remember ideas they have talked about with peers better than concepts they have read about or heard in lecture

5. Conduct a major review early enough to allow for a visit to the instructor

6. Break up the study tasks into manageable chunks

- Plan times of day to devote to each “chunk” of material
- Break between stretches of studying (no more than 60 minutes of studying before a break)
- Studying while you are mentally fatigued is usually a waste of time

CONCEPT MAPPING

Why map?

- Outlining is linear and organized, but **NOT THE WAY OUR MINDS WORK.**
- Our minds work like websites: ideas or concepts are *linked* together, or even go off on their own into other groupings or webs
- *Learning* combines what you already know with new information (what you want to know), and links this new information with what we already understand
- *Memories* then process these new LINKS and associations for later recall

When to map?

Organizing a subject

Bringing about “deeper” learning

Integrating new and old ideas

Preparing for tests

TAKING NOTES

Placing new ideas in a structure

Preparing to preview a reading assignment

Understanding complex ideas

How to map?

1. Forget the idea of an outline, or of notes in sentences
2. Think of key words or symbols that represent ideas & words
3. Think *visually*
4. Start with the most important stuff in the center, and work out like spokes of a wheel
5. Keep this to add to, using reading assignments, notes from study groups, etc. **REORGANIZE IT AND REVISE IT AS YOU UNDERSTAND MORE.**

Information from the Learning Center, University of North Carolina
<http://learningcenter.unc.edu/Resources/Handouts/Tests>