



PREPARING FOR A TEST

1. **Construct a study plan:** Determine if your test will focus on facts or concepts. Try to understand the kind of information you need, whether it may be specific details such as dates, or broad concepts. Then, actively search for it. (*Hint – get an Exam Success Plan from the peer coaches at the Learning Resource Center.*)
2. **Determine a time frame:** Get a head start 2 weeks before the exam. While looking at a calendar, realistically assess how much time you need to prepare for the test. Then, choose days, dates and times when you will actively study for the exam. Write down your study schedule.
3. **Get an overview of all your material:** Read, at least once, all the material that will be covered on the exam. You should accomplish this before you begin your review. Skim through the lecture, test and outside reading material. Get a feel for the quality and amount of information you are responsible for on the test.
4. **Make an outline of all major points:** Use the chapter subheadings and chapter review questions as your study guide. Often the table of contents of the course outline is an excellent way of distinguishing major concepts from minor ones. If the author of a text or an instructor thinks enough of a concept to make it into a separate boldfaced heading, then you can safely assume that it is important enough to study.
5. **Quickly review your outline...check off sections that seem the most difficult:** Using your outline, isolate those areas that seem to be your weakest. Begin by studying those. If everything seems difficult, isolate those areas that you do understand. Then, proceed to build your understanding of new material upon those areas that are already clear to you. However, do not keep studying material you have already mastered.
6. **Make notations on materials that confuse you...get answers to those questions:** If a particular concept needs clarification, ask someone. Most instructors are willing to clear up specific questions before a test. Also, consider forming a study group or taking the phone number of another student in your class. Do not get bogged down with information that baffles you. Talk with your professor or TA for assistance.
7. **Use your strongest learning style and preferences:** Auditory learners may want to read the highlighted information aloud or tape record questions that they can then listen to and answer later. Visual learners may want to picture their

notes or a page from a textbook. Kinesthetic learners may want to rewrite information (e.g., brief summary outlines or charts). Remember to study during the times and in the environments that will help you focus best.

8. **Use flashcards:** If a particular course includes many specific points that you know you must memorize, keep index cards on which you have written the specific points. Add to this pack as you progress through the semester and eliminate cards from it as you learn the facts. Carry the cards with you and thumb through them off and on during the day rather than spending an hour or more in one sitting trying to memorize the facts. Review all the cards before the exam.
9. **Know your instructor and their expectations:** Find out what kind of test to study for. Look at old tests if available.
10. **Review sample questions:** Look at sample questions and problems at the end of chapters for additional clues on what to know.
11. **Predict questions:** On the basis of this information, try to predict questions (both broad and specific), and then make sure you can answer such questions.

Finally, If you are well prepared and still have test-anxiety, make an appointment with an **LRC peer coach** to learn strategies for dealing with test-anxiety.