

Preparing for Tests

from the Augsburg College Academic Skills Center

This packet is designed to assist you in preparing for tests. The research in study skills strongly supports the need to start early in preparing for your tests, to stay on top of all reading assignments, and to plan for regular study and review sessions. Planning these strategies, you will decrease your stress level and achieve higher grades, not to mention the positive impact upon your self-esteem.

Read each statement and consider how it applies to you. If it does apply to you, check Y. If it does not apply to you, check N. The purpose of this inventory is to find out about your own study habits and attitudes.

1. Y N I spend too much time studying what I am learning.
2. Y N I usually spend hours cramming the night before an exam.
3. Y N If I spend as much time on my social activities as I want to, I don't have enough time left to study or when I study enough, I don't have time for a social life
4. Y N I usually try to study with the radio and TV turned on.
5. Y N I can't sit and study for long periods of time without becoming tired or distracted.
6. Y N I go to class, but I usually seem to get the wrong material into my class notes.
7. Y N My class notes are sometimes difficult to understand later.
8. Y N I usually seem to get the wrong material into my class notes.
9. Y N I don't review my class notes periodically throughout the semester in preparation for tests.
10. Y N I don't know how to pick out what is important in the text.
11. Y N I can't keep up with my reading assignments, and then I have to cram the night before a test.
12. Y N I lose a lot of points on essay tests even when I know the material well.
13. Y N I often study in a haphazard, disorganized way under the threat of the next test.
14. Y N Is often find myself getting lost in the details of reading and have trouble identifying the main ideas
15. Y N I rarely change my reading speed in response to the difficulty level of the selection, or my familiarity with the content.
16. Y N I often wish that I could read faster.
17. Y N I study enough for my test, but when I get there my mind goes blank.

- 18. Y N When my teachers assign papers I feel so overwhelmed that I can't get started.
- 19. Y N I usually write my papers the night before they are due.
- 20. Y N I can't seem to organize my thoughts into a paper that makes sense
- 21. Y N When I get to the end of a chapter, I can't remember what I've just read

Preparing for tests tends to focus on two important study behaviors: maximizing concentration and effective memorization techniques.

I. CONCENTRATION

Concentration is most important for college students. The amount of reading required by college courses constitutes a need for good concentration skills, yet a lot of students seem to have problems concentrating when reading through assigned text materials. Everyone's mind wanders occasionally. But when concentration loss happens frequently, a problem exists. The problem is often one of finding a place to study where there are no external distractions, distractions that originate outside of the body. Telephone calls, visitors, and noises are examples. Concentration loss may occur when there are too many such distractions present. This checklist will help you analyze distractions in the places you study.

DISTRACTION ANALYSIS

Pick study areas that have the least amount of distractions. The fewer distractions, the better your concentration will be. Use the following distraction analysis to help you analyze your choice of study locations.

List the three places where you usually study in the order you use them most:

A _____

B _____

C _____

Now indicate whether each of the statements below is true or false for EACH of the three places in which you usually study.

- | | | | |
|--------------|-----|-----|---|
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 1. Other people often interrupt me when I study here. |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 2. Much of what I can see here reminds me of things that don't |
| have | | | anything to do with studying. |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 3. I can often hear radio or TV when I study here. |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 4. I can often hear the phone ringing when I study here. |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 5. I think I take too many breaks when I study here. |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 6. I seem to be especially bothered by distractions here. |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 7. I usually don't study here at regular times each week. |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 8. My breaks tend to be too long when I study here. |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 9. I tend to start conversations with people when I study here. |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 10. I spend time on the phone here that I should be using to |
| study. | | | |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 11. There are many things here that don't have anything to do |
| with study | | | or school work. |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 12. Temperature conditions here are not very good for studying. |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 13. The chair, table, and lighting arrangements here are not very |
| good for | | | studying. |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 14. When I study here, I am often distracted by certain |
| individuals. | | | |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 15. I don't enjoy studying here. |

The location which has the most "false" responses may be the least distracting place to study. Try to plan your day so that you do as much of your work as you can there.

Strategies for improving your concentration:

1. Try to have one or two special study areas.

Everyone becomes conditioned to behave differently in different places. For instance, you probably behave differently at a party than you do at home. If you pick one or two places in which to study all of the time (the second place is to be used when

the first place is occupied or distracting), soon you will literally condition your brain to study there. Several surveys suggest that 80% of a student's studying is done in his or her own room, not in a library or study hall. **A place where you are used to studying and to will do nothing else is the best of all possible locations.** After a while, studying becomes the appropriate behavior in that particular environment. Then, whenever you sit down in that particular niche in the world you'll feel like going right to work. Look at it this way, when you come into a classroom, you sit down and go to work by paying attention to the instructor. Your attitude and attention and behavior are automatic because in the past the room has been associated with attentive listening and not much else. If you can arrange the same kind of situation for the place where you study, you will find it easier to sit down and start studying. As a result, your concentration will improve.

2. Set time limits.

Before you begin an assignment, write down on a sheet of paper the time you expect to finish. Keep a record of your goal setting. This one step will not take much time at all. However, it can be extremely effective. It may put just the slightest bit of pressure on you, enough so that your study behavior will become instantly more efficient. Keep the goal sheets as a record of your studying efficiency. Try setting slightly higher goals in successive evening. Don't try to make fantastic increases in rate. Just increase the goal a bit at a time.

3. Select a symbol.

Strengthen your ability to concentrate by selecting a social symbol that is related to study. Select one particular article of clothing, like a scarf or hat, or a new little figurine or totem. Just before you start to study, put on the cap, or set your little idol on the desk. The ceremony will aid your concentration in two ways. First of all, it will be a signal to other people that you are working, and they should kindly not disturb you. Second, going through a short, regular ritual will help you get down to work, but be sure you don't use the cap or your idol when you are writing letters or daydreaming or just horsing around. Keep them just for studying. If your charm gets associated with anything besides books, get a new one. You must be very careful that it doesn't become a symbol for daydreaming.

4. Select a regular time for studying.

Set aside a certain time to begin studying. Certain behavior usually is habitual at certain times of the day. If you examine your day carefully, you may find that you tend to do certain things at predictable times. There may be changes from day to day, but, generally parts of your behavior are habitual and time controlled behavior is fairly easy to start. The point is that if you can make studying - or at least some of your studying - habitual it will be much easier to start. And if the behavior is started at a habitual time, you will find that it is easier to start, you will find that it is easier to get going without daydreaming or talking about other things.

5. Don't overdo it!

If you feel yourself getting tired, take a break! Don't force yourself to sit through hours of "die-hard" studying. Get up and fix something to eat, get a glass of water, stretch, or walk around and bring yourself back to life before you jump back into the books!

6. Check Mark Method.

This method of concentration improvement is one of the best methods you can try. Keep pieces of blank paper and a pen by the book you are reading. Every time you feel your mind wandering, pick up the pen and put a check mark on the paper. Do this every time you lose concentration. The first few days you do this, the paper may be filled with check marks! But over the week you will notice that the amount of marks will decrease, and it will keep decreasing. You are literally training your brain to concentrate.

7. "Stand up, and sit down."

When you feel your mind wandering off during your reading, stand up, turn around once, and sit back down. Pretty soon you will become tired of popping up and down and will pay more attention to your reading!

8. Keep a pencil and reminder pad on your desk

If your mind seems to be constantly wandering off and becomes fixated on problems you have to resolve in your life, write them down on the pad and start reading again. Later, during your free time, sit down in a comfortable easy chair, read each problem, and set goals for solving each of them. Also, use the reminder pad to jot down anything you think of that needs to be done. Having written it down, you can go back to studying. You'll know that if you look at the pad later, you will be reminded of the things you have to do. It's worrying about forgetting the things you have to do that might be interfering with your studying.

9. Practice concentration!

Resist the urge to turn away from your textbooks or notes when someone enters your study area or moves about the room. Force yourself not to look up, keep reading, and soon you will break the habit of being easily distracted.

10. Don't start any unfinished business!

Don't start any unfinished business just before the time to start studying. most people tend to think about jobs they haven't finished or obligations they have to fulfill much more than things that they have done and gotten out of the way. Uncompleted activities tend to linger much longer than completed ones. If we apply that idea to the habit of daydreaming, you might suspect that uncompleted activities and obligations would be more likely to crop up as a source of daydreaming than completed ones. Therefore, when you know you're about to start studying because it's the time you have selected to begin, don't get involved in long discussions. Try to be habitual with the time you start, and be careful what you do before start studying. This can be one way to improve your ability to concentrate.

11. Relax before you start to study.

Relax completely before you start to study. One approach to concentration is to ask yourself, "Do studying and bookwork scare me?" If you have to do something unpleasant, something that you know you may do badly, how do you react? Probably you put it off as long as possible, fine yourself daydreaming, and would welcome reasons to stop studying. If you do react this way, you might be said to suffer from learned book-anxiety. The key to breaking this book-anxiety daydream series is learning how to

relax. When you are physically, deeply, and completely relaxed, it is almost impossible to feel any anxiety. Associate the book with relaxation, not with tension and anxiety. When you study, study; when you worry, worry. Don't do both at the same time.

Procrastination: Ten Ways to "DO IT NOW"

1. Rational Self-Talk. Those old excuses really don't hold up to rational inspection. The "two-column technique" will help. Write down all your excuses on one side of a piece of paper. Start challenging the faulty reasoning behind each of the excuses. Write down your realistic thoughts.

Example:

EXCUSE: I'm not in the mood right now.

REALISTIC THOUGHT: Mood doesn't do my work, actions do. If I wait for the right mood, I may never get it done.

EXCUSE: I'm just lazy.

REALISTIC THOUGHT: Labeling myself as lazy only brings me down. My work is really separate from who I am as a person. Getting started is the key to finishing.

2. Positive Self-Statements. Incorporate a list of self-motivating statements into your repertoire of thoughts. Consider...

* "There's no time like the present."

* "The sooner I get done, the sooner I can play."

* "There's no such thing as perfectionism. It's an illusion that keeps me from doing what I have to do right now."

* "It's cheaper and less painful if I do it now rather than wait until it gets worse."

3. Don't Catastrophe. Jumping to the conclusion that you will fail or that you are not good at something will only create a wall of fear that will stop you cold. Recognize that your negative predictions are not facts. Focus on the present and what positive steps you can take toward reaching your goals.

4. **Design Clear Goals.** Think about what you want and what needs to be done. Be specific. If it's getting that work project completed by the deadline, figure out a time with realistic goals at each step. Keep your sights within reason. Having goals too big can scare you away from starting.

5. **Set Priorities.** Write down all the things that need to be done in order of their importance. The greater the importance or urgency, the higher their priority. Put "messaging around" (distractions) in its proper place - last! Start at the top of the list and work your way down.

6. **Partialize the Tasks.** Big projects feel overwhelming. Break them down into the smallest and most manageable subparts. You'll get more done if you can do it piece by piece. For example, make an outline for a written report before you start composing or do a small portion of the chores rather than all at once. Partializing works especially well with the unpleasant jobs. Most of us can handle duties we dislike as long as they're for a short time and in small increments.

7. **Get Organized.** Have all your materials ready before you begin a task. Use a daily schedule and have it with you all the time. List the tasks of the day or week realistically. Check off the tasks when you have completed them.

8. **Take a Stand.** Commit yourself to doing the task. Write yourself a "contract" and sign it. Better still, tell a friend, partner, or supervisor about your plans.

9. **Use Prompts.** Write reminders to yourself and put them in conspicuous places like on the TV, refrigerator, bathroom mirror, front door, and car dashboard. The more we remember, the greater the likelihood we'll follow through with our plans.

10. **Reward Yourself.** Self-reinforcement has a powerful effect on developing a "do it now" attitude. Celebrate, pat yourself on the back, smile, and let yourself enjoy the completion of even the smallest of tasks. Don't minimize your accomplishments. Remember, you're already that much closer to finishing those things that need to be done. Go ahead, get started ... NOW!

Priority Setting “First Things First”

One day a management consultant, Ivy Lee, called on Schwab of the Bethlehem Steel Company. Lee outlined briefly his firm's services, ending with the statement: “With our service you’ll know how to manage better.”

The indignant Schwab said, “I’m not managing as well now as I know how. What we need around here is not more “knowing but more doing, not knowledge but action; if you can give us something to pep us up to do the things we ALREADY KNOW we ought to do, I’ll gladly listen to you and pay you anything you ask.”

“Fine”, said Lee. “I can give you something in twenty minutes that will step up your action and doing at least 50 percent”.

“O.K.”, said Schwab. “I have just about that much time before I must leave to catch a train. What’s your idea?”

Lee pulled a bland 3x5 note sheet out of his pocket, handed it to Schwab and said: “Write on this sheet the six most important tasks you have to do tomorrow”. Five more minutes pass. “Now”, said Lee, “put this sheet in your pocket and the first thing tomorrow morning look at item one and start working on it. Pull the sheet out of your pocket every 15 minutes and look at item one until it is finished. Then tackle item two in the same way, then item three. Do this until quitting time. Don’t be concerned if you only finished two or three, or even if you only finish one item. You’ll be working on the important ones. The others can wait. If you can’t finish them all by this method, you couldn’t with another method either, and without some system you’d probably not even decide which are most important”.

“Spend the last five minutes of every working day making out a “must” list for the next day’s tasks. After you’ve convinced yourself of the worth of this system have your men try it. Try it out as long as you wish and then send me a check for what YOU think it’s worth”.

The whole interview lasted about twenty-five minutes. In two weeks Schwab sent Lee a check for \$25,000 - a thousand dollars a minute. He added a note saying the lesson was the most profitable from a money standpoint he had ever learned. Did it work? In five years it turned the unknown Bethlehem Steel Company into the biggest

independent steel producer in the world; made Schwab a hundred million dollar fortune, and the best known steel man alive at that time.

II. IMPROVING YOUR MEMORY

Having a good memory does not mean that you can recall every piece of information that has been presented to you. Some can do this, but for most students a good memory involves being able to recall the right information at the right time.

When preparing for any test, find out the content, style, and date of the test for which you are preparing. You should also locate or write practice questions of the kind you will face and plan out a schedule of your preparation.

Below are some memory improvement techniques; these are divided into four categories, and each category is a basic principle for improving your memory.

BE ORGANIZED

1. **LEARN FROM THE GENERAL TO THE SPECIFIC:** Get a broad overview of the subject before you begin to learn the details. For example, skim your entire textbook at the beginning of a term. If you get a textbook reading assignment, look over it before you actually read it. When you take the time to get to know the big picture, the details are easier to remember.

2. **MAKE IT MEANINGFUL:** Relate what you are learning to your personal goals somehow. If you can find something about the material that has meaning to you, you will learn it better and quicker. Try to think of how the information can get you somewhere you want to be or something you want to have. When you want something, you can remember it.

3. **CREATE ASSOCIATIONS:** Your brain arranges information in bits, in a manner that makes sense to you. One way to recall information more effectively is to associate new information with the old because the brain will store the information near similar data. For example, if you had to remember a famous person named Greg, one

way to remember his name would be to call up an image of another person you know named Greg. Visualize these two people together. In the future, when you have to remember this new Greg, your mind will immediately associate him with a Greg you already know. Anytime you have to remember many details, you can gather them all together and create a common association.

BE PHYSICAL

4. **LEARN IT ONCE, ACTIVELY:** Learning consumes energy. The main reason people forget is that they never really learned it in the first place. Since learning consumes energy, you probably are not learning much if you are not burning calories. You need to create an atmosphere of activity where you study. Concentrate on sitting up straight when at a desk; consider even standing up when you study. Do not be afraid to make gestures when you recite material. Pace back and forth when you study. Draw pictures of concepts in the air. Use your hands. Get your whole body involved in studying. Active learners remember more than passive learners.

5. **VISUALIZE RELATIONSHIPS:** Create pictures about things you want to learn. Draw diagrams. Make cartoons. Visual information is associated with a different part of your brain than verbal information. When you make up a picture to go with a concept or a fact, you are anchoring the information in two separate parts of the brain, thus doubling your chances of being able to recall it. Use your imagination. Experiment with yourself to see what kind of images work for you.

6. **RECITE AND REPEAT:** Of all the memory techniques, recitation works the best for most people. When you want to remember something, repeat it aloud. When you repeat something aloud, you anchor the concept in three different senses. Second, you get the physical sensation in your throat. Third, you hear the concept. Your brain has now put that information in storage in three different ways. This will make memory a much easier process, and it takes less time to memorize the information.

BE CLEAR

7. **REDUCE INTERFERENCE:** Find a quiet place that is free from distraction to study in. Turn off your radio. If you have a strong attraction to food, don't torture yourself by studying close to the refrigerator. Study your most difficult subjects during the daylight hours; you will be able to concentrate better. Take breaks when studying.

Most people's brains need a break every 40-50 minutes. If you do not take a break, your ability to recall will suffer. After studying a difficult subject, do something enjoyable that takes little mental energy, like taking a walk, going to a movie, listening to music, or studying for your favorite course.

8. **OVERLEARN:** One way to fight mental fuzziness is to learn more about the subject than you have to. This especially works for problem solving. Do the assigned problems and then do more problems. You will actually feel smarter, which can lead to a better self-concept. Overlearning does not mean adding more facts at random or staying up all night rehashing the same material. It means to learn what is required and to explore further into the subject.

9. **BE AWARE OF ATTITUDES:** Your attitude about a subject can affect your ability to recall. If you have the attitude that history is boring, you may find it quite difficult to recall history. We tend to forget information that contradicts our opinions. When you are bored of a subject, consider the possibility that you are creating boredom. This does not mean to fight your attitudes or struggle to give them up. Simply acknowledge them. You can unlock your recall by being aware that an attitude is blocking your memory.

BE SMART

10. **DISTRIBUTE LEARNING:** Despite what you might believe, marathon study sessions are not effective. You can get far more accomplished in three two-hour sessions than in one six-hour session. These two-hour sessions work even better if you divide them into shorter sessions of 40-50 minutes. If you feel yourself getting tired or losing concentration, take a break. Use the breaks as mini-rewards.

11. **REMEMBER SOMETHING ELSE:** When you are stuck and cannot remember something that you should know, remember something else that is related. Similar information is stored in the same area of the brain. You can unlock your recall by stimulating that area of your memory.

12. **COMBINE MEMORY TECHNIQUES:** All of the memory techniques above work, but they work even better if you combine some of them. Choose two or three techniques to use on a particular assignment. For example, repetition (#6) and

reflection (#11) combine naturally. Experiment with these techniques and find the ones that benefit you the most.

Now that you reviewed the basic principles involved in improving memory, you need to examine specific techniques that will work to assist you in remembering factual information from textbooks and notes. Research supports that memorization of factual information is most effectively brought about through 4 specific techniques: self-recitation, the summary sheet, 3x5 flashcards, and study groups. Here is how to do each; choose one that works best for your style of learning, or use them in combination!

SELF-RECITATION

1. One of the most effective ways to prepare for a test is by testing yourself. For each concept you want to place in your long-term memory, make up a test question! This way you will begin to learn by creating your own test question; eventually you will get better at selecting questions very similar to those chosen by your instructors. In fact, by making up test questions, you will sharply reduce any test anxiety you may have.

2. Once you have test questions written beside each concept, you need to learn, you recite the questions out loud (reciting out loud reduces by half the amount of time it takes to remember the concepts); then try to recite the answers, but if you cannot remember the answers, read them again; then repeat the process until you CAN recite the correct answers. Make self-recitation a regular part of your study plan. About every 5-7 days, you will need to repeat your self-recitation in order to keep the answers in your long-term memory. Failure to review WILL result in memory loss!

3. Original Learning must take place. You have to be exposed to the material before you can review it.

4. Early Review is most efficient and, most productive. Before you attempt to learn new material in class or through reading:

- * Glance over previous chapters or notes.

- * Run through your mind what you already know.

* Since memorization of new material is most effective when it is associated with material already known, this process brings all available mental “hooks” to the surface.

Immediately after learning:

- * Rework your notes adding material that comes to mind. (Don’t recopy; this is wasteful.)
- * Order and organize what was learned. (Star, use arrows, additions; comments, etc.)
- * Integrate new material with what you already know.

Forgetting is most rapid right after learning. Review helps combat this. Relearning is easier if it is done quickly. Don’t wait until it’s all gone.

THE SUMMARY SHEET

Here is one of the most effective tools for remembering factual information. The Summary sheet accomplishes two important goals: (1) it breaks your dependency on your textbook and notes and (2) it reduces actual study time.

The Summary Sheet is a 1-2 page summary of what you learned both from one textbook chapter and from your lecture notes on that chapter. The Summary Sheet is written out EVERY week for the work you covered that week. Because it is only 1-2 pages in length, it cannot repeat word for word what is written in your textbook or lecture notes! Rather, the Summary Sheet contains a list of topics, with a few possible key words for each (to help you to remember), followed by the page numbers where the information can be found in your text and in your notes (for example, if you write on your summary sheet, "Bone structure (4 parts) (48G)," this means that the 4 parts of the human bone are found in the text on page 48 and on page G of your notes).

You need to complete your Summary Sheet each time you complete a chapter of your textbook, remembering to combine that material with the material from your lecture notes. If, on the other hand, your instructor assigns readings in sections of several chapters during the week, plan on simply doing a weekly Summary Sheet. When you

fill out your Summary Sheet, put your textbook and notes aside and see if you can recite the information for each topic. If you cannot remember the information, then look at your text or notes and read it over again. Try reciting again until you can, then move on to the next topic. Review your summary sheets at least once a week. If you were to keep up your summary sheets, just imagine how well prepared you would be by final exam time. While other students are cramming and getting stressed, you only need to review all of your summary sheets once.

The Summary Sheet is also a fine method of keeping tabs on whether or not you are selecting the most important ideas of the course. Simply show one of your summary sheets to your instructor; ask him or her to look over your list of topics and to tell you whether or not you ARE concentrating on the course's most important ideas.

Here is a sample Summary Sheet:

—
Economics 121- Chapter 4

I. Single proprietorship

ADVANTAGES (72 E)

1. Can do what desires
2. All profit goes to owner

DISADVANTAGES (72 E)

1. All losses hurt owner (unlimited liability)
2. Commercial banks ordinarily will not provide "venture capital"

II. Partnerships

ADVANTAGES (73 E)

1. Pool wealth, loss, profit
2. "Vertical integration" = gain control of resources, become own wholesaler
3. "Horizontal integration" = buy out competitors; add products; improve products

DISADVANTAGES (75 F)

1. Each time a member dies or leaves a new partnership needs to be formed
2. Unlimited liability even if own a small share

III. Corporation

ADVANTAGES (76 F)

1. Easy to form (legal permission needed)
2. Issue stock to raise capital; banker underwrites stock issues and sells public
3. Limited liability - Corp. distinct from its owners, can be sued

to

4. "Perpetual succession", or existence. Board of directors.

ADVANTAGES TO SOCIETY (80 G)

1. Technical efficiency - production of goods and services
2. Pool business risks-continuation of production
3. Creates further capital for expansion or finance new
4. It is taxed

3x5 FLASHCARDS

Students often neglect to use one of the most efficient study aids devised -- 3x5 flashcards. These cards present a useful way of reciting information that seems to be more difficult for you to recall, or information that you wish to OVERLEARN (that is, you know the information, but you continue to review it on a daily basis) because you are convinced that it is important and will likely be on the test. One of the best ways to use flashcards is to write out your question on one side of the card and the answer in abbreviated form on the reverse side. Carry your cards around with you as frequently as possible; when you have a few minutes to spare, see if you can recite the answers on a few of your cards. Keep your cards by you when driving home. For example: if you get stuck at a traffic light, use the time to recite one of your cards! In the mornings, place a few cards on the bathroom sink as you shave or brush your teeth; use the time to recite answers to your questions. You will think of other ways in which you can find time to recite answers. Flashcards are an excellent way to learn definitions, formulas, steps in a process, parts of a unit, etc.

STUDY GROUPS

Study groups have also proven most effective in helping students to increase their learning and to improve their grades on tests. Here are the steps to follow in setting up your own study group:

1. Select 3-4 other students in the class, students who seem committed to learning the material of the class. Determine what type of examinations the instructor will give (long essay, short essay, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, etc.) because the group will prepare questions of the same type.

2. Arrange a time for the group to meet every week, for approximately two hours. Every week the group selects one chapter of the text and the week's lecture notes to review. Each member of the group shows up at the appointed time with approximately 5 questions taken from the week's chapter(s), written out in the format the instructor has chosen for his tests.
3. Each group member takes a turn and reads one of his/her questions to the group, then calls on a group member for the answer. If the answer is not complete enough, call on another group member until the correct and complete answer is arrived at; if no one in the group can supply the correct and complete answer, then the group member asking the question supplies the answer.
4. The group should not be concerned if many of the group members come with the same questions! That indicates that the question is probably very major, and the group will have a chance to hear the answer many times, which will aid memorization.
5. The group needs to honor the two-hour time block set aside for study: in other words, do not use that time for anything but study; save personal conversations for later. Aim to stop sharply at the end of the appointed time! Study groups that aimlessly stretch out over many hours will not remain vital and the participants will begin skipping sessions.

III. A WORD ABOUT CRAMMING!

Preparation usually eliminates the need for cramming. But if you find yourself unprepared for an exam, then cramming is an unfortunate necessity; however CRAM SYSTEMATICALLY! To cram systematically, limit the information that you attempt to commit to memory, and devote the bulk of your time to reciting what you have chosen to remember instead of trying to learn it all.

LIMIT WHAT YOU TRY TO LEARN

If your only chance to pass a course is to cram, then the one word to remember is **selectivity**. You must avoid falling into the trap of trying to learn too much. It will be extremely difficult to resist picking up important looking information along the way. Concentrate on essential facts, and use as much of your time as possible for remembering them.

Each textbook chapter has to be skimmed and searched, and the main ideas and pertinent supporting materials must be ferreted out and written in your own words on summary sheets. The same must be done with your lecture notes.

RECITE INSTEAD OF REREAD

Once you have extracted the **MOST IMPORTANT** ideas from both your textbook and lecture notes, push aside the books and notebooks. Resist the temptation to read more in search of important information you may have missed. It is time to admit it is too late to try learning everything. Limit yourself to only ten or so sheets of notes from your textbook and ten sheets of notes from your classroom notes. Your hope in passing the upcoming test lies not in force-feeding yourself more and more information at the last minute, but in mastering the few facts you have in front of you.

Now **recite, recite, recite**. The notes you have selected will do you no good unless you embed them in your mind so that you can mentally carry them into the examination room. To make these notes your own, read each fact you have chosen, and devise a question you can jot down in the margin of your summary sheet for which that fact is the answer. Formulating these questions will act as written recitation. Then once you have a question for every idea, cover up the answers, and test yourself by reading each question and reciting the answer from memory, again and again until you know the information cold.

By selecting the very top ideas and by using your own questions to help you memorize them, you will have a chance of passing the examination. You may not remember much once the test is over, but for now the objective is to survive the test with the best possible grade so you can come back next term and commit to a more effective form of learning.

Next time, through organized note taking, regular recitation, and systematic review, you can avoid the pressure and anxiety of cramming. A few days spent with

your summary sheets will organize vast amounts of material in your mind, far more than you could ever learn by cramming! Moreover, you will be rested, confident, and ready for your exams.