

Exam - Taking Tips

1. **Get a good sleep and eat before you enter.** If you are falling asleep on your desk or your stomach is growling it's going to be hard to concentrate, no matter how much studying you did.
2. When you sit down to write your exam, perform a **memory dump**. A memory dump is when you quickly jot down the key information that you have studied. Do this before you read any questions. If you jot down some quick reminders at the beginning (dates, formulas, graphs, names, terms) you'll have it when you need it.
3. **Read instructions before you begin.** Does your teacher want answers on the test or on a separate sheet? Should you do all the essay questions or are you being given a choice? You need to read the instructions to avoid extra work.
4. **Complete easy questions first.** If you struggle and strain over the hard ones first, you might find yourself rushing through the stuff you should be acing later. Do the questions you know first, chalk yourself up some marks, and then take your time with the questions you're not so sure about.
5. **If you draw a blank, don't panic.** Sometimes we blank during an exam. Use scrap paper to write down what you *do* know about the question and this will probably jog your memory.
6. **Budget your time.** The time you spend on a section should roughly match its value. If the short answer section is worth almost half of your exam mark, you should be spending almost half of your time on it.
7. **Multiple choice question tips:**
 - a. **Answer the ones you know, star the ones you don't** and go back to them.
 - b. When you go back to a question you have starred, **eliminate the answers you know are wrong.**
 - c. When choosing between the possible answers, **go with your gut.**
 - d. **Use common sense.** Even if you don't remember the answer from your notes, sometimes breaking down words can give you a clue about their meaning, or you can narrow your guess down to the *most likely* answer.
 - e. **If all else fails, guess!** A one-in-four chance of getting it right is always better than no chance.
8. **Answer all questions.** A chance at partial-marks is better than a guaranteed zero.
9. **Organize essays.** When answering essay questions, create a brief introduction that outlines your main points, and then write one paragraph.

Study Tips for all Learners

- **Create a study schedule and stick to it.** Many of you work part-time or are involved in other activities. This means that you will need to schedule your study time. Study for the length of time you schedule, and make sure that you stop when you said you would. If you planned to study for two hours, stop after two hours. If you are fair with yourself, you will be more likely to stick to your schedule when you next study block arrives.
- **Give yourself study breaks.** Most of us can concentrate for about 45 minutes before we need a short break. Make a deal with yourself that you can have a 15 minute break if you concentrate for 45 minutes. After your break, hit the books for another 45.
- **What time of day do you learn best?** Do you concentrate best during 3rd and 4th period? Maybe you should study in the mornings. We all have a certain time of day when we are most awake and productive. Think about when this time occurs for you, and try to study then. Most of us do not concentrate best late at night or in the wee hours of the morning.
- **A change of place might help.** You may concentrate better if you go somewhere specifically to study, like the library or even UNBSJ. Sometimes, there are just too many distractions at home.
- **Study actively, not passively.** If you break the information down by organizing it into categories, and adapting it to your learning style, you will remember much more than if you simply read and re-read a bunch of notes. Study smarter, not harder!
- **No matter your learning style, you must learn by doing.** For example, if you are studying for a Math or Physics exam, you need to complete review questions and check your answers or re-do old assignments. Studying is not just memorizing. Teachers are most interested in whether you can *apply* what you've learned. The old cliché is true: Practice makes perfect.