

STUDY SKILLS PACKET

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Memory Principles

Below is a list of memory or learning principles with a brief definition of each.

Making an Effort to Remember

- **Interest**--In order to remember something thoroughly, you must be interested in it. You must have a reason to learn it.
- **Intent to Remember** has much to do with whether you remember something or not. A key factor to remembering is having a positive attitude that you will remember.
- **Basic Background**--Your understanding of new materials depends to a great degree on how much you already know about the subject. The more you increase your basic knowledge, the easier it is to build new knowledge on this background.

Controlling the Amount and Form

- **Selectivity**--You must determine what is most important and select those parts to study and learn.
- **Meaningful Organization**--You can learn and remember better if you can group ideas into some sort of meaningful categories or groups.

Strengthening Neural Connections

- **Recitation**--Saying ideas aloud in your own words is probably the most powerful tool you have to transfer information from short-term to long-term memory.
- **Mental Visualization**--Another powerful memory principle is making a mental picture of what needs to be remembered. By visualizing, you use an entirely different part of the brain than you did by reading or listening.
- **Association**--Memory is increased when facts to be learned are associated **with something familiar to you.**

Giving Time For Connections to Set

- **Consolidation**--Your brain must have time for new information to soak in. When you make a list or review your notes right after class, you are using the principle of consolidation.
- **Distributed Practice**--A series of shorter study sessions distributed over several days is preferable to fewer but longer study sessions.

How to Study Smarter for Tests

MULTIPLE CHOICE

- *Tests are made in multiple choice because they are easy to grade and there is no penalty for language skills or poor writing.
- *If two answers seem right, turn the two right answers into true/false questions.
- *If a question or stem is lengthy, try to read the answers or choices first.
- *When reading answers like “None of the above” or “All of the above” look for the stems to note terms that are important and be cautious of questions that are written as absolutes (i.e. never, always, etc.).

TRUE/FALSE QUESTIONS

- *If a question is true, it must have all of the parts be true.
- *Note key words in a question if statements seem true to you. The statement has to be true in all circumstances.

MATCHING COLUMNS

- *Instructors put more answers than questions in a matching column section because they don’t want you to use process of elimination to answer.
- *Answer all obvious choices first and narrow your number of options when two answers are very similar.

COMPLETIONS OR FILL-IN THE BLANKS

- *Put information required by the question only. Don’t waste time adding more to the question.
- *If you know the answer, but are not sure of the spelling, spell the word phonetically . Hopefully, the instructor will know what you mean.
- *If you remember only part of an answer, put down what you may remember. You might get partial credit.

ESSAY QUESTIONS

- *Essay questions allow students to show knowledge and skills.
- *To keep from running out of time on essay questions, make a plan, map, or diagram before you begin writing.
- *In studying for an essay test, rely on class notes, reading assignments, and any material the instructor has emphasized in the course.

TIME MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

1. What is your best time to study? Are you a “morning person” or a “night person”? Use your power times to study; use down times for errands, laundry, cleaning, other responsibilities, etc.
2. Try to study the difficult or harder courses for you first, especially when you are fresh.
3. Distribute your learning times and practice it. You can do this by studying in time blocks with short breaks between. The brain may still be processing the information while you are taking a break.
4. Have an environment that is conducive to studying and reduce distractions which can waste time.
5. Have balance in your life that allows you responsible time to study and have responsible time for a social life.
6. You need effective time management to eat and sleep properly.
7. You can combine activities at times; for example, bring notes or flash cards to study while waiting in a doctor’s office, or waiting for a friend or bus to pick you up, or laundry to be done, or on a walk.
8. Plan Ahead! Allow extra time for main tests and projects. Review practice problems or information from a class within one hour, one day, one week, one month. Don’t leave it to the night before to study or do a project.

Taking an Objective Test

Objective tests include those with multiple-choice, true/false or matching questions. Use the following suggestions to help you take an objective test:

1. Before you start taking the test, preview the entire test. Survey to find how many questions there are and of what type. Set a time limit so that you will have at least five minutes at the end to recheck your test.
2. Read the directions, carefully, making sure you understand exactly what is expected.
3. Find out if you are penalized for guessing. If not, always guess and do not leave any unanswered questions.
4. Carefully read each question; underline key words.
5. Anticipate the answer and look for it. Read all the alternatives before answering.
6. Do not read into questions what is not there.
7. When your anticipated answer is not one of the options, discard it and systematically concentrate on the given ones.
8. When two or more options look correct, compare them with each other. Study them to find what makes them different. Choose the more encompassing option unless the question requires a specific answer.
9. Pass over the difficult or debatable questions on your first reading and come back to them after completing those about which you were sure.
10. Use information from other questions.
11. In all questions, especially the true-false type, look for specific determiners. Words such as “rarely,” “usually,” “sometimes,” and “seldom” allow for exceptions; “never,” “always,” “no,” and “all” indicate no exceptions.
12. Mark statements true only if they are true without exception. If any part of the statement is false, the whole statement is marked as such.
13. Stay in one column of a matching test. Usually it will be the column with the definition. Work backward to find the word or symbol that matches it. Be sure to find out if the answers can be used more than once.
14. If you know you made an error, change your first answer. If it is just a guess, keep your first impression.

Things to do Before the Test

Studying for Exams

What to know before you start to study:

1. What type of test is it?
 - a. Objective – multiple choice, true/false, matching or a combination
 - b. Essay – short or long answer, or sentence completion
 - c. Problem solving
 - d. Combination of the above
2. What material is to be covered?
3. How many questions (approximately)?
4. What is the time limit?

If the information above is not given by the instructor when he/she announces the test, ASK. This information is valuable to the way you study.

STUDYING

1. Be sure you have read all the material to be covered and all the lecture notes before you begin your serious studying.
2. Plan what you will study and when you will study it.
3. Each review session should be limited to one hour. Take breaks of five to ten minutes between hourly sessions.
4. Try to predict exam questions. If it will be essay, try to answer your predicted questions.
5. Study in a *group* only if everyone has read the material. You do not gain much when you must “tutor” someone else or if other students are not prepared.
6. Prepare summary sheets to study and eliminate rereading the textbook.
7. Review for objective tests by concentrating on detail and memorizing facts, such as names, dates, formulas and definitions.
8. Review for essay tests by concentrating on concepts, principles, theories and relationships.
9. For problem-solving tests, work examples of each type of problem. Work them from memory until you get stuck. Study your guide problem and begin working it again from memory, from the beginning. Do this until you can work the entire problem without referring to your notes.
10. On the day of the test, do not learn any new materials. It can interfere with the knowledge you have already learned.
11. Try not to discuss the test with other students while you are waiting to begin. If you have studied, you do not need to be flustered by others making confusing remarks.
12. Try to consciously make yourself relax before the test begins.
13. After the test is over, forget it! Do not discuss it and do not look for answers you might have missed. Concentrate on your next exam.
14. Keep in good physical condition by not ignoring food and/or sleep requirements.

SENSORY STUDY TIPS



AUDITORY LEARNERS

- *Explain the material to someone else, as if you were the tutor.
- *Read explanations out loud.
- *Make up a song using the subject material. The 'crazier' the better.
- *Review audio tapes while you drive.
- *When learning new information, state the problem out loud. Reason through solutions out loud.
- *Say words in syllables.
- *Make up and repeat rhymes to remember facts, dates, names, etc.
- *Go over all important facts aloud.
- *Join or create study group, or to get a study partner.
- *Learn a sequence of steps, write them out in sentence form, then read them out loud.
- *Use mnemonics and word links.
- *Discuss the material with someone else.



VISUAL LEARNERS

- *Take notes
- *Write questions and answers on paper or on the blackboard.
- *Use color-coded highlighting.
- *Use graph paper to help create charts and diagrams that demonstrate key points.
- *Use mnemonics, acronyms, visual chains, and mind maps.
- *Use the computer to organize materials and to create graphs, tables, charts, and spreadsheets.
- *Organize the material.
- *Use visual analogies. Use photographs.
- *Use visual metaphors.
- *To explain something, try writing the explanation down.
- *Make flashcards. The act of writing the cards and viewing them doubles their comprehension.
- *Visualize the scene, formula, words, charts, etc.
- *Use illustrations.

Sensory Study Tips (continued)



TACTILE/KINESTHETIC LEARNERS

- *Pick up the book as you are reading or talking
- *Write while you are reading or talking
- *Sit near the front of your classroom to take notes. This will keep you focused.
- *Spend extra time in any labs offered.
- *Use the computer to reinforce learning using your sense of touch.
- *Write with your fingers in sand.
- *Write lists repeatedly.
- *Exaggerate lip movements in front of a mirror.
- *Stand while explaining something.
- *Use rhythm (beats) to memorize or explain something.
- *As you explain something, point to the subject matter in the book, on the board, etc., while reading it out loud.
- *Use gestures when giving explanations.
- *Make models that demonstrate the key concepts.
- *Use hands-on experience when possible.
- *Make flashcards for each step in the procedure. Put the cards in order until the sequence becomes automatic.
- *Use audio tapes from classes. Play them while you walk or exercise.
- *Stretch and move in the chairs.