

Preparing for College Tests and Exams

The study techniques you use in high school might be good ones, or they might not. The difference when you're in college will be that you're on your own with no-one looking over your shoulder to make sure you're studying. It's up to you.

Here are some tips that will help Sr High students and beginning college students. Students who do well do these things.

1. Plan your review

Be organised. Make a realistic plan you can stick to, daily. Start early ... weeks before, not the night before.

2. Be Realistic

Don't try to review for more than an hour at a stretch, per subject. Give yourself a 10 minute break, and then switch to a different subject.

3. Work with someone

Reviewing with someone helps a lot. Ask each other questions. Talk about the material.

4. Get help

It's not too late. Get help with things you still don't understand. Call someone.

5. Find a good study environment

Find a quiet place where you are comfortable. Don't start until you have everything you need, including refreshments.

6. Divide up the material

Divide the material you need to learn into logical parts. Review one part at a time.

7. Make notes

Make notes about what you are learning. Use point form, diagrams, memory maps ... whatever helps.

8. Assess your learning

Regularly test yourself on what you've been studying.

9. Don't try to memorize definitions from the textbook

Write them out in your own words. *Rewrite* them from memory.

10. Help your brain retain things

Recent research indicates that your brain *isn't* like a sponge, soaking up whatever you try to pour into it. Rather, it's like a sieve; it filters much of what you see, hear or read, and only retains what is important.

You can make things 'important' to your brain by 'flagging' them:

- use repetition
- say or read things out loud
- rephrase things
- look for connections between things
- look for an order to things
- sing things to popular tunes (really!)
- use highlighters to colour code your review notes

11. Get lots of sleep

This one is worth repeating. Get lots of sleep. Especially the night before the exam. Get lots of sleep.

12. Use practice exams

If you can't find any, ask someone who knows the material to *make* you a practice exam.