

Mr. Kersey's Guide to How to Study for Final Exams

Finals week can be the most stressful time for a student. Ensure you're prepared for your exams with these study tips, which can help you conquer your finals.

Follow this list as finals week approaches (the earlier you prep, the better) so you can ace your exams from start to finish:

1. Create your own study guide.

While many teachers provide a study guide, creating your own can help you understand the material better. Outlining the important information you need to learn can be helpful, both in creation and to refer to during your studies.

2. Ask questions.

Your teachers are there to help! Ask them questions regarding the material and the exam so that you're prepared when exam time arrives.

3. Attend the review session.

Review sessions offer vital information on exam format, what will be on the exam and key concepts you should be focusing your studies on.

4. Start early.

If you always start ahead of schedule, you'll never be cramming the night before an exam. You'll almost always perform better in doing so!

5. Organize a group study session.

It can be helpful to study in groups – sometimes. Evaluate whether or not studying with others will be beneficial to the subject as well as your learning process. If you're very social, it might be better to study on your own.

6. Study things not on the study guide.

Study guides aren't always comprehensive – they're just suggestions of the main concepts to learn. Use your study guide for its intended purpose: a guide. Be sure to fill in the blanks with related information.

7. Take breaks.

You won't be able to memorize or comprehend all the material at once. Balance is key – ensure that you reward learning with break times to recharge and relax.

8. Stay well-rested.

There's a lot to be said about a good night's sleep. Make sure you're well-rested, especially during finals week, so that you can be fully focused during your exams.

9. Create a study schedule – and follow it.

Splitting the material into chunks you can actually achieve can be very beneficial. That way, you can keep track of what you've accomplished instead of looking at the big picture and getting overwhelmed.

10. Prioritize your study time.

Some exams will be more difficult than others, some you may find easier to study for. Some may be worth more of your grade than others. Make sure to evaluate all of your exams to consider and determine all of the involved factors so you can study accordingly.

11. Study for the style of exam.

If it's multiple choice, you'll need to know definitions, people, events, and concepts. For essay exams, focus on your understanding of all the concepts presented, with examples in mind.

12. Quiz yourself.

If you think about and create actual exam questions, you will likely become more familiar with what you need to study and, in the meantime, familiarize yourself with the type of language that will be on the exam. Draft potential exam questions and quiz yourself so that you can set expectations of what you need to focus on.

13. Meet with your teacher.

Often times, meeting with an instructor can give you helpful hints for what to study and ways to prepare for the exam.

14. Reorganize your notes.

Evaluate and reorganize your notes into what's important, outlining important concepts, formulas, dates and definitions so they're easy to understand.

15. Pace yourself.

Make sure you stay focused and don't burn yourself out. You can easily pace yourself by following tips like starting early, creating a study schedule and taking breaks when necessary!

16. Teach classmates.

Learning by teaching is a method that really works! If you work with a study buddy and explain concepts to one another, you're re-learning the material all over again. It's a great way to reinforce what you've learned and help someone in the meantime!

17. Revolve your focus.

Switching up your subjects is a helpful way to learn everything for your exams while preventing burnout on one topic. Make sure to switch it up before your eyes glaze over! That way, you can keep studying for longer periods of time while maintaining your focus.

18. Color code it.

Create a system that allows you to color code material that's going to be on the exam by what's most important, less important, etc. This will help you focus on the most pertinent information and prioritize the material.

19. Visualize.

If you're a visual learner, it can help to create mind maps or diagrams to visualize how the concepts you're learning relate to one another. This is especially beneficial when learning concepts that build upon the understanding of one another, like in science courses.

20. Make it fun.

It's easier to focus if you adapt to studying by quizzing yourself, creating acronyms or rewarding yourself for a job well done. Create a game plan – literally – that allows you to accomplish tasks and be rewarded for each.

For example, why not reward yourself with a piece of chocolate or a sip of your soda after you've accomplished a new chapter or allow yourself five minutes of free time for every chunk of material you digest?

You can even add in fun factors like power-ups every time you learn a new definition and lose a life, which means you add another definition to your list, when you get an answer wrong!

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