

Five-Day Exam Preparation Strategy

Most students learn more if they follow a long-term plan for review before an exam. Below is a five-day plan for exam preparation. Each day is devoted to specific activities. You may need to increase the time necessary to review each day. If so, do not schedule more than 20-30 minutes each session.

Before beginning the five-day countdown, you should:

1. Collect all materials needed to review.
This includes textbooks, class notes, handouts, study guides, 3x5 cards – anything and everything pertaining to the information to be included on the test.
2. Schedule at least three 20-30 minute review sessions for each of the five days preceding the exam.
3. Plan the content of each review session. What materials will you cover? How long to spend on each part? What method will you use to review the material?
4. Make a calendar with specific times, activities, subject matter to be covered and materials needed.

Day 5 – Reading assignments:

1. Set a timer or alarm clock for 20-30 minutes so you can work without interruption. Schedule a 5-10 minute break between each study session.
2. Reading must be completed on this day because time is scheduled for other review activities on the following days.

Day 4 – Textbook material: This includes reviewing textbook questions and answers, textbook notes and instructor-made study guides.

1. Set a timer or alarm clock for 20-30 minutes. Schedule a 5-10 minute break between each review session.
2. Review all textbook reading material using a textbook mastery review technique.
3. Review questions at the end of the chapters.
4. Review each instructor-made study guide.

Day 3 – Vocabulary:

1. Set a timer or alarm clock for 20-30 minutes. Schedule a 5-10 minute break between each review session.
2. Study the vocabulary words systematically, using either a self-made glossary or 3x5 cards. Try to recall the definition by looking at the word and then try to recall the word by looking at the definition. Do not study the words in the same order each time.
3. Be sure you can give the definition, recall the term from the definition, spell the word correctly and give an example of each term. This is important.

Day 2 – Lecture notes:

1. Set a timer or alarm clock for 20-30 minutes. Schedule a 5-10 minute break between each review session.
2. Review all lecture notes and handouts.
3. Make outlines or use mapping techniques to organize material.

Day 1 – Problem areas/Review: Concentrate on areas that have been a problem for you.

1. Set a timer or alarm clock for 20-30 minutes. Schedule a 5-10 minute break between each review session.
2. Review and concentrate on “Trouble” areas of past 4 days:
 - a. All lecture notes
 - b. All textbook notes
 - c. All instructor-made handouts and/or study guides
 - d. All vocabulary words
3. Plan to complete these activities early so the evening before the exam is free for relaxation.

At this point you should feel confident that you are prepared for the exam. Relax and prepare your test-taking procedures. Sometimes a last-minute review before bedtime can make you feel more confident.