

How to Be a STRONGER STUDENT: How to Study for Midterms

Presented by
The Collegiate Science &
Technology Entrance Program

Outline

- Test Preparation
- Question Formats
- Testing Strategies & Study Skills
- Reducing Test Anxiety
- Some Final Tips

Test Preparation: Know What You're In For

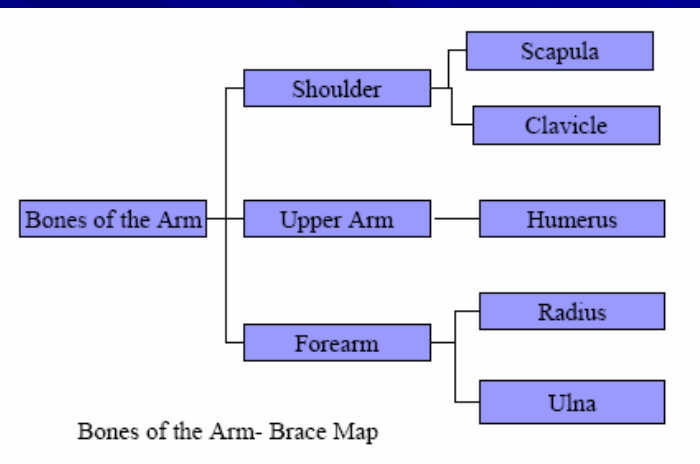
- Talk to the Professor
 - What will be the format of the exam?
 - What type of questions will there be (e.g., short answer, multiple choice, etc.)?
 - How many sections will there be on the exam?
 - How many points will each section be worth?
 - What material from class and assignments be covered in the exam?
 - Do you have any suggestion on how I should study?
- Try to Find Exams on the Same (or Similar Courses)
- Try to Find People who took the same course and/or professor
- Listen for Clues
- Create & Implement a Plan of Action (a.k.a. A Study Schedule)



Test Preparation: Create a Master List

1. **KEY TERMS:** Create a master list of key terms from your notes by writing down any names, dates, concepts, or ideas that are central to the course w/ brief definitions
2. **GENERAL THEMES:** Create a master list of general themes
3. **RELATED CONCEPTS:** Create a master list of related concepts by identifying groups of concepts that relate closely to one another and give it a subject heading

- **Baseline** – A standard against which future status, progress, and changes are compared and measured. Most plans developed during the planning phase are used as baselines. The budget usually serves as one baseline, the schedule as another, etc.
- **Communications Plan** – A document that defines the lines, content, method, and frequency of communications between the project manager, members of the project team, stakeholders, and management.
- **Critical Path** – The sequence or chain of interdependent activities in the project that takes the longest time to complete. This sequence determines the shortest schedule for the project. Any delay in a critical path activity increases the project schedule.
- **Life Cycle** – The complete set of phases something goes through, beginning with its conception and ending with its retirement from service.
- **Process** – A series of related activities or steps that accomplish a specific purpose.
- **Project Charter** – Document that announces the project by name, states its purpose, identifies the project manager, and announces his or her authority.
- **Project Manager (PM)** – Individual with responsibility and authority for directing the project.
- **Project Statement of Work (PSOW)** – Document that defines the goals, scope, and constraints of the project. It states what needs to be done, not how to do it.
- **Responsibility Matrix** – Document that identifies members of the project team and defines their roles.
- **Stakeholders** – Those persons and organizations that have an interest in the performance and completion of the project. The customer or user of a product created through a project is usually a primary stakeholder.
- **Statement of Work (SOW)** – A contractual document that defines the work to be performed for a specific project under contract.
- **Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)** – A breakdown of the project into its constituent tasks or activities. It lists the specific work needed to complete all aspects of the project.



General Themes & Related Concepts

General Theme

- Events and causes (that lead up to them)
- Rules and exceptions
- Similar ideas, concepts, theories, and examples
- Opposite or dissimilar ideas, concepts, theories, and examples
- Chronologies/datelines
- Causes and effects

Reasons for Increased Pessimism in the 14th & 15th Centuries

- Weak kings (Edward II, Richard II) whose power was threatened by the barons
- One Hundred Years' War
- The Black Plague (1348)
- Skepticism in the church (after sale of pardons is sanctioned)

QUESTION FORMATS

Two Primary Question Formats:

1. Short Answer
 - A. Multiple-choice
 - B. Binary-choice (e.g. True/False)
 - C. Fill in the Blank
2. Essay



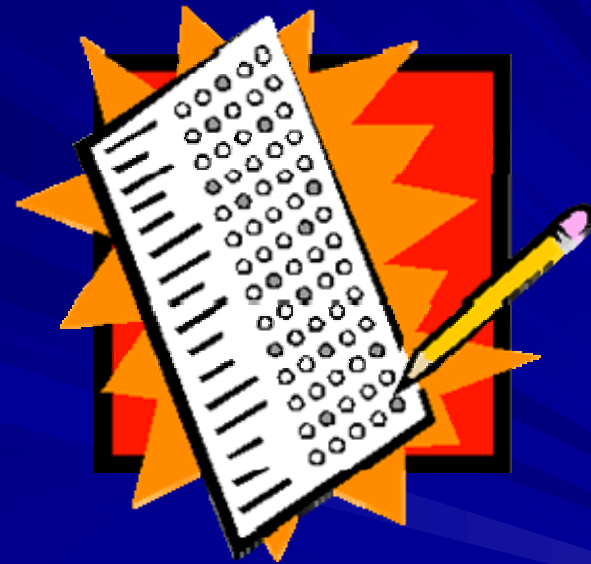
QUESTION FORMATS: SHORT ANSWER

These questions are specifically designed to test your factual knowledge, to see if you know about something of significance or the *meaning of a particular term*. Either you know the answer or you don't!



Strategies for Multiple Choice Questions

- Read the test items carefully and completely
- Strike out wrong answers by process of elimination
- Mark answers clearly and consistently.
- Change your answers cautiously
- Guess
- Look for cues in the question or other questions.



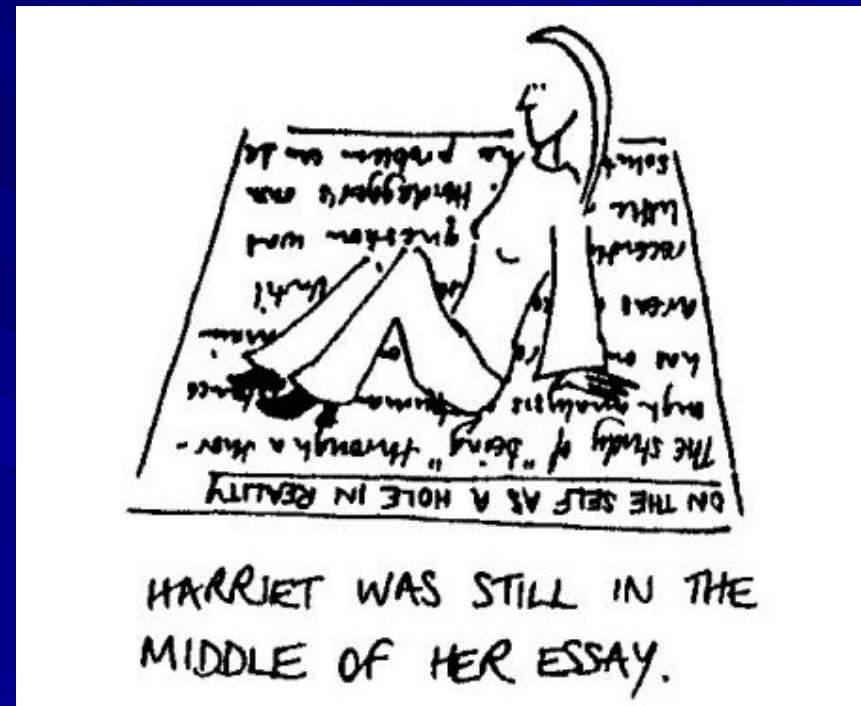
QUESTION FORMAT: ESSAY

The primary goal in answering essay questions is to demonstrate to the professor your knowledge and mastery of the subject matter. The more key terms you weave into the essay the better!



Strategies for Essay Questions

- Anticipate essay questions
- Read carefully
- Analyze the question
- Map your ideas
- Create an outline
- Reflect the question in opening sentence
- Write like a reporter (5Ws)
- Don't bluff
- Write legibly
- Proofread
- Budget your time!



Learning Styles & Testing Strategies

Visual

- Recall position of information on the note pages
- Draw out diagrams or concept maps before starting test
- Practice turning visuals into test questions or vice versa



Learning Styles & Testing Strategies

Auditory

- Speak answer to yourself (quietly!)
- Spend time in a quiet place recalling answers
- Use ear plugs



Learning Styles & Testing Strategies

■ Read/Write

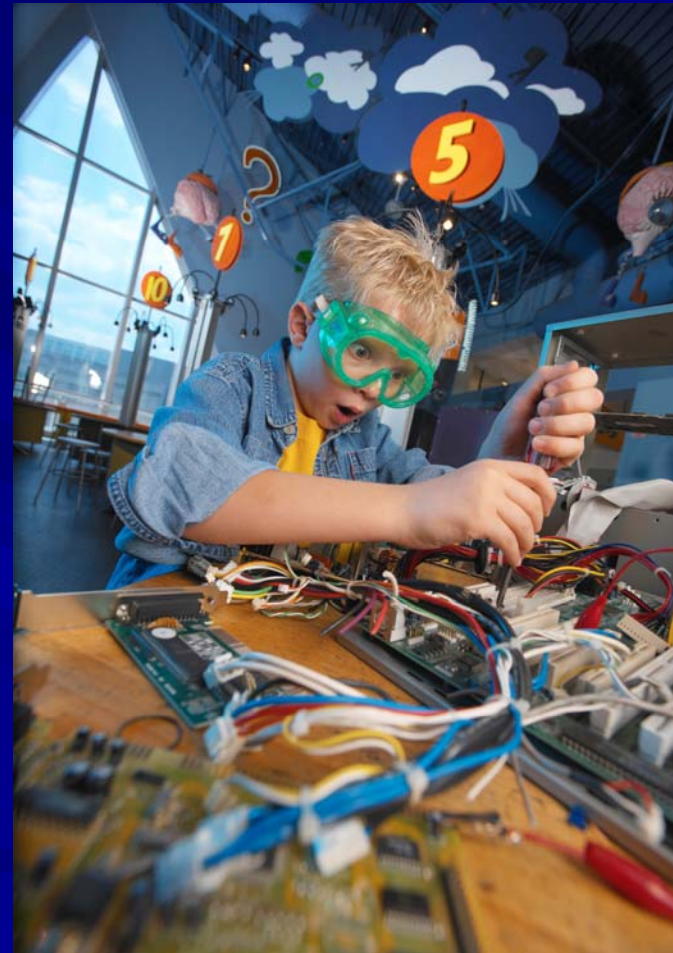
- Write out lists/formulas before starting exam
- Write out key terms & concepts
- Write out exam answers as fill-in the blank
- Use practice test questions



Learning Styles & Testing Strategies

Kinesthetic

- Role play the exam situation
- Use your hands/body to imitate what you are trying to recall
- Get exercise the night before the exam
- Bring a stress ball to the exam



So Remember...

Use Your Study Skills!

- Take practice test
- Use textbooks and notes to predict exam questions
- Use Study Aids
- Create test-like conditions
- Create flashcards
- Create mnemonic devices
- Record your notes & listen to them on an MP3
- Create study checklists
- **Make A Master List!**



Reducing Test Anxiety

■ Plan

- What you will need to study
- When you will study
- To study the material over several days

■ You should

- Know what to expect
- Match your study to the test format & your learning style
- Size up the professor
- Get an idea of what's on the test



Reducing Test Anxiety: Do's & Don'ts

■ Don't

- Over-study
- Study up to the last minute
- Wait until the day before the test to ask for or seek help



■ Do

- Get enough sleep
- Eat a starch or fruit
- Get there early
- Bring extras
- Bring a watch
- Take a deep breath
- Positive Self-talk
- Pace yourself
- Answer each question
- Avoid drug use!

Reducing Test Anxiety

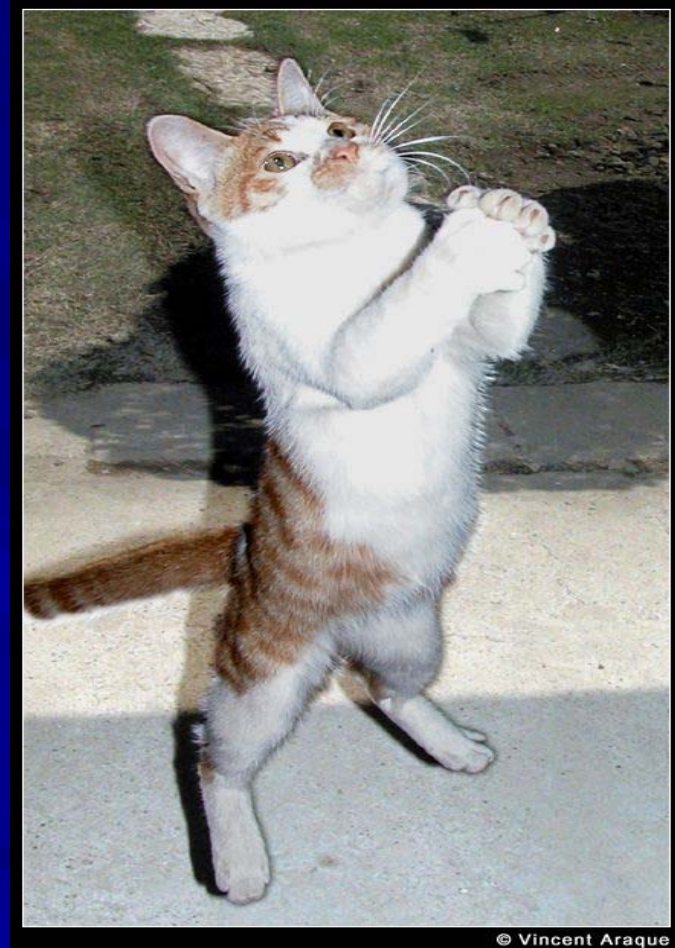
“FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL. DO NOT FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN NOT CONTROL.”

Reducing Test Anxiety

Concentrate on what you can control, not on what you can't. You can't control what will be on the test, but, you can control your level of preparation for the test and how alert you are so you can use what you know.

Reducing Test Anxiety: USELESS STATEMENTS

- I HOPE I PASS
- I PRAY THAT I PASS
- I CAN'T DO THIS
- THIS IS HARD



© Vincent Araque

“I HOPE I PASS” or “I PRAY I PASS”

Why they are useless...

- YOU'RE TELLING YOURSELF YOU DON'T EXPECT TO PASS UNLESS SOMETHING MAGIC HAPPENS
- YOU CAN'T CONTROL WHETHER YOU PASS. YOU CAN CONTROL WHAT YOU KNOW AND ANSWER

“I CAN'T DO THIS”

Why they're useless...

- IF YOU TELL YOURSELF YOU WILL FAIL, YOU WILL BELIEVE YOURSELF AND FAIL.

“THIS IS HARD”

Why they're useless...

- IT'S A DEAD END STATEMENT. IT REALLY MEANS YOU'RE GIVING UP.

“I HOPE I PASS” or “I PRAY I PASS”

What can I say instead?

- WHAT CAN I DO THAT WILL HELP ME DO WELL? (THEN DO THOSE THINGS!)

“I CAN'T DO THIS”

What can I say instead?

- LET ME FIND ANY PART OF THIS I CAN DO

“THIS IS HARD”

What can I say instead?

- THIS IS A CHALLENGE. I HAVE TO USE MY ABILITY TO FIGURE IT OUT.

**“FOCUS ON WHAT
YOU CAN CONTROL.
DO NOT FOCUS ON
WHAT YOU CAN NOT
CONTROL.”**

SOME FINAL TIPS:

Good Test Preparation Begins from the First Day of Class

- GO TO CLASS!
- Keep up with reading assignments, and pay attention during class (e.g., ask questions, take good notes, get enough rest)
- Use Study Skills consistently throughout the semester
- Break up what will be on the test into study sessions you can spread out a couple of weeks before the test

SOME FINAL TIPS: Day Before the Test

- Go over JUST the materials you aren't sure of [not what you already know...]
- Only review the night before and make sure you get a good night's sleep.
- Gather materials for test
- Do something non-academic and that soothes you in a HEALTHY WAY (e.g., TV, exercise, meditate, stress-reduction techniques, etc.).
- Get enough sleep & eat right
- Try going to bed early to get up early to review and get to the test on time

SOME FINAL TIPS: During the Test

- READ INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY
- READ ALL YOUR CHOICES CAREFULLY
- IF YOU DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER TO A QUESTION MOVE ON TO THOSE YOU KNOW AND GO BACK TO THE HARD QUESTIONS LATER IF YOU HAVE TIME
- REVIEW YOUR QUESTIONS IF YOU HAVE TIME
- STAY WITH YOUR FIRST ANSWER IF YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW WHICH IS RIGHT
- IF YOU DON'T KNOW AN ANSWER, GUESS!