

Studying for Multiple Choice Exams

How to study:

- 1) Study actively.
 - * Work with your material
 - Create visual images – for example: a neuron becomes a “tree”; label branches, trunk, bark, roots...
 - Create rhymes, acronyms, nonsense sentences
 - May I have a container of coffee thank you? = 3.14192653/Pi where the number of letters in each word correlates to the number Pi to be remembered.
 - Underline key words in one colour, definitions in another colour...
 - Be dramatic, read aloud, move while learning, re-enact scene
 - Make a diagram, chart or map to show relationship/compare related materials
 - Create questions
 - Be clear on what differentiates similar vocabulary, concepts, events, etc.

- 2) Study in the manner that the test will be given – Multiple choice requires the active retrieval of information.
 - * After reading a section of notes or text (about 3 pages), close the book and write down the key points on a scrap paper – motivate yourself by forcing yourself to repeat the exercise if you can't recall the key points – don't move on until you know the material.
 - * On a multiple choice test you must discriminate between answer “foils” that usually come from the same section of the text – try to think of some of these for yourself.

- 3) Spaced practice is better than massed practice.
 - * Review, review, review – 10 minutes for every hour of new material/day; 5 minutes for every hour of new material/week; 2 – 4 minutes for every hour of new material/month. After one month, you will remember about 80% of the information as opposed to only 30 % of the information with no review.
 - * Research shows that studying that is spaced over a few weeks is much more effective than the same amount of studying right before an exam.
 - * A short study period is also more effective than an extended period. For example, it is most effective to study very hard for 20-25 minutes and take a 5 reward (snack, exercise, short phone call). Use a timer. After 3 consecutive sessions – take a 15 minute break.

- 4) Study alone
 - * Begin study sessions with a quick review
 - * Review your notes and the text – make flashcards, create questions, etc.
 - * End studying with a quick review of what you learned

- 5) Study with a buddy/small group – when you're confident of your learning
 - * Ask each other the questions you've created
 - * This is effective because:

- It allows others to choose material you may have missed, exposing gaps in your knowledge
 - It enables you to estimate your learning – if you can answer 80% of the questions, you will probably know 80% of the answers on the test
- 6) Review old exams (this can be done at school)
- * Try to figure out the logic behind the questions
 - * Mark any questions that you know, ones you changed, guessed on, misunderstood and figure out why you chose something other than the correct answer.

How to create/predict test questions:

- 1) Think of the major concepts
 - * What concepts seem most important?
 - * Do some concepts fit under other main concepts?
 - * Where did your teacher spend most of the time?
 - * Which concepts have the largest space in the test?
 - * Listen to your teacher for clues:
 - “This is important, significant...”
 - “There are 4 reasons for the...”
 - “This is an example of...”
 - Teacher repeats information
- 2) Try to think like a tester and pick out possible multiple choice questions as you read/study
- 3) Create your questions the same way as you will be tested
- 4) Try to create a few questions after each day/study period
- 5) Share the study questions with your friends; between all of you, you will have created a large bank of questions to study from.

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