

Study to Answer the Exam Questions

Approaching your studying in an organized way can improve your efficiency in learning and remembering to that you are ready when exam times comes.

Identify Key Concepts

You need to know what you need to know!

- Survey the text and identify the content of: headings, sub-headings, bold-face/italic type, key terms list, summary, conclusions, reading/learning goals and repeated material.
- Look for thesis statements and / or statements of how X proves the thesis.
- Determine the information types in the text such as describe/define which looks at form and function or compare/contrast which focuses on the similarities and differences.
- Take Cornell style notes with key terms in the margins so that information makes sense to you.
- When making or reviewing notes from text or from class, look for outline topics or titles or refer to your syllabus for week topics.

Process Key Concepts with Supporting Information

Once you have picked out the key concepts you need to work with them to process and articulate what they mean to you.

- Elaborate the core ideas with some reference to those things which relate to the definition, explanation, comparison, or critique of a concept, idea, theory, or term.
- Identify how the key concepts relate to each other, to ideas from previous classes, and to themes of the course.
- When reading, use chapter outlines or objectives as organizing guidelines and look for relationships between and among items in the outline or objectives.
- Review your notes to fill in any missing ideas and deciphering unclear information as soon as possible so you gain a more thorough understanding of course materials.

Create Questions Based on the Key Concepts

Now, generate a series of questions which will help you practise your learning recall as if you are answering questions on an open book exam. This is practise in considering different aspects of the material you are learning and writing out answers and elaborating on them in relation to the course.

When answering these questions, you might work alone or you may want to work in a small study group where you have the opportunity to gather input from your peers or record you voice and listen to see if you have all the concepts. Go beyond simply repeating the words of the text or from your instructor. By expressing information aloud in your own words or in writing as if you were in an exam, you provide yourself with a way of seeing if you truly understand and remember the material.

Analyze Key Concepts as you think your Instructor might

Imagine you are the instructor and think about the hardest questions you think might come up on your exam. Practise answering these questions using your notes and text and writing out the answers fully. As you answer the questions, try to integrate information from various sources and express ideas in your own words. This will help prepare you for your exams in thorough and deep ways.