

**HOW TO TAKE NOTES, STUDY  
EFFECTIVELY AND IMPROVE  
PERFORMANCE ON EXAMS**

AN INFORMATIVE GUIDE!

**FOLLOW THIS GUIDE TO HELP IMPROVE  
YOUR SUCCESS IN SCHOOL!**

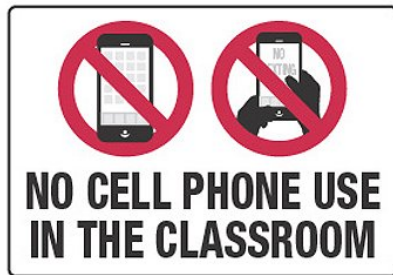


# THE BASICS! YOU WILL LEARN HOW TO:

- Take effective notes during class
- Study more effectively outside of class
- Improve your reading comprehension
- Memorize material more effectively
- Reduce test anxiety
- Improve performance on written and computer-based exams

# TAKING NOTES

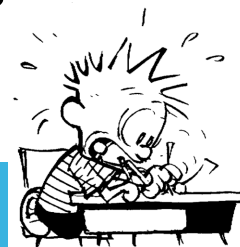
- **Effective note taking begins with effective listening!**
  - Attend class regularly – if you're not in class, you're missing the information
  - Sit near the front of the class to minimize distractions
  - Put your phone away – focus on the material
  - Have the right supplies to take notes and label them
  - Read the material for lecture at least one day prior so you are familiar with the material before it's presented to you in class



# IN CLASS

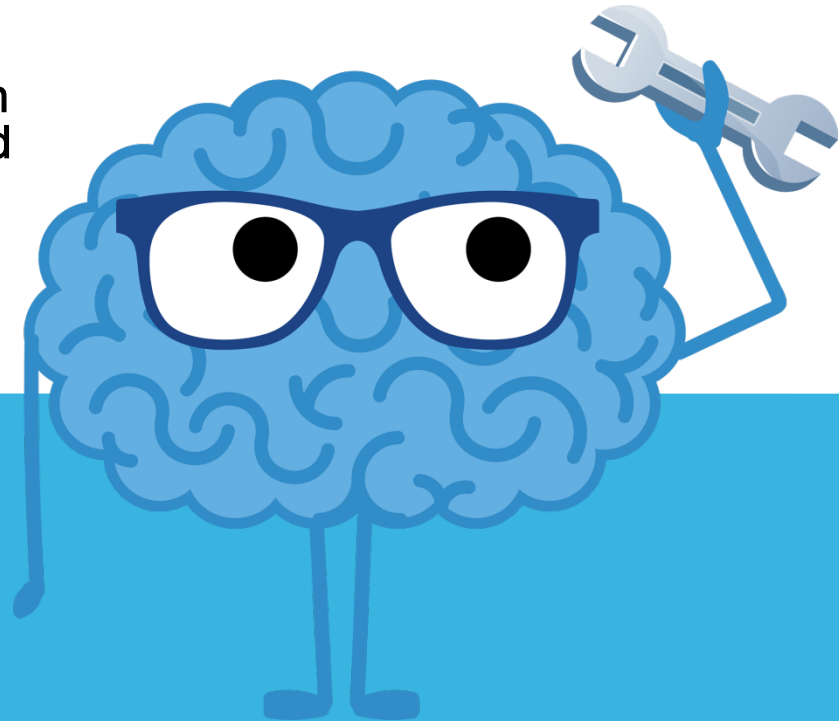


- Don't write down everything the instructor says!
- Focus on key terms
- If your instructor writes something on the board, be sure to add it to your notes because it's **IMPORTANT!**
- Focus on phrases the instructor says like "The most important . . ." or "Things to remember . . ." – these are things you should put in your notes
- Make a rough outline
- Avoid writing complete sentences
- Use signs or symbols to represent words or concepts
- Draw pictures and make charts
- Note what your instructor repeats and when he/she summarizes – these are things you should put in your notes
- Mark items you don't understand and look these concepts up later or ask your instructor for help



# OUTSIDE OF CLASS

- After class is over, go over your notes from class and fill in any gaps
- Make a rough outline from your notes – use key terms as headers and group items together to see how they relate
- Go back to items you have marked that you don't understand and clarify them – don't just ignore them and hope they won't be on the exam!
- Rewrite your notes
- Go to other sources to find the answers you need – take responsibility for your own education!
- Save your old notes – you never know when you will need them again – **CREDENTIALING EXAM!!!!**



# READING TECHNIQUES

In order to read effectively, you must read actively!

- Know what the topic is and why you're learning it
- Make a rough outline as you read
- Watch for key terms and write down brief definitions
- Note general themes
- Utilize the objectives at the beginning of the chapter or your syllabus to help guide you
- Make note of items that you do not understand fully and clarify them – you may need to go to other sources for this
  - Try youtube, Google Scholar, ask your instructor, etc.



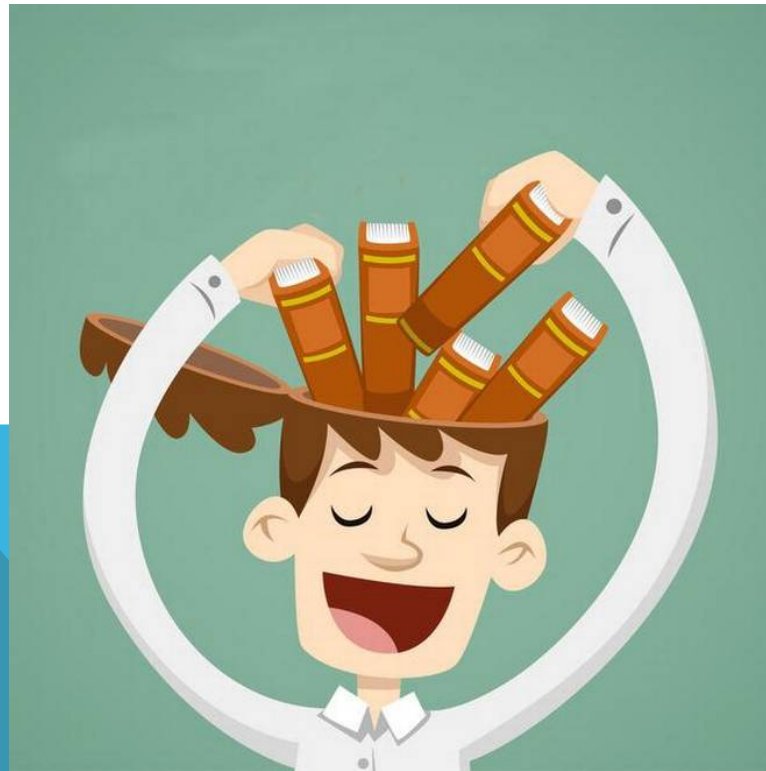
**The more that you read,  
the more things you will know.**

**The more that you learn,  
the more places you'll Go !!**

**-- Dr. Seuss**

**REVIEW, REVIEW, REVIEW!!!**

**Check old notes for understanding  
and try to connect them with  
what you're learning now!**





# BE A SELECTIVE READER!

- Read introductions, conclusions and summary paragraphs
- Read first lines and last lines of paragraphs
- Look at illustrations, diagrams, charts, pictures, etc.
- Read all words and phrases that are **bold** or *italicized*
- Ask for help when needed – ask classmates, your instructor or seek out other resources



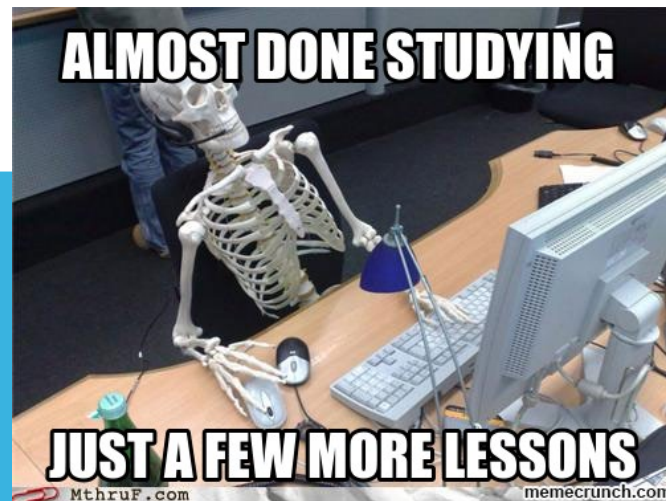
# STUDY TIPS!

- Be willing to invest time and effort!!! You can't learn everything just by attending your classes.
- Don't procrastinate – STUDY EVERY DAY!
- Make a study schedule – take in to account the number of exams you have to take and how much time you have to devote to each one
  - Begin studying 5 to 7 days prior to an exam
  - If you are studying for multiple exams, only study one subject at a time and break for at least an hour before moving on to another subject
  - Include some down-time in your study schedule!
  - Get enough rest and eat well leading up to your exams



# CREATE AN EFFECTIVE STUDY SPACE!

- Minimize outside distractions
- Consider designating different places for different study tasks
- Stay focused
- **Stay awake!**
  - Get enough sleep but not too much
  - Exercise regularly
  - If you tend to fall asleep while studying, set an alarm to wake you up
  - Take breaks
  - Stay actively involved when reading – take notes, talk out loud, etc.
  - Don't get too comfortable!



# STUDY TIPS CONTINUED!

- Review all of your notes for the subject material start to finish without interruption
- Learn general concepts first – don't worry about smaller details until you have the main concepts mastered
- Create 3 **master lists** from your notes and quiz yourself on them:
  - One list for key terms
  - One list for key themes
  - One list for related concepts

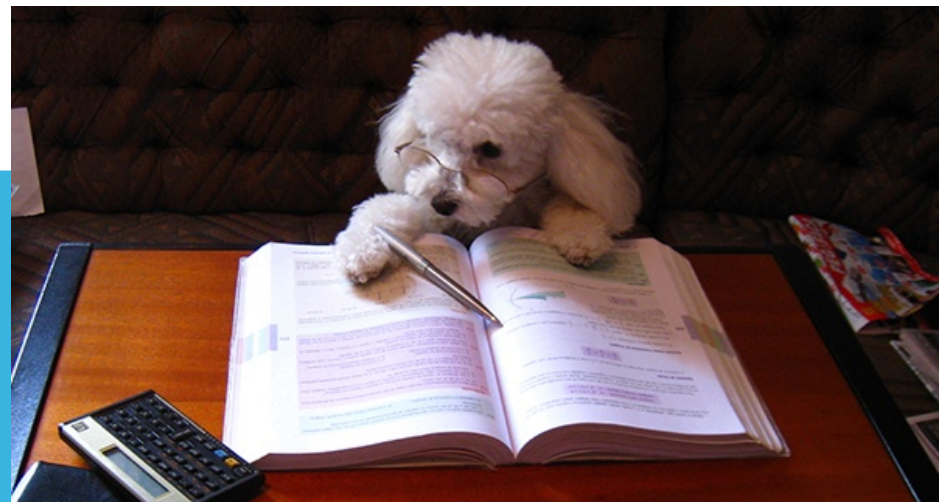


# EVEN MORE STUDY TIPS!

- Attend review or tutoring sessions
- Learn from your mistakes – gather questions you got incorrect on previous exams, quizzes or homeworks and ensure you completely understand them before moving on



- **Stay organized**
  - Keep all of your assignments and due dates on a calendar
  - Set alarms on your phone or computer to remind you of upcoming assignments or exams
  - Keep notes organized and labeled
  - Break larger projects in to smaller, more manageable pieces



# FLASH CARDS

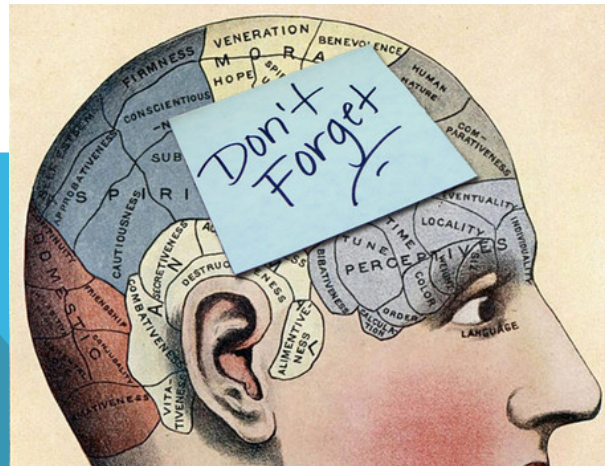
- Helpful when you need to remember a lot of key terms
- Write a term on one side and the definition on the other



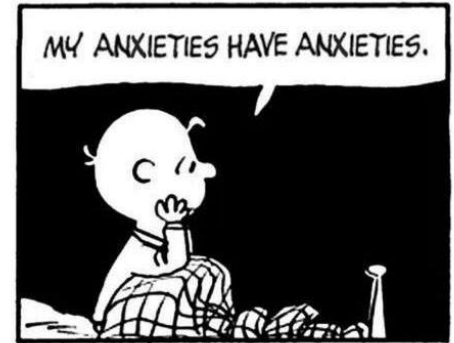
- Quiz yourself by looking at the terms and testing yourself on the definitions AND by looking at the definitions and testing yourself on the terms
- Quiz yourself often, shuffle the cards, eliminate the cards you know well, study them until you know the answers without hesitation

# MEMORIZATION TECHNIQUES: MNEMONIC DEVICES, ETC.

- **Rhymes** – find words that rhyme with terms you need to know and write a short phrase to connect the two together – **example: use a mnemonic device so you don't forget it twice**
- **Alliteration (two or more words that begin with the same letter or sound)** – take the key terms you need to learn and find a word beginning with the same sound that will trigger information about the term – **example: plethora (which means many) & plenty**
- **Mental associations** – think of a word or image you associate with both the term and its definition
- **Visualizations** – its easier to remember pictures than words, create a picture in your mind about what you're studying
- **Acronyms** – words formed by taking the first letter from several words in a series
- **Repeated exposure** – the more times you expose yourself to the material, the more it becomes imbedded in long-term memory
- **Sleep!** – studies have shown that you are more likely to remember something if you read it right before going to sleep



# REDUCING TEST ANXIETY



- Have a well-thought out plan for the exam, have a strategy in mind
- Put the experience in perspective – remember the big picture, one exams likely represents one small portion of your grade or program and you don't have to get every question right to do well on the exam
- Remember your grade on an exam is not a reflection on you as a person and not even your intelligence and one score does not dictate how you will do on other exams
- Avoid “**alarmists**” – these are students who are completely stressed out and will try to turn their panic on others – they can shake your confidence but don't let them!
- Be wary of rumors! Most of what you hear about the difficulty of upcoming exams are just rumors – Consider your sources!
- Take breathers – give yourself breaks, put your pencil down for a second and just breathe or practice relaxation techniques





# TEST TAKING TIPS

## The morning of the exam

- Talk to yourself about some of the key terms and general themes you have been studying
- Eat a good breakfast
- Try to get to school early
- Bring your pen or pencil
- Avoid talking to other students about the test

## Once you are in class:

- Try to clear your mind and stay as relaxed as possible
- When you receive the exam, take a moment to glance over the entire exam to get an idea of how it is structured and what you will be doing
- **READ THE DIRECTIONS!!!!**

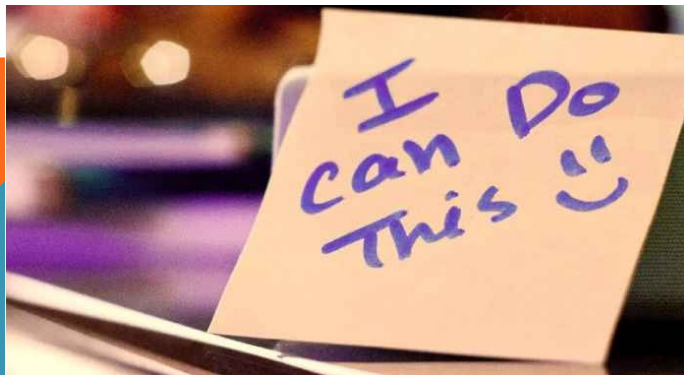


# HOW TO TACKLE EXAM QUESTIONS!!!



# FILL-IN-THE-BLANK, TRUE-OR-FALSE AND MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

- Read each question carefully – read the entire question, do not skim, be aware of “trick” words such as **not, always, sometimes, never, all, some, none, except, more and less** and underline them.
- Try to answer the question without looking at the answers
- Read and consider all of the answers provided
- Pace yourself – check the time frequently, skip very difficult questions and come back to them later
- **Guess intelligently**
  - Try to identify a general theme that the question is asking and think about key terms that relate to it
  - On true-false questions, try to find only one specific case to support or counter the statement, if you see the word “never” in the question and you can think of one case where it could happen, the answer will be false.
  - On multiple-choice questions, try to eliminate as many of the given answers as possible and stick with your **FIRST INSTINCT!!!!**
  - Try visualizing – close your eyes and try to think of the page in the book or your notes where the answer is located – it may help to bring the answer to mind
  - Be aware of the “all of the above” answer – if one possible answer doesn’t apply, don’t choose all of the above; if two or more answers apply, chances are that “all of the above” is correct
  - Beware of two similar answers – test makers may use two similar choices to confuse you – if you’re going to guess, pick one of those two



# MORE EXAM TIPS!

- If you have trouble understanding a question, read over it a few times and don't focus on words you don't know but focus on what the question is asking – Is it asking for a key term? A definition? The exception to a rule? etc.
- When you read an exam question, underline key terms
- Look for clues in other questions
- When you receive the test back – be sure to study your errors and ensure you understand them, do not just ignore concepts that you are still unsure about!



# STRATEGIES FOR COMPUTER-BASED TESTING (CBT)

- **STUDY!!!** The best way for you to ensure that you will do well on a computerized exam is to know the material presented!
- Familiarize yourself with computer-based exams by taking practice exams online – even if they are not the same subject matter, they will help you become more accustomed to them and they will seem less stressful when grades really matter!
- Pay attention to the instructions when they are given!
- Remember that you may not be able to change your answers after you submit them the first time. If you are unsure of the answer on a particular question, skip it and come back to it later.
- If you're allowed, utilize the scratch paper provided to you – use it for math problems, write relevant details about questions you're not sure about, use it to draw diagrams, write the numbers of the questions you skipped so you can easily go back to them later
- Be aware of the time – don't rush yourself but don't dwell on any particular question too long, skip it if you need to and go back to it later



**YOU GOT THIS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

