

# Tips for studying for Finals

When it comes to studying, every student is different. Review the tips below with your student and come up with a plan to do as well as possible on final exams and get through the week with as little stress as possible.

## The Study Environment

- Some students need silence, others need soft music in the background and still others thrive on chaos all around them. It's a proven fact that students who have a comfortable, relatively quiet and well-lit place to study learn better. Where are you more focused and productive?
- Concentrate on one course at a time and have all materials -- textbook, notes, study guides -- for that class out in front of you.
- Take little breaks (about a 5- to 10-minute break every hour); set a timer. It keeps the stress level down and gives the information time to sink in. Studies show we better retain information learned at the beginning -- and at the end -- of a study session. During your break, get a little exercise or do something fun to take your mind off your studies.
- If there's a study group, make sure the other kids are serious. It's easy to be distracted in a group.
- Try not to study past your normal bedtime. Sleep is important! Think about what times of the day are most productive for you and hit the books hard during those times.

## Cramming for Finals

- In a perfect world, you would have completed all coursework and reading assignments, turned in any extra credit, gone in during lunch for extra help and reviewed what you did in class immediately after class, every day throughout the semester. More likely, here it is the weekend before finals and panic has set in! Stop the panic -- there's still time to learn the material.
- Eat healthy.
- Dress comfortably (but not so comfortable as to become sleepy).
- Learn the general concepts first (at the beginning of the chapter) before moving on to the details (middle and end).
- Make flash cards from the reading and class notes. Summarize important ideas. Don't just read and try to memorize everything! Use the flash cards to test your knowledge and take your flash cards with you to study whenever you can.

## The Night Before and The Morning Of...

- Gather everything you're going to need so you aren't rushing around before leaving for school: sharpened pencils, erasers, calculator, healthy snack, etc. Set out your clothes.

- Do NOT pull an all-nighter! All it does is shift your brain into survival mode. You'll have trouble remembering anything you learned. Go to bed at your usual time.

- Eat a healthy breakfast. Both the End Zone and Temporary End Zone will continue to serve breakfast starting about 7:00 a.m. during finals week. Breakfast is available for \$1.50. It's a good time to review those flash cards and/or meet classmates to test each other. Ask other students what they think will be on the test. If they mention something you didn't study, it'll give you some time to organize your thoughts.

- Arrive early. Remember, traffic may be an issue, especially on Thursday and Friday. Plan accordingly so you don't add to any stress unnecessarily.

- Use the restroom before each test. Get a drink of water. Eat a healthy snack during breaks.

- Tighten and release your muscles to help rid yourself of anxiety. Take a breath (or several) and try to relax. Remind yourself that being anxious will not help you do better (don't be your own worst enemy -- **STOP THE NEGATIVE TALK!**)

## Taking the Test

- First thing, look over the entire test. It'll help you determine how to manage your time on each section. You can always go back over your answers if you finish early. In fact, try to plan for time to review your work.

- Read the directions carefully. Reread them. Make sure you understand what you're being asked to do.

- Answer the easy questions first. (If you're using an answer sheet, make sure you mark any questions you skip so your answer sheet matches the questions you've answered!) If you aren't sure of an answer, you might find it elsewhere on the test or another question may help you remember the answer.

- Try to answer multiple choice questions before looking at the the possible answers. If you're right, your answer will be one of the choices.

- On essay questions, take a minute to organize your thoughts. Think about how the material in the textbook and lectures was organized. Jot down your key points before starting to write. Use the writing tools you have learned over the years.

- Be neat and legible. Use your best handwriting. If you need to erase, erase well.

- Keep it in perspective. It's just a test, a measure of your knowledge. Remember, teachers do not try to trick students!

- **Never, ever cheat. Academic integrity is non-negotiable.**