Preparing for Exams:  
Some Tips and Thoughts for Success!  
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Preparation (… don’t wait until you have an exam)

1. Seek Confidence! (This is the goal of exam-taking)
2. Note Cards, Note Cards, Note Cards
3. Take 5-10 Minutes after each class to put the lecture into your own words:  
   a. What was the main idea today?  
   b. What did you like about the lecture … what didn’t you like?  
   c. What issue or topic did the professor spend alot of time on?  … do you know why?  
   d. What questions do you have (that you could ask later)?
4. Take 10-15 minutes at the end of each day to review what you accomplished and to make a list of things you will do the next day – then put it aside and go to sleep.
5. Guess the test – If you were the professor, what would you put on the test?  (check with your friends to see if they have the same ideas as you)
6. Doing something is better than doing nothing.
7. Be confident! (it is only a test – think of it as your job and you are showing a “customer” that you know what you’re talking about)

Talk to your Professor (or TA) … it’s OK to do this

Talking to a Professor (or TA)

1. Be prepared (do not go just to visit – have questions or issues you need to discuss)  
2. Review your notes before the meeting and write down your questions.
3. Possible questions:  
   a. How much of the exam will be based on lecture notes vs. book material?  
   b. Do you emphasize understanding of concepts or facts or are you more interested in application of material?  
   c. What is the test format? Multiple choice, T/F, Essay, Short Answer ?  
   d. Specific information. From your notes, ask for information that is not clear to you.  
   e. Do you have any sample questions from past exams that will give me an idea of the kind of questions you include on exams?
4. If you anticipate needing additional time for the exam, it may be okay to request more time but follow the following recommendations:  
   a. Ask for it only if you need it (vs. wanting it for greater comfort)  
   b. Do not expect that you will get it (… see it as a bonus if you do get more time) – professors are not obligated to give additional time unless there is a documented need.
Talking to other students

Possible questions:
1. What kind of exams does this professor give? … Easy? Fair? Difficult?
2. What kind of questions are typical? (multiple choice, essay?)
3. Does this professor return exams? If he/she does, do you know where I might find one?
4. Do you have any notes that I can borrow (… again, students do not have to lend you their notes, if they do, see it as a bonus)
5. If you were this professor, what would you ask on this exam?

General Guidelines

1. Remember to breathe
2. Study in any way you need to (sing, dance, act it out, meet with other students, use MNEUMONICS, etc.)
3. Read the directions
4. Look over the whole test before starting to answer
   a. What parts are you more confident with? (multiple choice, essay, T/F?)
   b. What parts have the most / least points?
5. Answer each question
6. Write as much as you can on the test itself – notes, ideas, cross-outs, … your answers!
7. Find FRIENDLY questions and answer them first.
8. You do not have to answer questions in order (for example:)
   a. Answer the ‘friendly’ questions
   b. Answer the ‘big-point’ questions (if this is a good strategy for you)

Tests and Tips for Taking Them

Essay

- Read the question.
- Write down general thoughts and notes you associate with the question.
- Make an outline of what the question is asking for.
- What parts need to be answered?
- What information are you going to use to support your arguments?

For example: Compare and contrast the nature vs. nurture arguments for development and give examples of both.
    Nature (genetics)
      a. twin studies
      b. ???
    Nurture (environment)
      a. learning from others
      b. parenting
      c. ???
• Write out the answer.
• If the answer is incomplete (for example, you cannot think of a second example for a question), leave it blank for now and move on. As you go through more of the test, another example may come to mind or one of the questions in the test may remind you of something. If you can think of nothing by the end of the test, see if there are any relevant thoughts and write them down.
• Feel good about doing your best.

** Keep in mind that some essay questions have no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answer and that writing something often earns you points (writing nothing will earn you nothing)**

** Essay questions do not have to be long – accurate short responses often earn just as many points as longer ones**

True/False

• Step 1: Go through and answer all of the items that you feel comfortable with.
• Step 2: Go back over the remaining items to see if you can take an ‘educated guess’
• Step 3: If you have no guess, consider the following guidelines:
  o Items are more generally biased toward TRUE as an answer
  o Assume the answer is TRUE unless some or all of the item seems False
  o Items with Qualifiers (sometimes, frequently, some, many) tend to be TRUE
  o Items with Non-Qualifiers (always, all, none, never) tend to be FALSE

Multiple Choice (… think POE)

Step 1: Before looking at the answers, try to answer the question from memory (write it down).
Step 2: Read all of the possible answers.
Step 3: Begin POE (… Process Of Elimination)
Step 4: Choose the BEST answer

Tips:
• To eliminate “All of the Above,” you only have to find one option that is obviously wrong.
• To choose “All of the Above,” you only have to find two options that are true (even if you are unsure of other options).
• If you can get a question down to 2 possible answers, then follow the rules for a True/False question.

Remember to do something nice for yourself … and Good Luck!