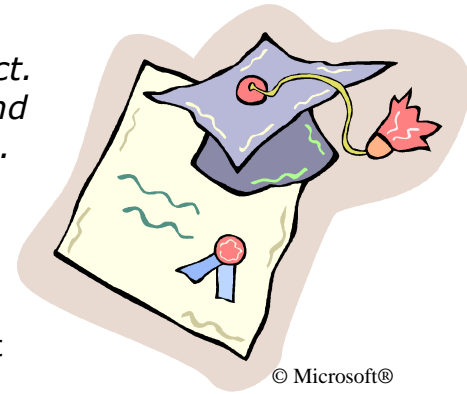


Learning Café Quick Study Tips

PREPARING FOR FINALS

For most students, final exams are an intimidating prospect. But, as is true of many other challenges in life, planning and preparation can make final exams a less trying experience.



Plan Ahead

You must know several things about the exam in order to begin preparing:

- Is there a final exam? Is it comprehensive or does it just cover some topics?
- When and where will the exam take place?
- How much time is allowed? How many & what types of questions will be on the exam?
- What special materials (dictionary, calculator, etc.) will you need to take the test?

Get Organized

To avoid missing questions because you forgot to study a certain chapter or unit, prepare a study checklist (available in the Learning Café) for each class.

- identify major topics of study as well as study materials available for each topic
- Predict how much time will be needed to review each topic

Plan & Schedule Your Time

Decide if it will be beneficial to spend some study time with a partner or study group & make appropriate arrangements.

- spend no more than 1/3 of your study time with a partner or group.

Know exactly when you will study.

- Write your study times on a timetable or planner & allow time to review your material.
- Once you have decided how many hours a day you will study, determine how much time you can spend on each unit.
- Spread your study out over a number of days.

Find an Appropriate Time & Place

Identify a quiet, focused place, free from distractions.

- Have all necessary materials available
- Protect your study time by making others aware you do not want to be disturbed.

Distribute Study Times

Short periods of study (sometimes as short as 15 – 20 minutes) with short rewarding breaks are more effective than long study sessions.

- Stop studying before you lose interest or become tired.
- Set a goal for each study period, & reward yourself once you reach your goal.

Over learn

Continue to study material even after you already know it well. If information is over learned, it is easier to recall during the exam.

Rehearse

It is essential to go through the entire process of recall:

- Express the information in some way, either write it down or say it aloud. It is not enough to read or think over material.
- Failure to be active in the learning process often results in “drawing a blank” on the test.

Reduce

From memory, condense the information to its simplest form.

- Write summaries, make mind maps & charts, draw pictures. Then check with your notes to see how much you were able to recall & fill in the details you missed.
- Develop mnemonic devices (rhymes, songs, acronyms, etc.) to help you remember lists, terms & formulas. These reduced formats can be used for your final, comprehensive review just before the exam. They also help you to keep the “big” picture in mind.

Predict

Predicting test questions enables you to practice what you will be asked to do on the exam.

- Use your notes, text, learning objectives provided by the instructor, & old tests (if available) to predict exam questions.
- Information the instructor stressed and basic terms & concepts are all likely to be on the exam.

Prepare Mentally

Keep the exam in perspective & think of it as a challenge rather than a threat.

- Plan to do well.
- Use positive self-talk: if you tell yourself the exam is going to be difficult and you will not do well, chances are, you won't.
- Study for all exams as though you will have to recall the information, not just recognize it.

A Word About Cramming

Cramming, a last minute intense attempt at learning the semester's work, is the least effective approach to studying & is usually avoidable.

- When you study at the last minute, concepts become confused with one another, learning tends to be superficial, & information is difficult or impossible to recall on the exam.
- The information you have crammed is usually forgotten immediately afterwards.

*For more information on any of the suggestions given here, please visit the Learning Café, located in the library (CE1340) / 403-382-6952 / learningcafe@lethbridgecollege.ca
Or sign up for a Student Success Workshop!*