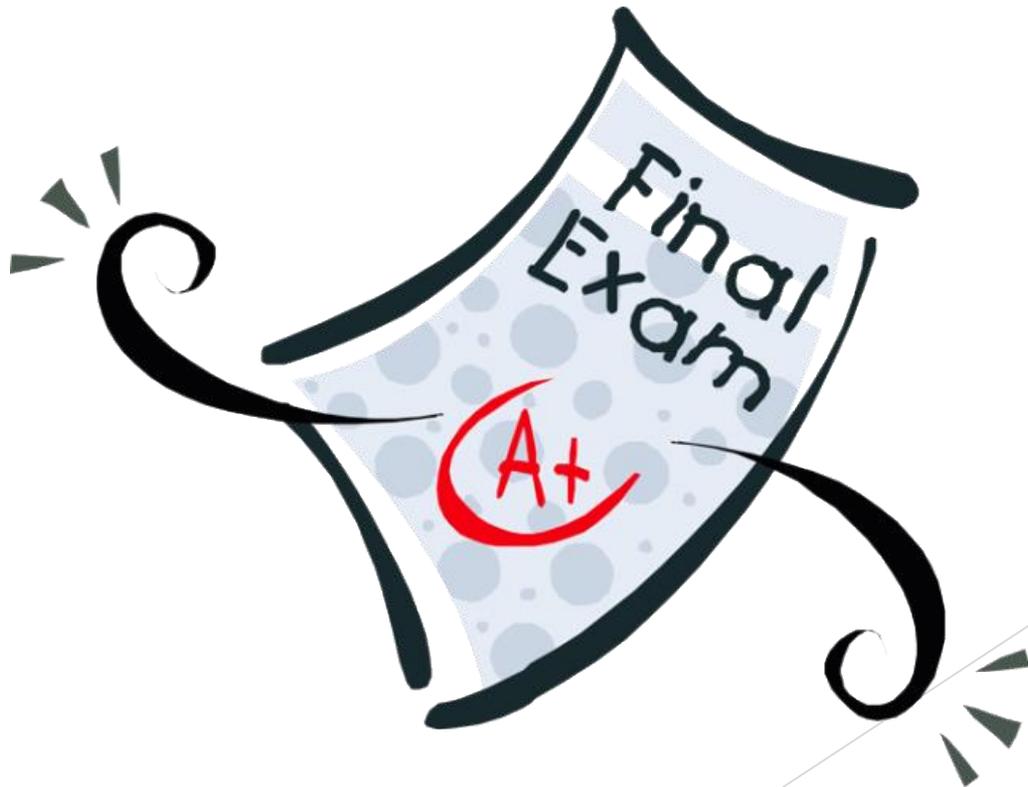


EXAM PREPARATION GUIDE

Part Three:

Actually Surviving The Exam



- Regardless of whether you are prepared or not (hopefully you are!), there are many things you can do to help improve your odds of being successful on the exam.
- This session will provide tips for the actual writing of the exam and tips for coping with exam anxiety.
- Many of these tips are pro-active and are designed to actually prevent anxiety in the first place.

BEFORE THE EXAM...

- You may want to review your study notes one more time. If you feel you are prepared and reading over your notes just makes you more nervous, skip this step and try to do something to get your mind off the upcoming exam like watching television, exercising, listening to relaxing music, etc.
- Make sure you had at least 7 hours of sleep the night before.

A FEW HOURS BEFORE THE EXAM (CONT.)

- Eat a good, nutritious breakfast/lunch. This is vital! Numerous studies have proven that a well-fed person is much more successful on an exam than someone who writes without eating.
- If you feel you are too nervous to eat, try something that is easier to stomach like a piece of toast with a banana or a granola bar.
- Make sure you are well-hydrated. Drink a lot of water. Caffeine actually de-hydrates you , so skip the coffee if you can.
- Note: A bag of Doritos and a Coke does not constitute a good meal!

BEFORE YOU LEAVE...

- Make sure you have all the materials you need for the exam. Bring extra pens/pencils, your study notes (if you wish), a calculator or dictionary if they are permitted, any textbooks that need to be returned, and a bottle of water (if permitted). Leave your phone behind!
- Leave early to get to school on time. Make sure you have double-checked the time and location of the exam.

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH...

- Once you enter the examination room, find your spot quickly and write your name on the exam (and on the attendance sheet if required). You would be surprised at how many students forget this simple first step!
- Take a deep breath, say an extra prayer, and...begin!

MAKE A PLAN OF ACTION

- But wait! Many students just start writing the test in order and hope for the best. This is their first mistake.
- It is extremely important to take a few minutes and figure out how you will tackle the exam. This step usually takes about five minutes and can save valuable time in the end!
- Look over the whole exam first. Read the first page to make note of any special instructions (such as using a scantron card). Make sure you have the correct exam and the correct amount of pages.

YOUR PLAN OF ACTION (CONT.)

- It is very important to figure out how much time you are going to spend on each section of the exam. Many students are unsuccessful because they do not plan ahead and they run out of time.
- To help you determine how much time to allot to each section, take into consideration the mark values of the exam. Don't spend an hour on something that is only worth 5 marks! You may want to allot a few extra minutes to a section you know will be more difficult for you.
- Check the time frequently to make sure you stick to your time limit.

AS YOU BEGIN...

- Tackle the easier sections first. This will save time in the end.
- Make sure you read the instructions carefully and pay close attention to the mark values of each question. Underline key words so you know exactly what is expected of you.
- If you come to a question you don't understand, re-read it carefully. Take a deep breath and try to recall the information. If you are still unclear, put a little star beside the question and get back to it later.

IF YOU START TO PANIC...

- Breathe deeply.
- Don't be afraid to take a 30-second break to relax and collect your thoughts.
- Look at a question that you knew the answer to for reassurance.
- If your teacher is supervising the exam, tell them you're panicking. A comforting word of encouragement can make all the difference (don't bother asking for an answer, though!).
- Give yourself a pep talk. You can do it!
- Above all, don't give up. Students often underestimate themselves in stressful situations.

WRITING THE EXAM

- Many students make the mistake of writing much more than is required. This not only wastes valuable time, but it also leads to rambling, repetitive responses that usually do not make too much sense.
- The mark value should help you determine how much you should be writing. Do not write a two-page response to a five mark question. If you have explained 3 to 5 points, that should be more than enough.

WRITING THE EXAM (CONT.)

- Keep your responses as neat and as clear as possible. You want your teachers to be in a good mood as they mark your exams!
- For sections like matching, multiple choice and fill in the blanks, always do the easier questions first.
- Once you have finished writing, make sure you look over your work to make sure you have answered everything. Go back to difficult questions and try again.

OTHER EXAM-WRITING TIPS (CONT.)

- Never leave questions blank! If you have no idea how to answer the question, it does not hurt to take an educated guess
- Check over your exam for errors.
- Don't change too many answers unless you are absolutely sure. Usually, your first instinct is correct.

WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED...

- Make sure your name is on each sheet.
- Number the pages.
- Hand in your paper.
- You are done! (Leave the area before you shout for joy).
- **GOOD LUCK!**