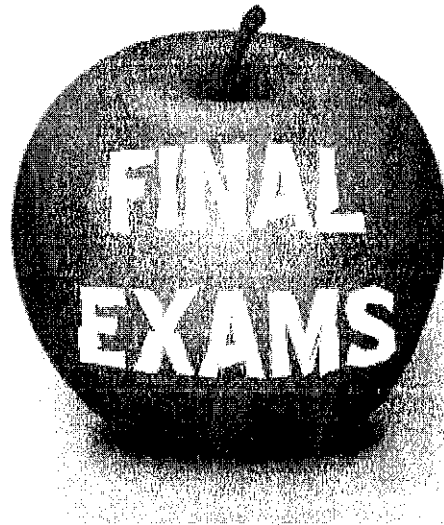


Getting Ready for Exams

Study Skills Package



Notre Dame CHS

December 2018

Preparing for tests and exams can mean stressful times if you are not adequately prepared. There are many strategies that can help us prepare effectively and reduce the stress that comes with exams. If you have never gone through the process, you might not know what to expect or know how to best prepare. Planning ahead is key...hopefully this guide can help you get started.

And remember, keep the exam in perspective. Grades do not define us. But, consistent poor grades can prevent or delay us from our plans. So, be active, be engaged, and plan ahead. This will help you best demonstrate what you know so that you can move forward on your path!

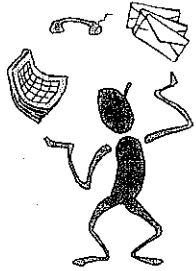
What Can You Do to Get Smarter?

Just like a weightlifter or a basketball player, to be a brain athlete, you have to exercise and practice. By practicing, you make your brain stronger. You also learn skills that let you use your brain in a smarter way—just like a basketball player learns new moves.

But many people miss out on the chance to grow a stronger brain because they think they can't do it, or that it's too hard. It does take work, just like becoming stronger physically or becoming a better ball player does. Sometimes it even hurts! But when you feel yourself get better and stronger, all the work is worth it!

<https://s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/mindset-net-site/FileCenter/52G3LTP08OVNI3G9NMI8.pdf>

P.S. This is a really good article and it is easy to read. Check it out on the Mindset Works website (see references on the last page).



ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING



Attitude is important—it affects:

1. **How successful you are** in achieving your academic and personal goals;
2. **How you feel**, mentally and physically;
3. **How you look**, what you say and what you do.

Do you have a positive attitude?

1. **Are you willing to learn**, no matter how difficult it is?
2. **Do you do your best when studying**, and try to improve how you do your work?
3. **Do you demonstrate enthusiasm** in whatever you say and do?
4. **Do you welcome challenges**, experiment, try new ideas?
5. **Do you have a sense of humor** by not taking yourself too seriously?

7 Easy Ways to Develop a Positive Attitude:

1. **Be confident.**
2. **Be positive.**
3. **Be punctual.**
4. **Be patient:** some things just take time to do.
5. **Believe in yourself:** you are unique in this world, and so are your talents.
6. **Set goals for yourself:** then WORK hard to achieve them.
7. **Get fun out of life:** don't take yourself too seriously.

Adapted by Rachel Fleming '00 from the pamphlet "Your Attitude and You" by Channing L. Bete Co., Inc.

Test yourself on the "positive attitude" checklist:

	Yes	No
1. Do you believe in yourself?		
2. Do you want to improve?		
3. Do you have goals?		
4. Do you have a plan to achieve your goals?		
5. Are you willing to change?		
6. Are you on time?		
7. Are you patient?		
8. Are you a good listener?		
9. Are you willing to make mistakes?		
10. Do you enjoy life?		

POSITIVE THINKING ☺	NEGATIVE THINKING ☹
Planning ahead "I'll make a schedule."	Carelessness "It doesn't matter."
Willingness to learn "I'll ask for help."	Fatalism "If it happens, it happens."
Alertness "I'll concentrate and pay attention."	Passiveness "It's not interesting."
Knowing your goals "I want to improve."	Ignorance "I don't understand it."
Faith "I'll try my best."	Cynicism "It's not worth my time."
Willingness "I'll work on it now."	Laziness "It's too much trouble."

Adapted by Rachel Fleming '00 from the pamphlet "Your Attitude and You" by Channing L. Bete Co., Inc.

Study Habits and Preparing for a Test...what kind of student are you?

Do you know what kind of learner you are? Use the assessment tools on myBlueprint to help you figure out how you learn best. Then review the suggested strategies. Learning can be made easier by using our preferred method of learning. If you have completed the survey already but want to update it, just hit the restart button.

You can login to myBlueprint a few different ways:

1. Direct through the website: www.myblueprint.ca
 - a. If you don't have an account, drop by Guidance for instructions.
 - b. If you have forgotten your username or password, drop by Guidance for a reset.
2. Direct through www.mycdsbeo.com
 - a. Your username and password are the same as what you would use to login to the network at school.
 - b. Find myBlueprint in your app selection.

To find the survey, go to "Who Am I" in the left menu bar. Click on the survey you would like to complete.

Examples of Test Study Strategies

There are many strategies that can be used to help you prepare for a test. Some strategies work better for specific subjects than others. Some strategies work better for your particular learning style. You have to choose the strategies that will work best for you and also allow you to actively study and think about the material that you are learning or consolidating.

Here are some suggestions:

- Create a study guide based on the review your teacher has given you (If you haven't received one...ask for one!);
- Create flashcards (formulas, definitions, or brainstorming);
- Use the Frayer Model for multiple concepts;
- Mind mapping;
- Have someone quiz you (make up your own quiz or have someone else make up the quiz) either orally or in written form;
- Explain the information to someone else;
- Review homework questions;
- Review past quizzes and assignments – what would you do differently;
- Create mnemonics or funny sayings;
- Draw pictures or diagrams;
- Use charts;
- Reread your text or notes (Use the SCAN strategy);
- Rewrite notes for each chapter or unit (Use the Cornell strategy);
- Study over several days and ask your teacher clarifying questions.

Answering Specific Types of Test & Exam Questions

True & False Questions

- Remember if any part of the statement is false, the entire statement is false;
- Watch out for double negatives. Cross out both negatives and read the statement as a positive one;
- Pay attention to extreme modifiers (ie always, never, all, only...)
- Choose the answer that is most true.

For Multiple Choice Questions

- Read the entire stem of the question and each response individually;
- If two choices use similar wording, look for and circle the differences;
- Use the process of elimination; cross out any that you know for sure are incorrect;
- After reading the stem and before reading the options, see if you can identify the correct answer based on what you know;
- Be clear about what the stem is asking you;
- Avoid choosing based on unfamiliarity; if uncertain go with the response that “rings a bell”;
- Answer all questions unless you are penalized for guessing (not usually the case in high school);
- If you are unclear about a response, make a note in the margin (using a symbol like a *). This will remind you to pay closer attention when you review at the end;
- Do not change your initial answer unless you have a specific reason to do so. Trust your first response.
- If an answer choice is only partly correct, the choice is most likely wrong;
- Incorrect answers tend to be based on common errors or misconceptions, try to identify those if you are unsure;
- Once you have made a choice, re-read the stem and your choice in its entirety to be sure it makes sense and answers the question being asked;
- If the multiple choice question is based on a reading selection, go back and re-read to confirm the information.

For Essay or Long Answer Questions

- Understand the question – Look for key terms, use the words from the question in your response;
- Do brainstorming or jot notes – identify the main points you want to make and order how you would like to present them;
- In the opening paragraph, write a direct answer to the question in one or two sentences;
- Begin a new paragraph for each point; be sure to include specific evidence to support the point (think text to text, text to self, text to world, etc);
- Pretend the reader knows nothing about the topic unless otherwise clarified;
- Write something for every question; sometimes common sense can go a long way;
- Write on every other line so you can go back and edit/change words when you review;
- Allocate time at the end for re-reading and proofreading.

For Math Word Problems

Math word problems tell a story and follow a logical progression. Here are some steps to help you work through a word problem:

1. **Pre work** includes the following:
 - Read the problem to understand it before dealing with the numbers;
 - Circle the numbers (and units if applicable) in the word problem, you will likely need to use them or eliminate them;
 - Underline key words that represent math operations;
 - Underline or highlight the question that you need to answer;
 - If there is a diagram or picture – use it;
 - If there is no diagram or picture – create one;
 - Label either diagram or picture;
 - Make a table or graph, look for patterns in the data;
 - Look for missing information and assign a variable to the unknown;
2. **Solve the problem.**
3. **Re-read** the question to make sure you have answered what is being asked;
4. **Double check** the math including calculations and sign errors;
5. **Ask** yourself, does the answer make sense? If not, re-check your work.

Key Words

Compare: Tell what is the same and what is different

Describe: Use words to create a mental picture for the reader

Determine: use mathematics to find a solution to the problem

List: use point form

Explain: Use words and symbols to make your solution clear

Justify: Give reasons and evidence to show your answer is correct

Show your work: record all calculations and all the steps you went through to get your answer. You may use words, numbers, graphs, diagrams, symbols and/or charts

Addition: Sum, add, total, more, plus, increase, together, combine

Subtraction: less, fewer, subtract, minus, difference, take away, decrease

Multiplication: times, product, multiply, twice, three times, double, triple

Division: quotient, divided by, ratio, per

Equal: is, were, equivalent, same, equal to, will be

5 less X: means $5 - X$

5 less than X: means $X - 5$

Exams, Anxiety and Stress

Exams time can be a particularly stressful time. Unfortunately, some students try to deal with this stress in ways that are counter-productive. This type of behavior along with poor attitudes can diminish performance rather than enhance it.

A certain level of stress can be helpful but using specific strategies will help you learn more efficiently.

Remember: you are not alone! Almost everyone gets somewhat anxious at exam time!

Research is clear, these things DO NOT help during exam time...in fact, they can add more stress:

- Keeping irregular hours
- Pulling all-nighters
- Eating irregularly or eating poorly (ie lots of junk food!)
- Relying on ineffective learning strategies
- Distractions (like technology and people)

Here are some guidelines to help you through exams:

- Try to stay on a regular schedule of reviewing, eating, sleeping and relaxing.
- Don't attempt to study 24 hours a day. Your efficiency and capacity to learn will be decreased.
- Short and regular study periods are more productive than long marathons. Don't force yourself beyond your normal concentration limits. Study for a short period of time and then take a short break. If your concentration is waning, this will help you get back on track.
- Follow a well-balanced diet and drink lots of fluids. Try to avoid excessive amounts of caffeine. Too much may actually cause you to be disorganized, scattered and confused.
- Don't use drugs or alcohol – they can decrease your ability to think clearly, in the short and long term.
- Be reasonable about the demands you place on yourself.

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At Camden Campus

STRESS: GOOD HABITS

- **Break tasks into small units**

Even writing a huge paper or studying for a big exam is really manageable if you separate it into smaller individual tasks.

- **Don't leave loose ends**

Even though it's best to break a project into smaller pieces, when it's nearly done, finish it completely. For example, when you finish writing a paper, don't leave the bibliography for tomorrow. Complete the job now! You'll have one less thing to worry about.

- **Exercise**

Make sure you have a physical outlet for your stress.

- **Do what you say you're going to do**

Keep your promises to yourself.

- **Set reasonable goals for yourself**

Don't expect more from yourself than you'll actually accomplish. Plan on what you *will* do, not what you think you *should* do.

- **Be overprepared for tests and presentations**

You'll feel a lot less anxious if you know the material *better* than you think you need to.

- **Take time out to relax**

If you feel guilty about it, schedule it. Also, if you work extra hard just before a break, you'll feel like you deserve it.

- **Do it now!**

Probably the greatest source of stress for students is procrastination.

For more information, visit or call your nearest Rutgers Learning Center, or visit our website: <http://rlc.rutgers.edu>

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STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

1. Deep Breathing

- △ Twenty minutes of deep breathing once a day or 10 minutes twice a day can significantly reduce the amount of stress in your body.
- △ Find a comfortable place to sit or lie down. Focus on each breath. Think of being totally relaxed as you inhale. Picture tension leaving your body as you exhale.
- △ Use a 2-second count in between breaths to be sure you slow down.

2. Muscle Relaxation

- △ Clenched fists and a tight stomach may cause headaches and heartburn. Reverse the effects of tension by using "Relaxation Exercise" or by performing selected physical activities such as:

- | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| △ Walking | △ Running | △ Swimming | △ Aerobics |
| △ Cycling | △ Racquetball | △ Basketball | △ Speed bag |

- △ Performance of any of these activities non-stop for 20 minutes a day, at least 3 days a week, can significantly reduce your stress levels.

3. Be Positive!

- △ Change your attitude. Focus on the positive aspects of your life. If you look deep enough, things can almost always be worse. Whistling and singing can help take the edge off. Be creative. Come up with other ways to stay focused on the positive.

4. Express and Accept Emotions

- △ Don't keep things bottled up. It's okay to show your anger in a calm way. Communicate appropriately about what is bothering you through:

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------|----------|
| △ Conversation | △ Meditation | △ Prayer |
|----------------|--------------|----------|

5. Fix it or Forget it!

- △ Attend to what is possible. Dismiss the impossible. Brooding over matters beyond your

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PROCRASTINATION

Know what procrastination is

- It is often a natural way to put off doing what you expect will be unpleasant.
- It is often caused by fear of failure or fear of not performing perfectly.
- It is one way—a passive one—to let your situation provide the pressure you need to complete a task.
- It is not necessarily bad.

Consider the consequences:

On the positive side

Most procrastinators get the job done on time or at least without serious penalty for lateness.

On the negative side

Consequences may be too much anxiety and/or guilt, lowered quality of work, exhaustion caused by last minute push.

Decide whether to:

- Use your procrastination to help you get things done. Ease up on yourself and accept it—you may ignore the rest of these hints.

OR

- Overcome your procrastination.

Identify the cause and take action:

“It’s no fun to study.”

Use the things you’d rather do as rewards and only do them after you’ve done some work. Start small so that your task isn’t overwhelming.

“My mind keeps wandering onto other things I have to do.”

Expect distractions and write them down. Use procrastination on them!

“I don’t see how this assignment connects to anything.”

Look at it as something *you* can do to achieve a goal (pass the course) rather than something imposed upon you. Check the consequences of not doing it.

“I can’t get started on this paper; I guess I have writer’s block.”

Make an outline. Write a rough draft quickly in the same manner as you would tell someone about it.

“I try to study, but nothing happens.”

Say “I will study now;” don’t say “I’ll try.” Firm up your commitment. Trying doesn’t cut it.

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Stress Management = Time Management

Good Habits to Relieve Stress

1. ***Discover the source of stress.*** How? Try talking to a friend or using a journal to write about the times you feel stressed.
2. ***Set reasonable goals for yourself.*** Don't expect more from yourself than you will actually accomplish. Plan on what you *will* do, not on what you think you *should* do.
3. ***Take time out to relax.*** If you feel guilty about relaxing, schedule it. Also, if you work extra hard just before a break, you will feel as if you deserve it.
4. ***Eat right.*** Make sure to maintain a healthy diet. Minimize your consumption of caffeine and sugar; they increase your level of stress.
5. ***Exercise.*** Create a physical outlet for stress. Even a short walk can help you to relax.

Good Habits for Time Management

1. ***Prioritize.*** Arrange activities or steps by working backwards from important deadlines.
2. ***Break tasks into small units.*** Even writing a huge paper or studying for a big exam is manageable if you separate the final product into smaller, individual tasks.
3. ***Keep promises to yourself.*** Do what you say you will do. One of the greatest sources of students' stress is procrastination.
4. ***Avoid interruptions.*** Create or find an environment that allows you to be master of how you spend your time.
5. ***Be flexible.*** The best plans will sometimes have to change. Realize that you can work around unexpected events. Use a weekly schedule that shows every hour of every day. Block out your courses, job and personal obligations, required study times and other activities. Most people discover that managing time creates time to get everything done.

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DEC 2018 (REVISED DEC 7)

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
							01
WEEK 2	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
WEEK 1	09	10	11 Week 1 Period 1 Culminating 8:15 – 9:27	12 Week 1 Period 1 Culminating 8:15 – 9:27	13 Week 1 Period 1 Culminating 8:15 – 9:27	14	15
WEEK 2	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Christmas Break	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	30	31					

JAN 2019 (REVISED DEC 7)

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		01	02	03	04	05
Christmas Break						
06	07	08	09	10	11	12
WEEK 1		Week 1 Period 2 Culminating 9:37 – 10:49	Week 1 Period 2 Culminating 9:37 – 10:49	Week 1 Period 2 Culminating 9:37 – 10:49		
	Periods 1,2,3,4	Periods 1,2,3,4	Periods 1,2,3,4	Period 1,2,3,4	Periods 1,2,3,4	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
WEEK 1	Week 1 Period 3 Culminating 11:41 – 12:53	Week 1 Period 3 Culminating 11:41 – 12:53	Week 1 Period 3 Culminating 11:41 – 12:53		Week 1 Period 4 Culminating 11:41 – 12:53	
	Periods 1,2,3,4	Periods 1,2,3,4	EQAO Math Periods 1,2,3,4	EQAO Math Periods 1,2,3,4	Periods 1,2,4,3	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
WEEK 1	Week 1 Period 4 Culminating 11:41 – 12:53	Week 1 Period 4 Culminating 11:41 – 12:53		EXAM WEEK 1 PERIOD 1 8:15 start	EXAM WEEK 1 PERIOD 2 8:15 start	
	Periods 1,2,4,3	Periods 1,2,4,3	Periods 1,2,3,4			
27	28	29	30	31	Feb 1	
	EXAM WEEK 1 PERIOD 3 8:15 start	EXAM WEEK 1 PERIOD 4 8:15 start	Exam Snow Day	PD Day	First Day of Semester 2	

Typical Exam Announcements

- It is the responsibility of each student to arrive on time for their exam. Exams start at 8:15am and are written in the regular classroom.
- Students at school must be in proper uniform.
- If a student is absent, a parent or guardian must notify the school prior to the exam and must provide a doctor's note upon return. Arrangement to write the exam will be made by the main office.
- Only students who have an exam should be at school unless arrangements have been made with the office or a teacher.
- Students may not leave the exam until 9:30. The exam period will finish at 11:00 and the exam buses will leave at 11:15. The bus routes are posted in the main office. These are not regular bus routes. Students must check to see if the route works for them. Seating is limited, so students are encouraged to arrange their own transportation, if possible. Regular bus routes run at 2:15 each day.
- Students MUST return their textbooks and library books prior to writing their exam. All books must be returned before January 29th. Students will be expected to pay for any lost or damaged text. Report cards and Semester 2 textbooks will NOT be issued to students who have outstanding fees or textbooks.
- Students leaving their exam must go directly from the classroom to the library or cafeteria or exit the building.
- Lockers and hallways are completely out of bounds during the exam period. Students are to bring their coats and books to the exam and leave them at the back of the room. Lockers will be accessible at 11:00am.
- The gym and weight room will be closed to high school students during exams.
- Students who remain at the school in the afternoon must be in the library or cafeteria for quiet study and must be in proper uniform.
- Should bad weather force the cancellation of buses the entire exam schedule will shift ahead one day. Cancellations can be heard on the radio/T.V., be found on the STEO website, or on STEO's Twitter account.
- Report cards will be issued in February. **GOOD LUCK ON YOUR EXAMS!**

Resources

Dartmouth College Academic Skills Centre

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/learningstrategies.html>

EQAO

www.eqao.com

Help Teaching

www.helpsteaching.com

Learning Skills Services- York University

www.lss.info.yorku.ca/resources

Mindset Works

<https://www.mindsetworks.com/>

Ontario Ministry of Education

www.edu.gov.on.ca

Queen's University Learning Strategies

<http://sass.queensu.ca/learningstrategies/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2013/09/Preparing-for-and-taking-tests-and-exams-at-university.pdf>

Rutgers Learning Center

<http://rlc.rutgers.edu>

Think Literacy Resource (taken from OAME)

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/studentssuccess/thinkliteracy/library.html>

Worksheet Works

www.worksheetworks.com