

# The 5-Day Study Plan

When you have a large amount of material to study for a test, commit yourself to about two hours per day of very structured study time. By carefully following this approach, you will be able to systematically cover all of the material. With planning ahead, many students have found that the 5-Day Study Plan gets good results. Keys to the plan are:

- 1 Space out your learning over a period of at least 5 days.
- 2 Divide material so you can work on it in chunks.
- 3 Each day, prepare a new chunk of information, and review previous days' material.
- 4 Use active learning strategies to study the material (see chart on next page).
- 5 Use self-testing techniques to monitor your learning (see chart on next page).

Eight to 10 hours of studying may be required to get an A or a B on an exam. This is just a general guideline. You may need to allow for more time depending on the difficulty of the class. Start early!

More than any other technique, the key to performing well on exams is starting early and using short, frequent study sessions. The human brain learns academic material faster and better on an exam if done in brief blocks of time spread out over longer periods of time, rather than in a few lengthy sessions. For example, you will perform better on an exam if you spend one hour studying each day for 20 days than if you spend 10 hours studying each day for two days before an exam. Avoid cramming!

If you have to cram, try to focus on remembering the information you do know, rather than trying to teach yourself new information. You will typically not remember what you tried to learn the night before the exam anyway, so it is best to make sure you really know some part of the information for the test. If you have a few days, try to spread the studying out so you aren't doing it all in one night. Get organized!

The 5-Day Study Plan begins with dividing the material you need to study (e.g., chapters in your text and corresponding lecture notes) into about 4 equal parts: A, B, C, & D (with "A" being the oldest and/or most difficult material and "D" being the most recently covered material). For example, if chapters 1-8 of your PSYC textbook will be on your upcoming test, you could divide them as follows. A = chapters 1-2, B = chapters 3-4, C = chapters 5-6, D = chapters 7-8. List your four groups of study materials here.

- A \_\_\_\_\_
- B \_\_\_\_\_
- C \_\_\_\_\_
- D \_\_\_\_\_

Next, for each of your four groups of study materials, you need to select at least two (2) preparation and two (2) review strategies. Take a look at the examples below. Make sure that your review strategies fit with your preparation strategies. *(For example, flashcards as part of preparation, then review the flashcards; if you make charts of related material, recreate those charts from memory.)*

Examples of ways to prepare and review

Preparation strategies	Review strategies
Develop study sheets	Recite study sheets
Develop concept maps	Replicate concept maps from memory
Make word cards	Recite word cards
Make question cards	Recite question cards
Make formula cards	Practice writing formulas
Make problem cards	Work problems
Make self-tests	Take self-tests
Do study guides	Practice study guide info out loud
Re-Mark text material	Take notes on re-marked text
Make a list of 20 topics that might be on the exam	Recite the list of 20 topics
Do problems	Do “missed” problems
Make an outline	Recite notes from recall cues
Summarize material	Recite out loud
Make charts of related material	Re-create chart from memory
List steps in a process	Recite steps from memory
List steps in a process	Recite steps from memory
Predict essay questions	Answer essay question
Answer questions at the end of the chapter	Practice reciting main points
Prepare material for study group	Explain material to group members

### Preparation Strategies

- Section A 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_
- Section B 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_
- Section C 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_
- Section D 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

### Review Strategies

- Section A 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_
- Section B 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_
- Section C 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_
- Section D 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

### Creating your 5-Day Study Plan (without a day off)

On Days 1-4 you will prepare one section of material (preparation strategies from previous page). On Days 2-5 you will review the material you prepared the day(s) before (review strategies from previous page). On Day 5 you will only review and then self-test over all materials. Follow your plan, noting the rotation of the different groups of materials (A, B, C, D) and about how much time is spent on each one. An example Day 3 of a 5-Day Study Plan is below.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Prepare Portion A--2 hrs.	Prepare Portion B--2 hrs.  Review Portion A--30 mins.	Prepare Portion C--1.5 hrs.  Review Portion B--30 min. Review Portion A--15 min.	Prepare Portion D--1 hr.  Review Portion C--30 mins. Review Portion B--15 mins. Review Portion A--15 mins.	Review Portion D--25 mins. Review Portion C--15 mins. Review Portion B--10 mins. Review Portion A--10 mins.
Total: 2 hours	Total: 2.5 hours	Total: 2 hrs. 15 mins.	Total: 2 hours	Total 2 hours

### Sample Day 3

Prepare Ch. 3

1. Re-mark highlighting
2. Make study sheets
3. Make word cards
4. Make questions cards

Review Ch. 2

1. Recite re-highlighted material, mark unknowns (recite main points)
2. Mark and recite study sheets
3. Recite word cards
4. Recite question cards

Review Ch. 1

1. Make a list of information still not known from text or study sheets--recite
2. Recite cards still not known
3. Make self-tests questions

It's possible to study for more  
than one final at a time!

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues
POLSCI Day 1	POLSCI Day 2	POLSCI Day 3	POLSCI Day 4	POLSCI Day 5	POLSCI EXAM				
	MATH Day 1	MATH Day 2	MATH Day 3	MATH Day 4		MATH Day 5a	MATH Day 5b	MATH EXAM	
			PYSC Day 1	PYSC Day 2	PYSC Day 3	PYSC Day 4	PYSC Day 5	PYSC EXAM	
CHEM Day 1		CHEM Day 2		CHEM Day 3	CHEM Day 4	CHEM Day 5	CHEM Day 6	CHEM Day 7	CHEM EXAM