

Test Preparation Strategies

The Stop Light Study Technique

The Stop Light method is a study strategy that helps you learn information. These are the materials you will need:

- red stickers or tabs
- yellow stickers or tabs
- green stickers or tabs
- study notes or textbook



It is always better to study from notes you created yourself. I am sure you know a lot of friends who study from the textbook, and that does work for some, but the act of writing out the material provides an extra layer of familiarity. The information was processed by your brain more intimately when it is seen through your eyes, and processed by your brain, then written on another paper by your hands. If you have the time, make your own notes.

Here are the steps to take when implement this study strategy:

- read a page/section from your notes or textbook
- ask yourself the following, “Do I know this information...”
 - ✓ very well
 - ✓ somewhat well
 - ✓ not very well
- for very well place a green sticker on the page/section
- for somewhat well place a yellow sticker on the page/section
- for not very well place a red sticker on the page/section
- do this for every page/section until you reach the end of the content



You want every page/section to have a green sticker on it. For pages with yellow stickers, you need to study that material more. Pages that have red stickers on them you need to spend a lot more time studying and committing that information to memory.

A good study strategy to use at this point is to focus on the content with red stickers. We recommend you work towards turning those red stickers into yellow stickers. Once you have converted red into yellow, do the same as before, and work to turn yellow into green. When all pages of your content is green, you can be very confident that you are prepared to write the test.

Study Strategy: SQ3R

The SQ3R method is the reading and studying effective for both comprehension and memory retention.

Step 1. "S"= Survey

Before you actually read a chapter, or go over a particular section of notes, take five minutes to survey the material. Briefly check headings and subheadings in order to understand the author's organizational pattern of ideas to be discussed. Scan all visual material. Read introductory and summary paragraphs. This preview will enable you to anticipate what the chapter is about.

Step 2. "Q"= Question

Create interest in the material by asking: What are the main points of the chapter? As you read, keep the question in mind and figure out the most important points. It gives you a clearly defined purpose for reading, and helps you maintain interest in the material.

Step 3. "R"= Read

Read the chapter actively for meaning. Go through the paragraph before underlining, then underline key words and phrases to help you recall the main points. Be selective, you don't want to highlight non-important points or miss anything that can help your comprehension. Summarize main concepts in your own words in the margins. The more active you are in the reading process, the more you will retain.

Step 4. "R"= Recite

After every few pages, close your book and recite aloud the main points to the questions you posed in step 2. Try to recall basic details as to the author's intent by putting them in your own words. Verify your answer by checking the text. If you can't remember the text, read through it again. If you don't get it now, you won't remember it for a test. Take as much time as you need to answer your questions. Don't be frustrated, this takes more time but the information will be clearer in your mind.

Step 5. "R"= Review

Finally, review the chapter every so often to fix the material in your mind. Keep rereading your margin notes and under linings. Verbalize the sequence of main ideas and supporting facts to aid retention. Numerous reviews are a lot more effective than one cramming session the night before an exam. Review once right after you've finished reading and then every couple of days.

Strategies For Multiple Choice Tests

- Narrow your choices down by eliminating obviously wrong answers which are almost identical.
- Try to decide what the answer to the question is before you read all of the choices, but: Be sure to read all answers before selecting one. Sometimes two answers will be similar and only one will be correct.
- Do not be afraid to change an answer if you feel strongly about it.
- Do not be discouraged if you cannot answer a question. Leave it and go on. You may find the answer or clues to the answer in subsequent questions.
- Beware of questions with "no", "not", and "none." These words easily change the meaning of questions.

Strategies for Math/Physics/Chemistry...

- Complete every homework question assigned.
- Complete every review question assigned.
- Correct your tests.
- Go over your notes for a given unit and copy down a typical question from each lesson but don't make a note of which lesson it comes from. When you have made a list of these questions, write them out in a random order. Now try to answer these questions

Strategies For Essay Tests

- Read all of the questions before beginning, making sure that you understand what the professor is asking. LOOK FOR KEY TERMS.
- Begin by answering the easiest question. This will lessen frustration and build confidence.
- Jot down ideas which immediately come to mind. Especially those which include specific vocabulary from the course.
- Make a simple outline of what you will write about.
- Be sure to keep track of time. *You should spend more time on questions which are worth more points.*
- Try to write as neatly as possible and leave some space for added ideas or corrections.
- Before turning your test in, read your answers a final time in order to check for grammatical errors and misspellings.

