

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. By 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 for 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 do 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 4 about 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 2-3 preparation and review strategies. Take a look at the examples below. Each day you will prepare one section of material to review the following day(s). Each day (except for the first) you will review the material you already prepared.

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
Predict essay questions	Answer essay questions
Answer questions at the end of the chapter	Practice reciting main points
Prepare material for study group	Explain material to group members

Example of a 5-day study plan over 6 days (taking one day off)

Day	Action	Material	Approximate time needed
Day 1: Tuesday	Prepare	1 st oldest/hardest chunk of material	2 hours
Day 2: Wednesday	Prepare	2 nd oldest/hardest chunk of material	2 hours
	Review	1 st chunk of material	30 minutes
Day 3: Thursday	Prepare	3 rd chunk of material	1 ½ hours
	Review	2 nd chunk of material	30 minutes
	Review	1 st chunk of material	20 minutes
Day 4: Friday	Prepare	4 th chunk of material	1 hour
	Review	3 rd chunk of material	30 minutes
	Review	2 nd chunk of material	20 minutes
	Review	1 st chunk of material	10 minutes
Saturday	None (if not needed and there is enough time before the test)		
Day 5: Sunday	Review	4 th chunk of material	30 minutes
	Review	3 rd chunk of material	20 minutes
	Review	2 nd chunk of material	10 minutes
	Review	1 st chunk of material	10 minutes
	Self-Test	All material	1 hour
		Total time	11 hours

Examples of study plan days

Example 1

Saturday

Prepare chapter 15 (1 ½ hours)

1. Review notes from reading
2. Re-read highlighted or underlined features
3. Make cards for cash dividends and dividend dates
4. Make study cards for reasons for issuing stock dividends
5. Make a definition sheet
6. Do all examples and problems assigned.
7. Review study guide

Review chapter 14 (30 minutes)

1. Go over cards for corporation lists
2. Self-test on definitions
3. Review all examples and problems assigned
4. Review study guide.

Example 2

Sunday

Noon-1 p.m. (1 hour)

- Review and highlight notes on Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Morgan
- Compile summary sheets from lecture and text notes
- Write questions in the margins of text book

1:15-2:15 p.m. (1 hour)

- Recite industrial revolution questions and answers

2:30-3:30 p.m. (1 hour)

- Recite railroad questions and answers

Creating your 5-Day Study Plan

Select 2-3 preparation and review strategies for each of your four groups of study materials, and list them in your 5-day study plan chart below. Make sure that your review strategies fit with your preparation strategies. (*For example, if you make flashcards as part of preparation, then review the flashcards; if you made charts of related material, recreate those charts from memory.*) 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.

Day 1: _____	Day 2: _____	Day 3: _____	Day 4: _____	Day 5: _____
Prepare Part A—2 hrs.	Prepare Part B—2 hrs. Review Part A—30 min.	Prepare Part C—1.5 hrs. Review Part B—30 min. Review Part A—15 min.	Prepare Part D—1 hr. Review Part C—30 min. Review Part B—15 min. Review Part A—15 min.	Prepare Part D—25 min. Review Part C—15 min. Review Part B—10 min. Review Part A—10 min. Self-test on all parts—1 hr.
Total: 2 hours	Total: 2.5 hours	Total: 2 hrs. 15 min.	Total: ~ 2 hours	Total: ~ 2 hours
Prepare 1. 2. 3.	Prepare 1. 2. 3. Review 1. 2. 3.	Prepare 1. 2. 3. Review 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.	Prepare 1. 2. 3. Review 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.	Review 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. Self-Test (methods)