

Preparing for an Exam – How to Learn on Your Own

Use your answers to the following questions to plan and keep track of your studying.

PLANNING

- 1) What will I do to study for this exam? (Circle only what you WILL COMMIT to do, not what you think you're supposed to say.)
 - a) Read the chapters or sections relevant to each topic
 - b) Work with a study group
 - c) Answer the Concept Check and end-of-chapter questions
 - d) Practice labeling blank figures from the lecture outline
 - e) Use the Exam Preparation Guide as a practice test
 - f) Watch the Bioflix animations and take notes on the Bioflix study sheet
 - g) Memorize definitions of vocabulary terms
 - h) Ask questions during recitation
 - i) Find your professor's office and ask questions during office hours

- 2) How much time will I need to do all the study activities I circled?
 - a) How long will each of my study sessions be? (How long can I realistically pay attention?)

 - b) How many study sessions do I need?

 - c) When will I schedule my study sessions?

 - d) Over what period of time will I prepare for this exam?

- 3) What information do I need to spend more or less time on, based on my current understanding? (Ask yourself this question before you begin each study session.)

KEEPING TRACK

- 1) Am I systematically studying all the chapters on the exam? If not, which chapters do I need to spend more time on?

Your professor's exam writing recipe:

$$\frac{\text{number of lectures on Topic 1}}{\text{total number of lectures on all topics}} = \% \text{ of exam points on Topic 1}$$

- 2) Am I taking advantage of the study aides provided for this course? (Circle what you are already using, highlight what you are going to try for the next exam.)
 - a) pre-lecture outlines
 - b) lecture slides
 - c) reading the textbook
 - d) using Bioflix to get a visual of difficult concepts
 - e) re-working homework questions that were challenging
 - f) recitation
 - g) exam preparation guide

- 3) Am I struggling with being motivated to study? Do I remember why I am taking this course?
- 4) Which of my confusions have I clarified? How did I get them clarified?
- 5) What am I still confused about? How will I get this confusion clarified?

Teaching Tips for Peer Leaders

Begin recitation by having students answer Questions 1 – 3 on the sheet “Preparing for an Exam.” Give them about 5 – 7 minutes to complete the **Planning** section and reassure them that they are not required to share their answers with anyone else.

Point out the **Keeping Track** section and encourage them to evaluate themselves as they study for each exam.

Highlight the exam writing formula to help them understand why they need to pay attention to all the chapters.

Notes to Faculty

Some of the recommendations in this document are general and some are specific to the course as taught at the University of Houston.

We recommend that faculty edit activities in PLANNING Item 1 to match the structure of your own course, especially Items 1c – 1f.

You may also wish to edit the exam writing formula in KEEPING TRACK Item 1, particularly if you have a different method for weighting topics on each exam.

You will probably need to edit KEEPING TRACK Item 2 to match the study aids used in your course.