

# Study Skills and Test Taking Guide

GHSON Library

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*"To be prepared is half the victory."*

—Miguel De Cervantes



**Don't forget** that Professor Nightengale [www.professornightengale.com](http://www.professornightengale.com)

and Kaplan <http://nursing.kaplan.com>

are both available to students for study skills and test taking assistance.

## Books Available in the SON Library

In the WY 18.3 section of the library, you will find a number of helpful books on study skills, time management, and test taking. Our instructors particularly recommend:

Dunham, Kelli S. (2008). *How to survive and maybe even love nursing school! A guide for students by students.* Philadelphia : F.A. Davis.

## Websites of Interest

Cook Counseling Center (2009). *Study skills self-help information.* Virginia Tech. Retrieved from: <http://www.ucc.vt.edu/stdysk/stdyhlp.html>

How-to-study.com: A study skills resource site (2009). *How-to-study.com.* Retrieved from: <http://www.how-to-study.com>

Kizlik, B. (2009). *Effective study skills.* ADPRIMA. Retrieved from: <http://www.adprima.com/studyout.htm>

*Prentice Hall's student success; Academic skills* (2002). Prentice Hall. Retrieved from: <http://www.prenhall.com/success/StudySkI/index.html>

Student Services (2008). *Good study skills will not happen overnight.* North Central State College. Retrieved from: <http://www.ncstatecollege.edu/STUDENTSVCS/SSC/Howtostudy.htm>

Walsh, Lisa (2009). *Sites to promote academic success.* University Of Northern Iowa. Retrieved from: <http://www.uni.edu/walsh/linda7.html>

## Study Tips

1. Preparation for your first test should begin after the first day of class; this includes studying, completing homework assignments and reviewing study materials on a regular basis.
2. Budget your time, make sure you have sufficient time to study so that you are well prepared for the test. Short daily study sessions are better than one long session the night before the test.
3. Study in a place that is free of distractions. Have ready all the things you will need such as paper, pens, books or a calculator.
4. Set a goal for each study period. If you are being tested on three chapters, set up four study sessions, one for each chapter and one for a review of the main ideas in all three chapters.
5. Repetition is key. Read and reread your class notes and the relevant chapters in the textbook.
6. Go to review sessions, pay attention to hints that the instructor may give about the test. Take notes and ask questions about items you may be confused about.
7. Ask the instructor to specify the areas that will be emphasized on the test. Find out:
  - what materials the test will cover
  - what type of test it will be (multiple choice, true false, short answer, essay)
  - how the test will be graded
  - how much the test will count toward the final grade
8. While you are reviewing your notes, cover them up periodically and summarize them out loud. Pretend that you are explaining the materials to someone else.
9. Put the main ideas/information/formulas onto a sheet that can be quickly reviewed many times, this makes it easier to retain the key concepts that will be on the test.
10. Create your own study tools:
  - make an outline from your notes of just the main ideas
  - make a timeline of important dates or the order of events
  - make flashcards for studying vocabulary or events and important dates
  - make up your own quiz or test based on your notes and have a friend, parent or sibling test you
11. Do any practice exams or study sheets provided by the teacher. These will help you focus your study session and give you confidence.
12. Get help from the teacher if you do not understand something.
13. Make sure you go to the class right before the test; it's another prime time for the instructor to give out more hints or the format of the test.
14. Eat before a test. Having food in your stomach will give you energy and help you focus but avoid heavy foods that can make you groggy.
15. Don't try to pull an all nighter. Get at least 3 hours of sleep before the test.
16. Set your alarm and have a backup alarm set as well.
17. Go to the bathroom before walking into the exam room.
18. Try to show up at least 5 minutes before the test will start.

## Test Taking Tips

### DETER

#### **D = Directions**

Read the test directions very carefully.

Ask your teacher to explain anything about the test directions you do not understand.

Only by following the directions can you achieve a good score on the test.

If you do not follow the directions, you will not be able to demonstrate what you know.

#### **E = Examine**

Examine the entire test to see how much you have to do.

Only by knowing the entire task can you break it down into parts that become manageable for you.

#### **T = Time**

Once you have examined the entire test, decide how much time you will spend on each item.

If there are different points for items, plan to spend the most time on the items that count for the most points.

Planning your time is especially important for essay tests where you must avoid spending so much time on one item that you have little time left for other test items.

#### **E = Easiest**

The second E in DETER reminds you to answer the items you find easiest first.

If you get stuck on a difficult item that comes up early in the test, you may not get to answer items that test things you know.

#### **R = Review**

If you have planned your time correctly, you will have time to review your answers and make them as complete and accurate as possible.

Also make sure to review the test directions to be certain you have answered all items