

How to Study for Tests

1. Keep a monthly calendar with the student to record any upcoming tests.
2. From 5 days to 1 week before the test, devise a study plan with the student.
3. Using the Menu of Study Strategies, have the student decide which strategies he or she wants to use to study for the test. Make sure the student understands what is involved in each strategy, providing further explanation if necessary (e.g., if the student chooses "Study flash cards," ask him or her to show what the flash cards will look like, giving additional suggestions for flash card design).
4. Have the student make a plan for studying that starts 4 days before the test. Vast psychological research shows that in learning new material, *distributed practice is more effective than massed practice*. In other words, if a student plans to spend 2 hours studying for a test, it is better to break down the study time into smaller segments over a longer period (e.g., 30 minutes a night for four nights) than study for a 2-hour block the night before the test. Research also shows that learning is consolidated through sleep, so getting a good night's sleep before an exam is more beneficial than "cramming" the night before.
5. If the student has problems with sustained attention, it may be easier to use several strategies, each for a short amount of time, than using one strategy for the full study period. You can suggest that the student set a kitchen timer for the length of time for each strategy, and when the bell rings, the student can move on to the next strategy (unless he or she prefers the strategy being used and wants to continue it).
6. After the student takes the test, have him or her complete the posttest evaluation. This builds self-evaluation so that improvements can be made and implemented for the next test.

(cont.)

MENU OF STUDY STRATEGIES

Check off the ones you will use.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Reread text | <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Reread/organize notes | <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Read/recite main points |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Outline text | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Highlight text | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Highlight notes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Use study guide | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Make concept maps | <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Make lists/organize |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Take practice test | <input type="checkbox"/> 11. Quiz myself | <input type="checkbox"/> 12. Have someone else quiz me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13. Study flash cards | <input type="checkbox"/> 14. Memorize/rehearse | <input type="checkbox"/> 15. Create a "cheat sheet" |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16. Study with friend | <input type="checkbox"/> 17. Study with study group | <input type="checkbox"/> 18. Study session with teacher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 19. Study with a parent | <input type="checkbox"/> 20. Ask for help | <input type="checkbox"/> 21. Other: _____ |

STUDY PLAN

Date	Day	Which strategies will I use? (write #)	How much time for each strategy?
	4 days before test	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
	3 days before test	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
	2 days before test	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
	1 day before test	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.

POSTTEST EVALUATION: How did your plan for studying work out? Answer the following questions:

1. What strategies worked best?
2. What strategies were not so helpful?
3. Did you spend enough time studying? Yes No
4. If no, what more should you have done?
5. What will you do differently the next time?