How to study for a Psychology Class (and any other class really)

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Step 1: Read ahead

- Reading before we cover the material in class allows you to
  - reinforce what you read
  - make notes of questions you need answered in class
  - process your memory of the material more deeply

- Remember: The more times you familiarize yourself with the material (while reading, while listening in class, while taking notes, while working on assignments) and the more ways you work with it (look at it, write it down, say it aloud, listen to the teacher say it, come up with your own examples) the better you will remember it.
Step 2: Prepare study materials as you go

- A- Take notes in your own words as you read
  - Using your own words requires you to engage more deeply with the material as you have to understand it not merely copy it.
  - Saves you from having to reread all the chapters before the exam, a daunting task when there’s 6 or 7 on an exam.
  - This takes more time as you read but saves you time when studying and helps you do better on the exam (as long as you put enough in your notes: see sample of note-taking at end of presentation)
Step 2: Prepare study materials as you go

- B- make any study materials you find helpful while you read
  - It save you time later

- Flashcards
- Semantic maps
- Visual representation
Step 2: Prepare study materials as you go

- Flash cards
  - Put the Term on one side
  - Put Definition on back (in own words, not copied from book- helps with comprehension)
    - Include an example of your own when possible
  - When using the cards make sure you write down what you think the definition is on scrap paper before flipping it over (if you’re wrong take the time to write out the correct answer)
    - The “Oh I know that flip” without making yourself answer doesn’t actually aid memory
Step 2: Prepare study materials as you go

- Semantic maps -
  - Linking words and concepts together visually

![Semantic Map of Apples](image-url)
Step 2: Prepare study materials as you go

- Visual representation
  - Charts, graphs, drawings, anything to help you visually

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Step 3: Use the available resources

- There’s a lot of resources available for you to study from and use for every exam, such as:
- A- Your textbook
  - read and take notes on everything
  - use the glossary at the back (you knew they were there right?)
  - use the appendices if your book has them
  - read all the little asides in the book
    - if you only read the textbound paragraphs you are missing a lot of information
    - read all boxes- they go in depth on specific topics
    - make sure you understand all tables and figures
Step 3: Use the available resources

- B- Supplemental websites- Most, if not all, books nowadays come with supplemental websites which can include summaries, quizzes, activities, and other studying help. Now with some books this access may have an extra cost, but in an increasing number they are free.

  - See Angel for course link to Worth Publishers website.
Step 3: Use the available resources

- C- Use your homework. It is not busy work assigned by teachers to take up your time; it serves a number of useful purposes.
  - allows you to find out you don’t understand something before the exam.
  - useful tools to study from as they often apply and summarize concepts that might be on the exams.
  - bolster your grade in the class in a way that allows you more time and resources than in an exam.
Step 3: Use the available resources

- D- Handouts. These
  - give examples
  - clarify concepts
  - give alternate phrasing
  - often point out key things for you to study.
  - they are often ways to test yourself as well
Step 3: Use the available resources

- **E- PowerPoints.**
  - In our class I make the PowerPoint available at week’s end
  - **DON’T** recopy the slides word for word
    - Instead print it out in a form that leaves you room to take notes
  - **DO:**
    - Include examples
    - Add definitions
    - Include things that are reminders for you from your life (i.e. Ah, my uncle did that when he...)
    - Add questions to things you are unclear about- you can reread that section or ask the teacher for clarification
Step 3: Use the available resources

- F- People
  - If you are unclear on a topic talk to the teacher.
  - Ask for clarification during class.
  - Get together and study with classmates.
  - Have a friend or partner quiz you on concepts.
Step 4: Plan ahead for study time

- Don’t underestimate how much time you need.
  - Need time for each chapter, to review each of your resources, to test yourself once you’ve studied, to go back and restudy things you are still unclear about
- Plan in lots of little time periods for reading and studying.
  - If you study for too long at once you
    - may have trouble paying attention to what you are reviewing
    - may not be able to recall everything you review
- It’s nearly impossible to cram several chapters in one (or several) night(s) and have any hope of remembering it, so start studying earlier than you think you should.
And Lastly, Step 5.....

• Be positive
  • You **can** do this
  • Don’t focus on too much at once, that can be overwhelming
  • Don’t give up if you don’t do well at first, there’s always ways to do better
    • Do extra credit
    • Study differently next time. It’s not about time entirely, you can study for 20 hours and still do poorly if you are not using your time in the best way. For more info see the “Six Hour D” at: [http://www.psychwww.com/discuss/chapoo/6hould.d.htm](http://www.psychwww.com/discuss/chapoo/6hould.d.htm)
  • Talk to me- This is a general guide for studying but you are all individuals and almost every teacher is willing to give individual time to someone who needs it
  • Don’t wait till the end of the term to seek help if you need it, get it now.
Appendix- Note-taking

Chapter 5 excerpt pages 125-126 (Berger: The developing person...7th Ed)

Exactly how rapidly does growth typically occur? We saw in Chapter 4 that at birth the average infant weighs 7½ pounds (3,400 grams) and measures about 20 inches (51 centimeters). This means that the typical newborn weighs less than a gallon of milk and is about as long as the distance from a man’s elbow to the tips of his fingers.

Infants typically double their birthweight by the fourth month and triple it by their first birthday. Physical growth slows in the second year, but it is still rapid. By 24 months most children weigh almost 30 pounds (13½ kilograms) and are between 32 and 36 inches (81—91 centimeters) tall. This means that typical 2-year-olds are already half their adult height. They are also about 15 to 20 percent of their adult weight, four times as heavy as at birth. (See Appendix A)

Each of the above numbers is a norm, an average or standard for a particular population. Norms must be carefully interpreted. The “particular population” for the norms above is a representative sample of North American infants, who may be unlike representative samples of infants from other regions of the world. To understand norms, you also need to understand percentiles. A child who is average is at the 50th percentile, a number that is midway between 0 and 100, with half of the children above it and half below it.

Percentiles allow a child’s growth to be compared not only with that of other children but also with his or her own prior development. Pediatricians and nurses notice all children whose growth is far from the norms, but they pay closer attention to the ranking: A drop in percentile means that something might be wrong.
Appendix- Note-taking

- My notes on the excerpt
  - In US: Average at Birth: 7.5lbs, 20 inches  Average at 2 years: 30lbs, 32-36 in (1/2 adult height)
  - In US: 2X birth weight at 4 months, 3X by 1 year, 4X by 2 year
  - Growth not linear- it continues but slows after year 1
  - Norms are averages for a particular population (like average in US or average in Uganda)
  - Percentiles- where the kid is compared to the norm 80th percentile above norm, 20th below norm, 50th is norm
  - Comparing a child not just to a norm but to their own previous percentile helps us look for problems/changes in that particular kid (Go from 80th to 40th- may be sick, malnourished)

- Hey look: I turned 4 paragraphs and 21 lines into 6 bulleted notes, I didn’t lose any useful information, and when I study I don’t have to go back and reread the whole thing.