CAN PASS

TI 010 - Thematic

By

Samuel R. Stockwell and Ruth Barber Sullivan

Reformatted by The Clearinghouse Fall 2003
# CAN PASS

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C-A-N PASS: Confront Academic Neglect

Practice Academic Success Skills (CAN-PASS)

By Samuel R. Stockwell and Ruth Barber Sullivan

Reformatted by the Clearinghouse at the University of Texas at Austin in 2003.

Introduction

The academic demands of university life are frequently overwhelming for students. Students may experience difficulty achieving the scholastic standards required for progress toward a degree. Poor academic performance may be attributed to such factors as students neglecting to accept responsibility for school work, insufficient academic skills, personal/emotional concerns, etc. Often, with a little encouragement and guidance, students are able to reverse direction and begin performing successfully.

Purpose and Design

CAN-PASS is a brief structured learning program designed to improve academic effectiveness. It is intended for use with students whose academic performance is unsatisfactory. The ideal number of participants in any program is 10 to 12. A single leader can use this program effectively, although co-leadership is recommended to insure sufficient attention to individual students. The CAN-PASS program is designed to move participants through a series of sequential steps that lead toward the overall goal of enhanced academic performance. The program consists of four one-hour sessions. The first three sessions should be held early in the semester and the final session should follow the receipt of mid-term grades.

Operational Philosophy

The philosophy underlying this program is evident in the title chosen: Confront Academic Neglect: Practice Academic Success Skills (CAN-PASS). It is assumed that the first step in improving academic performance is the acknowledgment and acceptance of current performance (Confront Academic Neglect). Once this has been done, it is assumed that conscious concerted effort is necessary to understand and master specific learning strategies (Practice Academic Success Skills). CAN-PASS focuses upon concrete learning skills as well as on intrapersonal blocks to successful academic performance. By devoting attention to the "whole person" the application and transfer of learning should be maximized.
The central philosophical thrust of CAN-PASS is that academic success is largely a matter of choice. Students are confronted with this overall choice and exposed to a variety of specific behavioral skills that they can either assume or reject. CAN-PASS leaders can provide supportive learning environments, but only the individual participant can decide on the direction and intensity of his or her academic efforts. The final responsibility for the degree of academic success or failure lies with the student.

Goals

As a result of participation in this program, students should be able to assess their academic status and individual learning needs. Students should be able to increase their academic skills and reduce personal blocks to successful academic performance. The most important goal is that students will apply learning from the CAN-PASS program to their individual circumstances and that they will transfer these lessons into their actual academic environments in order to improve academic performance.

Evaluation

The effectiveness of CAN-PASS may be measured by attendance figures, participant and staff feedback, faculty data regarding changes in students’ academic performance, and pre-CAN-PASS versus post-CAN-PASS cumulative point averages. A feedback questionnaire for participants is provided in Appendix A. Appendix B contains a feedback questionnaire for program leaders. An attendance chart is provided in Appendix C.

Materials

The four CAN-PASS sessions are detailed in the "Content" section below. Because each session involves didactic input as well as experiential activities and because there are time limits, a number of handout sheets are included in Appendices E, F, and G. All handouts should be copied and distributed by leaders at the times indicated in the content section of this manual.
Part I

Note: all times given are approximate.

Meeting I – Facing Reality

Objectives

1. To establish a supportive, yet open environment where participants will examine candidly their specific educational situations.

2. To determine exactly the degree of academic improvement needed by each participant.

3. To present the CAN-PASS philosophy that educational performance is based on specific learner choices, and to indicate that academic change is possible.

4. To introduce time-management strategies.

A. Introduction to CAN-PASS (5 minutes)

Leaders introduce themselves and provide a brief general overview of the format and procedures of the CAN-PASS program (four meetings, handouts and homework each week, experiential exercises, etc.).

B. Personal Review (10 minutes)

Participants introduce themselves to the group and each person provides a one-minute review of his or her educational performance history (primary school, high school, college).

C. Examination of Course Load and Needed Improvements (25 minutes)

1. Each participant lists his or her present courses and quality point average (GPA) on a piece of paper.

2. Each member discloses the above information to the entire group.

3. The leaders demonstrate how to compute a GPA and participants determine exactly what GPA they need to achieve during the current semester to remain in school (examine and distribute Appendix D).
D. Choice Awareness (15 minutes)

1. Participants draw a circle on a piece of paper and are asked to divide it in such a way so as to indicate the percentage of each day they choose to:

   • enjoy themselves;
   
   • feel sorry for themselves, or engage in other non-constructive activities such as worrying, avoiding, or wondering;
   
   • attend school;
   
   • perform school work.

   **Example:**

   ![Circle Diagram]

2. Have each participant show his or her circle to one other person and tell that person what the participant would like to change most about his or her circle.

3. The leaders present the core assumption of CAN-PASS — that behavior is primarily a matter of choice. Participants are reminded that they can change overall academic performance by changing the specific choices that they make (sorrowing, enjoying, working, etc.).
E. Transition to Meeting II (5 minutes)

1. The leaders note that the remaining CAN-PASS meetings will expose participants to specific learning skills, and that they are free to choose to assimilate or to reject these skills as they deem appropriate.

2. The leaders distribute a packet of handouts on time management (Appendix E) and instruct participants to read these materials and complete the “Self-Survey on Planning Your Time” prior to the next meeting.

3. The leaders ask participants to keep a daily log of their activities for the next week and to bring it with them to the next meeting. This should be a specific log which includes classes, work, study time, watching TV, meals, etc. The “time management Chart” in Appendix E could be used for this purpose.

4. The meeting is adjourned and the time and place of the next meeting is announced.
Meeting II – Improving Academic Skills

Objectives

1. To reinforce the notion that participants have control over their academic destiny and that scholastic success is the direct result of specific behavioral choices.

2. To teach participants a self-reinforcement technique designed to increase their study time.

3. To establish alliances among participants that facilitate improved academic performance.

4. To have participants create a tentative weekly schedule.

5. To introduce effective study and academic performance skills.

A. Introduction (10 minutes)

1. Leaders highlight the content of Session I and of this session, stressing the core assumption of CAN-PASS: **That students control the degree of their academic success by the specific behavioral choices they make (time management, study habits, etc.).**

2. Participants reintroduce themselves to the group and note a single time management choice that they made during the past week that had an effect on their academic life in some way (either positively or negatively).

B. Self-reinforcement (25 minutes)

1. Leaders emphasize the importance of rewarding oneself for choices that are desired (increased study time, etc.) and not giving self-rewards for undesirable choices (procrastination, etc.).

2. Each participant lists 5 potential rewards (watch TV, talk with a friend, play a game, sleep in, etc.) that he or she could reasonably give him— or herself for increasing attention to schoolwork by at least 30 minutes each day. No reward should exceed the amount of time added to study time.

3. Participants pair off and show their partner their log from the previous week (Session I homework).
With the assistance of the partner, each participant determines how he or she will increase study time for the next week by at least 30 minutes each day and what rewards will be allowed. On any given day, a reward is allowed only if study time is increased by at least 30 minutes.

C. Personal Schedule (10 minutes)

1. Review the handouts for Appendix E. Among these handouts are several tools to help participants analyze their use of time and plan ways to use their time wisely. These include:
   • Time Management Self Checklist
   • Time Management – Time Analysis Think Sheet
   • Suggestions on Scheduling
   • Time Management Chart

   Ask participants if they read these and if they have any questions.

2. Ask the participants to map out a working schedule, using the “Time Management Chart” and the information on the handouts, which includes all weekly activities plus planned study time.

3. Partners contract with each other to adhere to their plans and to monitor each other by a phone call during the week.

4. Leaders encourage participants to continue self-reinforcement while gradually increasing study time each week.

D. Specific Study and Academic Performance Skills (10 minutes)

1. The leaders note that time spent on academics can be maximized by specific study and academic performance skills (concentrating, note taking, listening, etc.).

2. Participants create a list together of the specific skills they think are necessary to study effectively and perform successfully academically. (Examples: concentrating, remembering, reading for speed and comprehension, writing, organizing, reviewing, listening, note taking, exam taking).

3. Leaders distribute the packet of handouts on study skills (Appendix G) and ask participants to read all materials prior to Session III, and to begin practicing the SQ3R method of study.
4. Leaders also ask participants to fill out the “Study Distraction Analysis” before next week’s meeting.

E. Transition to Meeting III (5 minutes)

1. The leaders note that whereas Session I and Session II focused upon concrete behaviors, Session III will examine ways in which one's personal style (anxious, perfectionist, etc.) and beliefs about self have an effect on academic performance.

2. The meeting is adjourned and the time and place of the next meeting is announced.
Meeting III – Understanding Personal Style

Objectives

1. To reinforce positive changes that participants have made.
2. To review basic concepts of previous material.
3. To teach participants to pay attention to the relationship between thinking, feeling, and academic performance.
4. To marshal affective and cognitive resources that can be used to effect increased academic success.
5. To review the academic situation of each participant and to provide support.

A. Introduction and Review (10 minutes)

1. Participants are asked to report on the results of filling out the “Study distractions Analysis.” Leaders may wish to point out common themes.
2. Each participant describes briefly a positive change that she or he chose to make due to reading the study skills materials in Appendix F.
3. Review time management, scheduling, self-reinforcement, and SQ3R principles described in the handouts.
4. Leaders note that, as with the concrete behaviors examined in CAN-PASS thus far, participants have control over intrapersonal dynamics that affect academic performance (motivation, anxiety, etc.).

B. Self-talk (20 minutes)

1. Leaders introduce the concept of inner speech or self-talk. They note that feelings (test anxiety, fear of failure, etc.) are not responses to events (an upcoming test, etc.), but are responses to self-talk (Example: “If I fail this test, I'll lead a morbid existence for the rest of my life,” etc.). Rather than becoming panic-stricken, depressed, or feeling thoroughly worthless, it is possible to change self-talk. (The handout on Self-Talk provides additional information.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Self-Talk:</th>
<th>Can be changed to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EVENT = on probation</td>
<td>SELF-TALK = This is inconvenient but not the end of the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELF-TALK = I'm stupid</td>
<td>FEELING = Hopeful, willing to risk trying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEELING = Hopeless, unwilling to try</td>
<td>FEELING = Hopeful, willing to risk trying</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Participants are given examples of “Self-talk” and “The Worry Cycle” (Appendix G).

3. Leaders elicit examples of negative self-talk. Participants practice changing the examples into positive self-talk.

C. "Sharing" (10 minutes)

In pairs, participants each share a specific current situation where they can attempt to change their negative self-talk into positive talk.

D. Transition to Meeting IV (10 minutes)

1. The leaders announce the time and place of the next meeting (to take place after mid-semester) and encourage participants to practice what they have learned in CAN-PASS prior to this meeting.

2. Each participant describes his or her current academic situation and participants encourage one another.
Part II
Meeting IV – Putting it All Together

Objectives

1. To teach participants effective exam-taking methods.
2. To celebrate positive changes that participants have made.
3. To focus upon remaining individual academic problem areas.
4. To help participants decide on future steps to be taken (where they go to from here).
5. To terminate.

A. Exam Taking (20 minutes)

Using Appendix H, leaders will present effective exam-taking methods.

B. Update (10 minutes)

Participants bring each other up to date regarding their academic situation: how they did on mid-terms, how they are using CAN-PASS, etc. Leaders reinforce successes and help examine problem situations.

C. Focus on the Future (15 minutes)

Participants describe their plans for the future, and the group helps undecided participants explore options (to stay in school, to drop out, to take a leave of absence, etc.).

D. Termination (10 minutes)

1. Leaders note additional resources available to participants (for example: Office of Counseling and Student Development, Career Services, Learning Assistance Center, etc.) at the university or college.
2. Leaders elicit verbal feedback on CAN-PASS materials, their own leadership, etc.
3. Participants and leaders say good-bye.

E. Evaluation (5 minutes): Appendix A is completed by participants and Appendix B is completed by leaders.
## Appendix A - Participant Feedback Questionnaire

1. Below is a list of CAN-PASS sessions. How helpful was each session in enabling you to increase your academic performance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>definitely not helpful</th>
<th>definitely helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session I: Facing Reality</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session II: Improving Academic Skills</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session III: Understanding Personal Style</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session IV: Putting It All Together</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Below is a list of some of the major components of CAN-PASS. How helpful was each component in enabling you to increase your academic performance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>definitely not helpful</th>
<th>definitely helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computing a GPA</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice awareness</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reinforcement</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study and Academic Performance Skills</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-talk</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on the Future</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Discussion</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectures by Leader(s)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handouts</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. How would you rate the overall effectiveness of CAN-PASS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>very negative</th>
<th>very positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Would you recommend CAN-PASS to a student you care about?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>definitely not</th>
<th>definitely yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

5. How could CAN-PASS have been improved?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

6. Comments

_____________________________________________________________________
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Appendix B – Leader Feedback Questionnaire

1. Below is a list of CAN-PASS sessions. How appropriate was each session to the purpose of the CAN-PASS program (increased academic performance)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>definitely not appropriate</th>
<th>definitely appropriate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session I: Facing Reality</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session II: Improving Academic Skills</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session III: Understanding Personal Style</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session IV: Putting it All Together</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Below is a list of some of the major components of CAN PASS. How helpful was each component to the purpose of the CAN-PASS program academic performance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>definitely not appropriate</th>
<th>definitely appropriate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computing a GPA</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice awareness</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reinforcement</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study and Academic Performance Skills</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-talk</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on the Future</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Discussion</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectures by Leader(s)</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. How would you rate the overall effectiveness of CAN-PASS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>very negative</th>
<th>very positive</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Would you recommend CAN-PASS to a student you care about?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>definitely not</th>
<th>definitely yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
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</table>

5. How could CAN-PASS be improved?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
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_____________________________________________________________________

6. Comments:

_____________________________________________________________________
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Appendix C- Attendance Chart

Leader I
___________________________________________________________

Leader II
___________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants:</th>
<th>Meeting I</th>
<th>Meeting II</th>
<th>Meeting III</th>
<th>Meeting IV</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Date: _____</td>
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</table>
Appendix D - GPA Computation Procedures

Computing a grade point average is done in a few short steps. It is a compilation of the average of all the grades in all of your courses. Generally, falling below a 2.0 means you are in academic difficulty. A 4.0 is a straight-A average.

On a 4.0 scale (the one used at The University of Rhode Island), each grade equals a number:

- A = 4.0
- B = 3.0
- C = 2.0
- D = 1.0
- F = 0

Each course has a certain number of credit hours. Most courses are 3 credit hour courses, but they can vary from 1 to 6. In computing your grade point average, note each course, the number of credit hours and the grade received. Then note the number for each grade and multiply the credit hours by the grade number, for example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Grade/No.</th>
<th>Credit Hr. x Grade No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>B = 3.0</td>
<td>3 x 3.0 = 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>C = 2.0</td>
<td>3 x 2.0 = 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>D = 1.0</td>
<td>3 x 1.0 = 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phys Ed</td>
<td>F = 0</td>
<td>1 x 0 = 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Lab</td>
<td>B = 3.0</td>
<td>4 x 3.0 = 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Add the total. In this case the total is 30. Then divide by the total credit hours which in this case equals 14. The grade point average is 2.14.

Total of Credit Hour times (x) Grade Number = 30
Divided by the total credit hours of 14 = 2.14 grade point average

You can do this for all of your courses each semester or all at once. Once you have your GPA, all you need to do to determine what GPA you can achieve for your present semester is to estimate your final grade in each course as if it were completed and follow this same procedure.

Remember that your present GPA and your estimated GPA for the present semester must be averaged and reach a 2.0 for you to be out of academic difficulty. You lose a lot of grade points with an F and gain a lot with an A.

Source: Nancy L. Carlson, Counseling and Career Services, University of Rhode Island, 1981.
# Appendix E: Time Management

## Self-Survey on Planning Your Time For College Survival

This questionnaire is to help you think about how you are using your time. Circle "YES" or "NO" as you answer each question in terms of your current use of time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</table>

*Source: Learning Assistance Center, University of Rhode Island.*
Appendix E: Time Management

Academic Competence and Time Management

Insufficient time is the block to academic competence that is mentioned most frequently by students. This is understandable, since time is our most limited commodity. Students must find time to attend classes, time to hold down a paying job, time to fulfill life-maintenance tasks, time to enjoy some leisure activity, and time actually to sit down and study.

Finding time to study requires two skills; common-sense planning and discipline. Consider these practical suggestions for planning your time and for increasing your ability to be self-disciplined:

1. Set aside a few minutes or an hour (depending on the task) after classes each day to review the material covered in your daily classes. It is easier to review than to relearn. Immediate review retards forgetting and prevents new material from slipping out of your mind.

2. Set aside regular study time(s). Having a routine of studying and never scheduling anything else for that time increases the probability that you will avoid missing study due to poor management of time.

3. Have one particular place where you can go to study. Setting aside a work place helps you to get down to the business of studying and usually cuts down on the number of distractions that you will encounter while studying.

4. Identify your periods of peak efficiency and periods when you are likely to have the best study conditions. Schedule that time for study, especially for studying your most difficult subjects.

5. Be realistic about planning study time. Generally, you will accomplish more with several shorter study periods than with one long study period.

6. Be mindful of your individual attention span and plan your study around it. If 30 minutes is a long time for you to sit and study, start by scheduling your study into 25-minute segments and reward yourself with a 5-minute break. The 5-minute break will serve not only to reinforce your self-discipline but also to refresh and make you more productive.
7. Limit your course load. Take only as many courses as you can handle well. Signing up for more than 12 or 15 credits will require more discipline than you presently have.

8. Allow some unscheduled time in case emergencies arise during your regularly scheduled study periods.

9. Plan some time in your schedule for reaction. Relaxation should be a regular part of your study routine.

10. Consider your study schedule a firm but flexible guide, not as a hard and fast rule.

11. Academic competence begins with sound planning and personal discipline. If you need more information or need assistance in building these skills, contact your own Office of Counseling and Student Development.

*Source: Learning Assistance Center, University of Rhode Island.*
Appendix E: Time Management

Time Management Self-Checklist

Summary of the *Three Phases of Planning Time for Survival*. You might want to use this form as a self-checklist.

**PLANNING THE TERM**

**Step 1. Look at the term as a whole.**

- Obtain term (semester) calendar.
- Tack it in a prominent place where you can view it daily. Spread it out so the whole term is visible.
- Gather information on the requirements of each course (these will be among your high priority tasks for the term).

**Step 2. Work backwards from the due dates.**

- Estimate the time required to prepare and complete each high priority task.
- Break the assignment down into smaller, feasible tasks.
- Record on your calendar your projected time goals for these tasks.
- Divide some of the tasks into mini-tasks you can work on when you have a few minutes to spare.

**Step 3. Self-Contracting**

- Set yourself goals and even rewards for reaching them.
Appendix E: Time Management

PLANNING THE WEEK

Step 1. Look at the week as a whole.
   _____Obtain or make a week's schedule.

Step 2. Schedule all fixed times.
   _____Classes, labs, seminars, recitations etc
   _____Work schedule.

Step 3. Schedule high priority activities during your prime time.
   _____Determine your prime time(s).
   _____Schedule studying for most difficult course(s).

Step 4. Set aside other large blocks of time for studying.
   _____Block out 1-, 2-, 3-, or 4-hour segments on your schedule.
   _____Decide what you will study during each segment.
   _____Decide where you will study during each segment.

Step 5. Make effective use of smaller blocks of time.

Look for 10-, 15-, 20-minute blocks. Check what you can do during this time. Some ideas follow.
   _____Review notes prior to class.
   _____Review notes following class.
   _____Review study cards.
   _____Review reading assignment.
   _____Discuss topic with classmate.
   _____Work on schedule.
Step 6. The 3 R's—Rest, Relaxation, Recreation

______Schedule rest and relaxation (listen to music, write letters, sleep...)

______Schedule physical exercise.

______Schedule meals (bet you were getting worried!)

**PLANNING EACH DAY**

**Step 1.** _____Obtain a pocket calendar.

**Step 2.** _____Write in high priority activities (exams, papers, tests...)

_____Write in goals for meeting deadlines.

**Step 3.** _____Keep up to date with assignments.

_____Keep up to date with notes, reminders, phone numbers.

*Source: C. Cooper, A. Sullivan, & J. Shulman, Making It In College, Michigan State University, 1976.*
## Time Analysis Think Sheet

1. The time management ideas I will use this term are:

5. I am currently spending too much time on:

2. My high priorities for this term are:

6. I can make better use of my “lost” minutes (coffee breaks, wasting time, commuting . . .) by:

3. My prime time(s) (when I’m most effective is/are:

7. One high priority task this term is:

4. I am currently spending too little time on:

8. My favorite escapes (ways of avoiding high priority tasks) are:

Source: Learning Assistance Center, Office of Counseling & Student Development, Univ. of Rhode Island.
Appendix E: Time Management

Suggestions on Scheduling

Make a tentative weekly schedule on a convenient form.

1. List all classes and other fixed activities.

2. Add time needed for meals, sleep, job, travel, grooming, etc.

3. Estimate and list time needed for studying each subject, generally 2 to 3 hours per credit per week. However, individuals vary, some may need more time in certain subjects than others.

4. Find your periods of peak efficiency and periods when you are likely to have the best study conditions. Plan to study your most difficult subjects then.

5. Be very sure to use any free hours between classes.

6. Allow time for preview and review. For example, if you have a free hour between classes, it is wise to spend the beginning of that hour reviewing and revising notes from the preceding lecture. The latter part of the hour may be profitably previewing for the next lecture.

7. Schedule each study period as close to that class meeting as possible.

8. To avoid learning interference, schedule the study of unlike subjects consecutively. For example, it is better to follow study of a language with study of a science than to study two languages one right after the other. If you must study two similar subjects on the same night, try taking a break in between.

9. Be sure to plan some time in your schedule for recreation.

Adapt your schedule to changing situations

10. Allow longer periods in your schedule for term papers and projects the weeks you need to work on these.

11. Be sure to plan your final exam review schedule at least three weeks ahead. Plan to spend time on intensive review several nights before the exam and to use the night before to go over concepts that are still fuzzy.

12. Allow some unscheduled time in case emergencies arise during regularly scheduled study periods.
Note these additional hints.

13. Use odd periods of time for some review or reading. Periods of time spent on a bus or waiting in a dentist's office may be so used.

14. Use periods when you are tired or when your situation is noisy for jobs that do not require much concentration and original organization. Such jobs as sorting cards and notes or preparing materials for the next day's use may be accomplished at these times.

15. Consider your schedule firm but flexible, not as a hard and fast rule.
## Time Management Chart

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<th>Wednesday</th>
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Appendix F: Study Skills

Study Distractions Analysis

Concentration is the number one problem for many students. Frequently, the problem is one of finding a place to study where there are no external distractions. External distractions are those that originate outside the body. Telephone calls, visitors, and noises are examples. Concentration may be difficult when there are too many such distractions present. This checklist will help you analyze distractions in the places you study.

List the three places where you usually study in the order you use them most:

A ___________________ B _______________________ C ___________________

Now circle the column that applies to each of these places T = true; F = false

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Place A</th>
<th>Place B</th>
<th>Place C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Other people often interrupt me when I study here.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Much of what I can see here reminds me of things that don't have anything to do with studying.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I can often hear radio or TV when I study here.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I can often hear the phone ringing when I study here.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. I think I take too many breaks when I study here.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I seem to be especially bothered by distractions here</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I usually don't study here at regular time each week.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. My breaks tend to be too long when I study here.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. I tend to start conversations with people when I study here.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I spend time on the phone here that I should be using for studying.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. There are many things here that don't have anything to do with study or school work. | T | F | T | F | T | F |
12. Temperature conditions here are not very good for studying. | T | F | T | F | T | F |
13. Chair, table and lighting arrangements here are not very helpful for studying. | T | F | T | F | T | F |
14. When I study here I am often distracted by certain individuals. | T | F | T | F | T | F |
15. I don't enjoy studying here. | T | F | T | F | T | F |

**Totals**

Now total the circles in each column. The column which has the most "false" circles is the least distracting place to study. Try to plan your day so that you do as much work as you can there. The following two pages present some material useful in improving concentration.
Appendix F: Study Skills

**Effective Study Behavior Model**

1. Time. Schedules self so that class time and study time totals not more than 10 hours a day. Studies not less than 45 hours nor more than 60 hours each week. Works efficiently. Tries to study minutes of concentrated study at a time, then takes a short break.

2. Records assignments in a book. Has a clear conception of what is required and for when it must be completed. If is not sure, asks questions of the instructor.

3. Gathers necessary materials. Uses all available resources. Asks librarians and instructors for assistance in locating the most appropriate materials.

4. Records information on 3” x 5” cards which can be arranged advantageously.

5. For essay writing, makes a rough outline first. Uses large blocks of time when he or she begins to write. Writes quickly for the rough draft. Puts it aside for 24 hours; then rewrites it. Has someone else read his essay and discusses their comments, leaves essay for another 48 hours, then prepares final draft for typing.

6. Does the most difficult assignments during his or her best concentration periods. Saves rewriting tasks for periods when his or her concentration is not as good. Tries simpler assignments first; therefore building up confidence.

7. Schedules definite time and outline specific goals for study time. Allows at least 2 hours for every subject each week for a review of notes and test content.

8. Asks the instructor questions when clarification of lecture point is needed.

9. Volunteers answers to questions posed by instructor in the class.

10. Participates in class discussions.

11. Asks the instructor (for example, in his or her office) for clarification of lecture information or assignments, or for comments on questions which have arisen from the student’s studies.

12. Engages in formal or informal discussions with classmates on topics relevant to coursework. Clarifies points which had not been clear during lectures or labs. Reviews course content with other students.

13. Interacts with other resource persons on the campus (librarians, tutorial leaders, course assistants) or in the community.

14. Watches diet and sleeping behaviors (eat 3 well-balanced meals a day) and gets at least 7 hours sleep a night.

15. Physical fitness (actively involved in fitness program). Engages in physical activity to break up the monotony of long study periods.
Concentration

Study Environment

The clue to a good study environment is to eliminate distractions which make a bid for your attention. Remember, there is plenty of time to devote to other interesting activities when you are not attempting to study.

1. Have a room free of unnecessary distractions; a far corner in the library is also often desirable. Avoid library tables near the heavy traffic lanes.

2. Form the habit of studying at the same place at the same time of day. Soon the habit of studying when you go to that place at that time will make getting started automatic.

3. Study at a table, not lying down. All of your life you have been going to sleep when you lie down. It is a strong habit, so don't make study more difficult by trying to study in a sleep-prone position.

4. Have adequate lighting throughout the entire room but avoid glare. Maintain adequate ventilation and proper temperature in your room. A hot, stuffy room is too conducive to relaxation and sleep.

5. A dorm room is often not a good place to study. Friends and roommates may not be studying at the same time you are. Many reminders of friends, home, and other activities are present in the room which may compete with the study material.

6. How long to study at once:
   - A long enough block so the material is meaningful.
   - Short enough so you don't get bored or saturated.
   - Take study breaks when it fits into breaks in the material or when you need them—better to take a break than to sit around and feel guilty.
The Strategy of Study

Let's assume that you have worked out a schedule, found a good place to study, and want to study. You're at a library table or desk with all your materials in front of you, and you know what you want to study for the next hour. Now the problem is to make the best possible use of the hour. In the time allotted, you want to learn as much as you can. You want to learn important things and bypass trivial things and you want to remember what you study. Let's find out the best way to go about this.

Each study program must be individualized to fit each student's need. This is due to the fact that individuals progress at different rates and vary in the numbers and kinds of errors they make while learning new skills.

One particular program has been worked out at Ohio State University in an elaborate program for analyzing and treating students' academic problems. In this program the essential rules are condensed into the following formula:

Survey Q3R — Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review.

This program has been proved not only to describe what good students do but to be a safe guide for enormously improving the work that all students, good and poor, can do.
The SQ3R Method of Study

"SQ3R" is a codification of methods actually used by the most successful and efficient college students. The initials stand for steps in the process. Thousands of high-ranking students were interviewed about how they achieved their goals and how long it took them to do so. Their responses were then boiled down into the following formula:

1. Survey.

BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE VARIOUS PARTS OF A TEXTBOOK.
You can learn from a text more efficiently if you know the function of the foreword, preface, summaries, glossary, appendix, bibliography, and index.

LOOK THROUGH THE BOOK FROM BEGINNING TO END. Before you start reading the text, survey the entire book to get an idea of what it is all about. Note the publication date, general layout, chapter headings and subheadings, quizzes, discussion questions, reading suggestions, graphs, pictures, diagrams, summaries, and other aids that the author and publisher have put in to help you understand the material.

READ THE PREFACE. Here the author will tell you the main purpose for writing the book and give you an overview of the subject matter.

SCAN THE TABLE OF CONTENTS. This will show you how the book is organized and how much material is covered. Later on, when you are reading the chapters, the table of contents will continually remind you of the author's entire plan.

LOOK OVER THE LAST CHAPTER OR FINAL PAGES OF THE BOOK. The author will often summarize the main points made in the separate chapters.

SURVEY EACH CHAPTER. Before you read an assigned chapter, preview all the pages. Look for introductory paragraphs or summaries that may be included.

They give valuable clues to the main ideas the author wants to emphasize and also serve as a handy outline. Take special note of chapter headings and subheadings. The way they are arranged will tell you which are the main topics and which are the less important ones.

The survey step sets you up for the job of reading. Thoughtfully done, it even allows you to predict what the author is going to say and is the greatest time saver ever devised for the good student.
2. Question.

WHEN YOU READ A TEXTBOOK, IMAGINE YOU ARE HAVING A DISCUSSION WITH THE AUTHOR. Keep asking questions about the statements being made and the ideas presented. Ask yourself “what,” “why,” “how,” “who,” and “when.” See whether the author is giving answers that satisfy you.

WHAT does a chapter title mean? What are the meanings of the headings and subheadings? What are the important words in each paragraph. What do the tables, diagrams, and graphs demonstrate? What do the concluding remarks signify?

WHY did the author choose to develop ideas in this particular order? Why are certain points emphasized?

HOW does the author's presentation correspond to your instructor's? Is the course sequence the same as the textbook? If not, how and why do you think they differ?

FOR WHOM is the author writing? If it is a history or political science text, for example, is the writer trying to influence the reader's point of view? Might the author belong to a special school of thought and does this attitude shape the book's ideas? Are you sympathetic to that school of thought?

WHEN was the book written? Have new developments made the content or the author's opinion out of date?

ASK QUESTIONS IN CLASS. Bring any inquiries raised by your reading to class and pose them to the instructor and to other students. Your teachers will admire your interest and know that your textbook readings are contributing to your classroom work.

The question step makes you an active, not a passive, reader: you are reading for answers.

3. Read.

IDENTIFY THE AUTHOR'S MAIN IDEAS IN EACH CHAPTER. This should be your primary objective in reading your text assignments. Keep asking, as if you were talking to the author, just what he or she is trying to get across. By focusing on the important ideas and facts, you will not be overtaxing your memory.

CONCENTRATE ON WHAT YOU ARE READING so that you understand each chapter, paragraph, and sentence. Read carefully and thoroughly, giving attention to each sentence and paragraph, so that you can grasp the major ideas and the notable details.

STUDY EVERY GRAPH, TABLE, AND ILLUSTRATION. These visual aids are put in the book by the author and publisher to reinforce important elements. They usually illustrate the material under discussion and highlight major points for you.
SUMMARIZE WHAT YOU READ. Restate the main ideas in your mind after finishing a page and then glance back to see if you are correct. Before closing the text review the major points of material you have read. See if you can jot down the central ideas in the section. If you can, most of the supporting details will return to you rather easily.

STUDY YOUR TEXTBOOK BEFORE EVERY CLASS. By reading each assignment beforehand, you'll be better able to join in the classroom discussion. Participating in class discussion will help you to remember the material you have read. You can easily fall behind in your work if you wait until the professor and other students discuss a topic before you read it.

It is usually wise to read the material by major headings, that is, one major-heading section at a time. Do not underline while you read!

4. Recite.

ASK YOURSELF QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE JUST READ. Look away from the assignment and from any notes you have taken.

MAKE THE DELIBERATE EFFORT TO RECALL THE IMPORTANT POINTS. If you can do so, you have mastered that part of the material; if not, you should reread it.

The recite step is what fixes the material in your mind. It makes reviewing for exams much easier. Understanding while you read is not enough.

5. Review.

REVIEWING IS AN IMPORTANT STUDY SKILL AND SHOULD BE BUILT INTO EVERY LEARNING ACTIVITY. Intelligent review increases our ability to remember. Reviewing ought to become a routine before and after every class or study session.

WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED YOUR TEXTBOOK ASSIGNMENT, BRIEFLY SURVEY YOUR UNDERLINING AND NOTES before you close the book. This two-or-three-minute review will help you retain what you have just learned.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN A NEW READING ASSIGNMENT, REVIEW WHAT YOU STUDIED PREVIOUSLY. Recalling what has already been learned will encourage you to begin another assignment and help you to better understand new material. By following this reading and review process throughout the term, you will find preparation for an exam a simpler matter.

TEXTBOOK BIBLIOGRAPHIES AND SUPPLEMENTS, STUDY GUIDES, OUTLINES, AND WORKBOOKS SUPPORT YOUR READING
ASSIGNMENTS. Although they might not be required, you can be sure additional readings will give you a better understanding of the subject. Often a point that seems obscure in a text can be clarified by more reading on the subject. During review time you might find it particularly helpful to use study guides and workbooks because they usually contain quizzes and self-tests on the material in the text. This, in turn, will give you confidence and better prepare you for examinations.

PLAN YOUR EXAMINATION REVIEW CAREFULLY. Your objective should be to understand the main ideas and important details. Survey and review your class notes, and textbook notes, recalling the important headings and ideas in each. Go from main idea to main idea, using the textbook chapter headings and your instructor's term outline as a guide. If certain items are difficult for you to remember, then re-read the textbook. Otherwise stay with your notes.

Whatever specific study, note taking, and review system you develop, learn to rely on your instructors and your textbooks for basic information. Through consistent study and reading you will grow in knowledge and will have the confidence to question your teachers, your textbook authors, and yourself.

This process of discovery and inquiry is the essence of education.

Is the SQ3R method an easy way to study? Not at first. It's easy to understand and memorize the steps, but putting them into practice will require deliberate effort, and for a while you may find that your older, more passive habits will interfere with the active effort to study. But you can learn to apply SQ3R successfully, and you will find it rewarding.

P.S. The students who originated SQ3R by revealing that this was the way they got results also reported that they had no problem concentrating. The fact is that when you use this method you are concentrating.

*Source: Learning Assistance Center, Office of Counseling & Student Development, University of Rhode Island*
Appendix F: Study Skills

Errors Students Make in Using the SQ3R Method

1. **Failing to turn topic headings into questions.** Many students merely glance at the topic headings, or even overlook them, in reading textbooks. Turning headings into questions by beginning with how, why, where, etc., is an excellent technique to stimulate yourself to think about the content in each section. Ask a question, based on the topic heading, and then attempt to guess the answer before you read. Then read to check your answers.

2. **Taking notes from the book in too much detail.** Bulky notes are not useful. Jot down the key words that will convey the main idea and important details. Don't worry about writing complete sentences. Condense the ideas as succinctly as possible. It will be easier for you to review and recall them then. Writing out the questions you made from topic headings and brief notes will give you a good review test on your understanding and retention.

3. **Failing to use notes for review.** Merely making notes will not help you retain the material unless you attempt to state the ideas in your own words and use your notes systematically for review. Look over your notes and test yourself on them at the end of one week, then two weeks, etc., and again at the time you plan your intensive review for an examination.

4. **Depending on underlining.** Combine underlining with the review step of SQ3R. Otherwise you may be postponing understanding.

5. **Believing that using SQ3R takes too much time.** This is a frequent complaint of students exposed to the SQ3R technique. It takes practice to learn a new study method, but if you take the small amount of time needed to learn it, you can save a great deal of time in the long run, for you will not have to spend hours rereading and re-digesting the total text when examination time looms.

6. **Most important error: using SQ3R rigidly and mechanically.** Alter the SQ3R technique to suit your needs and the difficulty of the course you are taking. If the course is easy for you and your background knowledge of the subject is good, then you may manage by mentally building and answering questions and writing down only those notes that you aren't able to recall. If the course is difficult, on the other hand, and you must make a good grade, then apply the method as it's outlined. You will need to write notes, and review them frequently, to grasp the new and difficult concepts.

*Source: Learning Assistance Center, Office of Counseling & Student Development, University of Rhode Island*
Sleep and Studying

Every semester some students find themselves facing the dilemma of having to read several textbook chapters on the night before an exam or of having to pull an "all nighter" to review for a test. Should you stay up all night, reading and studying material?

Research reveals that deprivation of REM, or dream sleep, will significantly impair an individual's ability to recall and process new information. Recall is greatest when information is studied first before going to bed and when you get a good night's sleep after studying. REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep occurs three to five times per night in 20-minute segments; it plays a significant role in processing new information.

Research studies also show that cramming for tests may be harmful unless the material is already known to the student. New facts cannot be learned with significant recall by studying all night.

A short period of sleep is worse than no sleep. For some reason a short sleep makes information more inaccessible. Research has found, for example, that six hours of sleep produced greater recall than four hours or less.

Here are some guidelines for sleeping and studying:

1. Get at least six hours of sleep after studying.
2. Wait at least an hour after awakening to begin studying.
3. Cramming may help you recall material that you've already learned; however, it will not enhance your recall of totally new material.
4. Study new material before going to bed; REM sleep will help you process the new information.
5. If you're making a choice between waking an hour earlier in the morning or studying an hour longer in the evening, choose the latter. Consolidating your study and your sleep time better utilizes your sleep time and its impact upon recall.

Appendix G: Personal Style

Self-Talk

NEGATIVE SELF-TALK:

“This is really terrible, probably the worst thing that ever happened to me. I just know I'm going to fail this test. I'll make a fool of myself and everyone will know how dumb and worthless I am when I get kicked out of school.”

CAN BE CHANGED TO POSITIVE SELF-TALK:

“Now, wait a minute. Is this really that terrible? Pretty bad, maybe, but certainly not the worst thing that's ever happened to me. And how do I know if I'll really fail this test? Looks like there's a lot of questions I can't answer, but that's happened before and I pulled through. And even if I do fail, so what! That doesn't make me a stupid and worthless person, and if someone thinks I'm stupid because I fail one test, that's their problem not mine. And I probably won't get kicked out of school for failing this test. I may have to do better in my other tests, or pull up my grades in Biology and English, but that's about it. Better cut out this nonsense of upsetting myself and get back to the test and do the best I can.”

POSITIVE SELF-TALK IS A SKILL YOU CAN LEARN

1. It is not really terrible, awful, or catastrophic to fail a test, flunk a course, or not get through college.
2. We don't NEED to be approved by everyone. We can live and survive without everyone's approval.
3. Having others think you're stupid is not the same as being stupid. We don't have to believe everything that's said about us.
4. People have worth, dignity, and value because they "are." People aren't worthless because they don't succeed at something.
5. No one can be competent, adequate, and achieving in all possible aspects.
6. It is not TERRIBLE and AWFUL when things don't go the way we'd like.
7. Worrying about taking tests, performance, how others are doing, etc. will not improve the situation.
8. Besides physical pain, what is there to really be afraid of?
9. Worrying and dreading test-taking situations grossly exaggerates the importance of the role this one test plays in our entire lives.
The Worry Cycle Chart

The Worry Cycle

Irrational Beliefs and Ideas

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reinforce</th>
<th>Lead To</th>
<th>Negative Outcomes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lead To</td>
<td>Leads To</td>
<td>Negative or Irrational Self-Talk</td>
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<td>Inappropriate Feelings</td>
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Appendix H: Exams

Some General Remarks About Exams

Before the Exam

1. Find out what the exam will cover. This will give you a "set" for reviewing.

2. No exam covers everything taught in a course.

2. Find out what kind of an exam it will be: objective, essay, or a combination of both. If it's an essay exam, find out whether there will be several short questions of this type, or whether there will be one or more long ones, or both. Objective exams require a specific type of response from you; essay exams require something just as specific, but different. There are successful techniques for preparing for and taking each kind.

3. Reviewing is a big stumbling block, largely because the task looks so large that the human tendency is to postpone it. This leads to the all-night cram session which sends you into the exam with a blurred mind filled with a jumble of facts and no sense or proportion (There is, however, such a thing as sensible cramming: see below.)

Start reviewing methodically and fairly early. Make human nature work for you.

(a) On reviewing methodically:

Separate review time from work on daily assignment.

Review in short chunks every day—at the most, two hours at a time. (If you work more than that, brain-lag sets in and you're wasting time. If you must work more than that, give yourself a deliberate, unexciting break of ten to fifteen minutes, before you start again. If you're interested in why this is good advice, read pages 31-36 in How to Study and Take Exams by Lincoln Pettit. New York, John F. Rider, 1960.)

Divide the review material in each course into logical sections and concentrate on one at a time. Terminology is a good place to start, if you're weak on it.

Relieve your mind by reviewing your worst subject first. A lot of what is called review is really learning something for the first time, and naturally this will take the most effort.

Re-review your toughest subject just before the exam—the day before, or even the night before. This is a sensible form of cramming, because it really reviews.
(b) On reviewing early:

There is such a thing as reviewing too early, if you have not been thoroughly on top of the material since the course began. Assuming you are an average student and there's plenty you don't remember, the best time to start is probably about two weeks before a major exam if you're fairly weak in the subject, or a week before it, if you're moderately sure of yourself.

Make sure you know certain elementary additional facts about the exam, such as where it is, when it is, and what you are expected and allowed to bring with you. Then get there early, with the appropriate materials.

During the Exam

1. Before you start writing:

(a) Glance over the whole exam. This gives you a "set" on the exam: what it covers, where the emphasis lies, what the main ideas seem to be. Many exams are composed of a series of short questions all related to one particular aspect of the subject, and then a longer one developing some ideas from another area.

(b) Observe the point value of the questions and then figure out a rough time allowance. If the total point value for the test is 100, then a 50 point question is worth about half of your time, regardless of how many questions there are. A quick rule of thumb for a one-hour test is to divide the point values in half.

(c) Underline all significant words in the directions. Many a hapless student has penalized himself because he did not see the word "or," in "Answer 1, 2, or 3." You do not get extra credit for answering three questions in that case.

Enumerate" does not mean "discuss."

If you do not clearly understand the directions, ask the proctor.

2. When you begin to work:

(a) Tackle the questions in the order that appeals to you most. There is nothing sacred about the order in which the questions are asked. Doing well on a question that you feel relatively sure of will be reassuring and will free your mind of tension. The act of writing often unlocks the temporarily blocked mental processes; when you finish that question, you will probably find the others less formidable. On the other hand, you may be the type of person who wants to get the big one off his mind first and have the
easy ones "for dessert." If you are writing in an exam book, be sure to identify the questions early.

(b) Keep the point value and time allowance in mind. This may save you from a very common and panic-producing mistake—such as taking 20 minutes of an hour test to answer a 5-point question, and then finding you have five minutes left in which to answer a 20-point question. It is impossible to score more than five points on a 5-point question!

(c) Work methodically, forcing yourself to do so, if necessary. If you tend to rush at things, slow down. If you tend to dawdle, pace yourself.

3. When you are finished:

Check over your entire paper, for two purposes:

   a. To see if you have left out any questions you meant to tackle later, and to see if you have followed directions.

   b. To catch careless errors.

Note: don't take time to copy answers, unless you're sure they're really illegible. You are not graded on neatness, but on accuracy.

After the Exam

An excellent way to learn how to take exams is to analyze what you've done on one. When you get your paper back, go over it, noting not only what you did wrong, but why. An hour or two spent in this way may be extremely valuable. See if you detect any tendencies, such as getting the main idea and then rushing sloppily through the proofs, or simply not following directions, or boggling down on relatively unimportant items, or misreading questions entirely. The next time you face an exam, consciously watch yourself for the weaknesses.

Also note what you did right! This may save you hours of worry, the next time around. That question on the English test, that haunted you for the next several days, may prove to be the one you did best on. Why did your answer get such a good reception? Often, such analysis proves genuinely reassuring.

*Source: Reading and Study Skills Lab, University of Maryland.
Some “Dont’s” on Answering Essay Questions

1. DON'T RUSH. Time spent thinking before you write is more valuable than time spent writing without thinking. A high-caliber 200-word answer is a great deal better than a rambling, disorganized, incoherent 500-word answer. Never mind if most people around you start writing before you do. They may be writing very bad answers.

2. DON'T ANSWER A QUESTION THAT YOU HAVEN'T BEEN ASKED.
   
   (a) Read the directions. If you are told to answer A, B, and either C or D, you will get no extra credit for answering all four, and you may have wasted valuable time you needed on another question.
   
   (b) Understand the question.

3. DON'T TRY THE SCATTERSHOT TECHNIQUE. Don't fire off all the information you have managed to accumulate, in the hope that some of it will hit the target. Take time to know what the target is, and direct your answer accordingly. Instructors recognize and discount the scattershot technique, and it does not impress them. It irritates them.

4. DON'T GIVE YOUR OPINION UNLESS YOU ARE ASKED FOR IT. This is a common mistake, particularly when you have strong opinions.

   Example: The question is, "In Catcher in the Rye, Holden Caulfield asks a prostitute to come to his room, but then he sends her away. Why does he send her away?"

   Bad answer: "He is ashamed of his immoral desires." Comment: Not only is this untrue, but the writer has made a moral judgment; nobody asked him what he thought of what Holden did. The question asks why Holden did it. Answer such questions in their own terms, from evidence in the text.

   Good answer: "Holden says, 'I just didn't want to do it. I felt much more depressed than sexy, if you want to know.' The girl seemed unfriendly and very young, and Holden was sorry for her."

5. DON'T AVOID WORDS BECAUSE YOU CAN'T SPELL THEM. Just indicate your doubt somehow. Write "sp?" above the troublesome word.

* Source: Reading & Study Skills Lab, University of Maryland.
Test Taking Procedures

You have studied, rested, reviewed and leisurely walked to the testing room. You get to the test – **NOW WHAT??**

Basic test-taking steps include:

1. **Read the directions.** Be sure that you answer the correct number of questions. There may be specific directions, and if you do not read them carefully, you may waste valuable time on unnecessary and possibly incorrect answers. Remember that it is helpful to underline the key term(s) in each question.

2. **Survey the test.** Before you begin responding to questions, skim over the entire test. This allows you to develop your plan for attacking the exam. On an essay exam, choose the questions that you can best answer with main ideas and by using supporting details. On an objective test, answer the "easy" questions first so that you will be certain of answering all the questions that you know before time runs out.

3. **Schedule your time.** Plan the amount of time that you wish to allot to each question, after noting the number of points assigned to each question. Remember to leave time to check over your responses.

4. **Outline Important Points for Essay Questions.** Take time to think before you start to write. You want your answers to be well organized and well thought out. A few seconds of thought will allow you to list the important ideas and the concepts, facts and examples which support the ideas. Once you have your outline, stick to it so that you can write an organized essay.

5. **Check your answers.** Some students answer test questions very quickly and turn in their answer sheets or blue books without double-checking their answers. This careless habit often lowers test scores because careless errors can make a difference between a B and a C grade, or between a C and a D.

6. **Be careful about changing your answers** once you have written them. down on an objective test. Study your responses carefully and change an answer only if you find a flaw in the reasoning that led you to your initial answer.

*Source: Learning Assistance Center, Office of Counseling & Student Development, University of Rhode Island.*