



5-Day Study Plan

With a 5-Day Study Plan, you set yourself up for success by starting early and pacing out your study sessions in a way that maximizes your learning potential so you can do your best on your exams.

We've all heard of college students pulling infamous "all-night" study sessions before exams. And you might have excelled in high school just by cramming in a study session the night before an exam. In college, however, you need to alter your approach.

College exams will likely require you to recall and think critically about more material than you can study in one all-night session. On top of that, researchers have found that students learn more effectively by spreading out short study sessions over multiple days or even weeks than in one or two lengthy sessions. The baseline recommendation for college test-preparation is that, at minimum, you adopt a 5-Day Study Plan.

How to Create a 5-Day Study Plan

- Step 1** Space out your exam preparation over a period of at least 5 days, devoting 2-2 1/2 hours each day to studying.
- Step 2** Divide your material into 4 or more sections or chunks. Each chunk of information will be either prepared or reviewed in a 2-hour study session.
- Step 3** In each study session, prepare and cover a new section of material, then review what you studied the previous day.
- Step 4** Use active study strategies to prepare and review study materials.
- Step 5** Self-test. Attempting to recall information from memory is scientifically proven to aid learning better than repeated review.

Examples of Ways to Prepare and Review

Each preparation strategy (left column) has a corresponding review strategy (right column).

Preparation Strategies	Review Strategies
Develop study sheets	Recite study sheets
Develop concept maps	Replicate concept maps from memory
Make word cards	Recite word cards
Make question cards	Recite question cards

Make formula cards	Practice writing formulas
Make problem cards	Work problems
Make self-tests	Take self-tests
Do study guides	Practice study guide info out loud
Re-mark text material	Take notes on the re-marked text
Make a list of 20 topics that might be on the exam	Recite the list of 20 possible exam topics
Do problems	Do “missed” problems
Make an outline	Recite notes from recall cues
Summarize material	Recite summary out loud
Make charts of related material	Re-create chart from memory
List steps in a process	Recite steps from memory
Predict essay questions	Answer essay questions
Answer questions at the end of the chapter	Practice reciting main points
Prepare material for study group	Explain material to study group

The 5-Day Study Plan Table

Choose one of the strategies from the table above, or your own, and use them in the “Action” columns below.

Day	Action	Material	Approximate Time Needed
Tuesday	Prepare	Oldest/hardest chunk of material	2 hours
Wednesday	Prepare Review	2nd oldest chunk of material 1st chunk of material	2 hours 30 minutes
Thursday	Prepare Review Review	3rd chunk of material 2nd chunk of material 1st chunk of material	1.5 hours 30 minutes 20 minutes
Friday	Prepare Review Review Review	4th chunk of material 3rd chunk of material 2nd chunk of material 1st chunk of material	1 hour 30 minutes 20 minutes 10 minutes

Saturday	None - Relax!		
Sunday	Review Review Review Review Self-test	4th chunk of material 3rd chunk of material 2nd chunk of material 1st chunk of material All material	30 minutes 20 minutes 10 minutes 10 minutes 1 hour
		Total time	11 hours
Monday	TEST!		

Example 5-Day Study Plan

Sample 5-day study plan for an Animal Science course:

Day	Action	ANSC Material	Approximate Time Needed
Saturday	Prepare	Make question cards over History of the Horse	2 hours
Sunday	Prepare Review	Make question cards over Breeds of Horses Review History of the Horse	2 hours 30 minutes
Monday	Prepare Review Review	Make question cards over Methods of ID Review Breeds of Horses Review History of the Horse	1.5 hours 30 minutes 20 minutes
Tuesday	Prepare Review Review Review	Make question cards over Anatomy, Conform, and Gaits Review Methods of ID Review Breeds of Horses Review History of the Horse	1 hour 30 minutes 20 minutes 10 minutes
Wednesday	Review Review Review Review Self-test	Review Anatomy, Conform, and Gaits Review Methods of ID Review Breeds of Horses Review History of the Horse Self-test all material	30 minutes 20 minutes 10 minutes 10 minutes 1 hour
		Total time	11 hours
Thursday	TEST!		

Reference:

Van Blerkom, Dianna. *Orientation to College Learning*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2004.

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