

BHS Tutorial- GUIDE TO PREPARING FOR MIDTERMS



First, organize your subject binders !

- Locate the “Expectations” handout that describes how to set up your notebook
Check to make sure you are following the correct format for your teacher
- Sort all your papers into their correct section, use reinforcers where necessary
- Make a master study schedule for the 2 weeks prior to exam.
Prioritize your time and tasks in order of importance. Do most important things first

Organizing Your Class Notes for Midterms

STEP 1 Make sure you have all your notes - get copies from classmates for anything missing

- Option 1: **Highlight** all of the important aspects of your notes
- Option 2: **Reduce** notes into a bare **outline** with just important events or key words

STEP 2 Use the review sheet your teacher hands out

- Option 1: Test yourself orally, or **quiz each other** with study partners
- Option 2: **Fill in the outline** from memory after you have read through your notes.
Go back and look up anything left blank.

STEP 3 Final review phase: Make connections between Topics

- Option 1: Talk it out - Explain a section of your notes to someone else in the class.
Ask them to fill in any points you left out, or ask you questions
- Option 2: Put headings on columns like major figures, major documents, events, politics, economics, social, religion, etc. Transfer information from the review sheets into the proper columns. Talk about how the columns are connected and see causes and effects.

Essay Preparation

STEP 1 Try to anticipate essay questions by asking yourself:

- What were the key themes?
- What could you compare and contrast?
- What are some themes which have appeared in multiple units?
- What is the relevance of the information to contemporary issues and to other units?

STEP 2 Develop outlines

- Gather evidence from your notes which they might use in the essay
- Talk through the outline

STEP 3 Practice writing

- Practice writing the essay from the outline

STEP 4 Review past essays

- What types of questions are typical?
- What were your strengths in past essays?
- Where could you improve?

Improving your memorization skills

1. Make flashcards for definitions/formulas

- Include a contextual example on the card
- If studying event-based testing (e.g., history, literature): Shuffle cards and describe the connection between 2-3 random cards.
- Test yourself on both sides of the flashcard (e.g., given vocabulary word, provide definition OR given definition, provide vocabulary word).

2. Create acronyms or acrostics

Acronym—“HOMES” for the Great Lakes: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior;

Acrostic—“Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally” for order of operations:

(Parentheses, Exponents, Multiplication, Division, Addition, Subtraction)

3. Write the acronym or other reminders at the top of the test as soon as the test is given to you.

- 4. After memorizing, test yourself by creating a practice test made up of homework or class questions with the concepts in a random order.**
- 5. Map concepts using links to show relationships (aka “concept mapping”).**
- 6. Keep a warning list of mistakes that you commonly make by reviewing quizzes and homeworks that cover material similar to what is being tested.**
- 7. Categorize information; group or outline the concepts in the topic you are studying.**
- 8. Create a rhyming scheme (“Brown v. Board of Education / ended public school segregation”)**
- 9. Repetition: Write it 5 times, say it 5 times, have someone read it to you (or listen to a recording) 5 times.**
- 10. Review for a number of consecutive days prior to test, rather than just one.**
- 11. Force yourself to spend more time reviewing material that you have trouble with, rather than reviewing material you know well.**

Additional tips for success.....

Boost your self-confidence by managing exam stress.....

Before the test:

- Know how much of your grade the midyear is worth.
- Know the format of exam and what is going to be on it (does it cover all 1st and 2nd Quarter)
- Organize materials (reference sheets, notes, HW, past tests).
- When are the teacher's office hours? When can you ask questions?
- What areas do you need to focus on more?
- Keep a "regular" schedule.
- Have a study space (distraction free).
- What study skills have worked in the past?
- Use positive feedback/affirmation!
I've accomplished a lot already! I can do this!
- Avoid panic stricken classmates

During the test:

- Take a deep breath. Think positive thoughts.
- Read all directions.
- Keep track of time.
- Do the easiest questions first.
- If you finish early, check over your answers!

After the test:

- It's done! Treat yourself!
- Reflect on what worked.

Study tips from research on the best exam strategies ...



☞ **Do not cram** students who sleep 8 or 9 hours a night do better than those who sleep less.

☞ **Review regularly** if you go over your notes every week, you are 60% ready for your test.

☞ **Repetition works** it is more efficient to review for short periods over many days than the reverse.

☞ **Break up the time** for example, your brain will remember better if you study in three sessions of 20 minutes each rather than 1 continuous hour.

☞ **Reward yourself** call a friend, check your email, make a snack when you've finished a study session.

☞ **Study with others** share notes, quiz each other, make it fun!