

Some words to the wise...

Semester exams are an important part of your academic career. In many cases, they can make or break a grade or give that B the boost it needs to be an A. Your semester average is the grade that stays on your permanent transcript (that all-important document colleges look at). The average is made up of your 1st nine weeks grade (40%), 2nd nine weeks grade (40%), and exam (20%). You should devote plenty of *quality* time preparing for your exams—even the ones you think are going to be easy. I have listed some simple study strategies that will help you prepare for these important exams and, hopefully, will help you keep your stress level down. Follow these steps for every subject area:

- Prioritize
 - Determine the class that you feel will be the most difficult and make sure you are scheduling plenty of time for that particular class.
 - Organize all of your notes for every class
 - Put them in the order that they come in on your study guide—or
 - Put them in order by most difficult to least difficult
 - This would be a good time to throw away the things you no longer need.
- Create a study calendar and time chart, for example:
 - Wednesday, December 13
 - 3:35-5:30 Practice
 - 5:45-6:15 Dinner
 - 6:15-7:00 Study Science
 - 7:00-7:15 Break
 - 7:15-8:00 Study Social Studies
 - 8:00-8:15 Break
 - 8:15-9:00 Study Spanish
 - Hold yourself to this schedule! Talk to your friends and family about the importance of sticking to this schedule so that they will not distract you. Also, set up *rewards* for yourself if you do well.
- What to do with your 45 minute study time:
 - Do:
 - Study in a well-lit, distraction-free room.
 - Sit at a table or desk.
 - Follow your study guide, piece by piece, and highlight important notes.
 - Rewrite notes that are messy or are especially difficult to commit to memory.
 - Don't:
 - Study in front of the TV
 - Study while listening to music (Classical music is actually good for brain stimulation, though.)
 - Eat while you study...especially junk and caffeine. Mints/gum are okay.
 - Study in pajamas or lay down in bed/on the couch to study.
- What to do with your 15 minute break:
 - Eat a snack
 - Rest—set an alarm
 - Text/social media/etc.
 - Avoid watching TV—you'll get hooked on a 30-minute sitcom or, worse, an hour drama