

Test Preparation

1. **Begin preparing early.** Always pay attention during class and do the assigned homework problems. Review daily and weekly, and then do a major review one week before your exam.



2. **Don't just memorize formulas.** Make up a sheet with all the formulas you need to know and learn them. Make sure that you understand the concepts involved. Concepts will stay in your memory longer and are less likely to be forgotten under the stress of a test.

3. **Form a study group.** Not only will other students be able to help you with problems, but by helping others you will better learn the material. Meet together in the group study room in the MARC.

4. **Know the vocabulary.** Know the terminologies related to tests in general such as explain, define, identify, list, etc. Know the terminologies related to your test topic such as simplify, reduce, factor, solve, rationalize, etc.

5. **PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE!** Work mixed problems in chapter reviews, old tests the professor has made available, and review books.

6. **Use study helps.** Use checklists, note cards, learning maps.

7. **Do practice tests.** You can create sample tests for yourself from study guides and class notes that have the correct answers listed so you can check your solutions.

8. **Take care of yourself.** Get plenty of sleep the night before the test. Sleep is essential for higher order thinking. Make sure you eat a good meal before the test. Your brain cannot do math on coffee alone.

9. **Check your materials.** Know what you will need, such as paper, pencil, erasers, calculator, graph paper, batteries, ruler, etc.

10. **Know your calculator.** If you are not familiar with how a particular calculator works, your calculations may be incorrect or it may slow you down.

Test Taking

1. **Scan the exam.** Know what is expected of you. Note how many questions there are and decide where you would like to begin.
2. **Prioritize items on the test.** Do the problems you are most confident about first.
3. **Pace yourself.** Be aware of time. The problems which are worth more in point value should receive more time. If you get stuck on a problem move on and come back to it later.
4. **Create your own formula chart.** When you first get the actual test, write down any key formulas in the margin of your paper or on the back so if you forget them when you're in the middle of the test you can look back at the formula.
5. **Read the directions carefully and completely before beginning.** Don't forget to answer all parts of the question. Make sure you are answering the question that is being asked!
6. **Clearly show each step of the solution.** Many instructors give partial credit if you miss the answer but have the procedure correct. Don't leave any questions blank. Write down anything you know about that question.
7. **When necessary start over on a clean sheet of paper.** If you know the answer to a question is incorrect and you cannot find your mistake, start over on a clean piece of paper. Starting over on a clean piece of paper will let you focus on the question, not on trying to find the error. Make sure you follow your instructor's guidelines for using separate pieces of paper.
8. **Remain confident!** Do not get flustered! Focus on what you DO know, not on what you do not know. You know a LOT of math!!
9. **Check all results.** Plug your answer back into the problem to make sure it works (this is particularly important for word problems). Check for careless errors like +/- signs. Check your calculator work. If time allows at the end of the test, rework the problems.
10. **Use all of your time.** Give yourself the entire test period to finish and do not get spooked because others leave early. You do not know that they completed the entire exam.

