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Download Article The best studying & test-taking strategies for any open note exam Download Article An "open book exam" is a test that allows you to use the text or material you have been studying throughout the exam. At first, you might assume that you can just look up your answers on the day of the test (making this a very easy type of test to
take), but that's not how an open note exam often works. If you have an open book test coming up, rest-assured that this guide will tell you everything you need to know about preparing for and taking your open-note exam—plus expert test-taking tips from academic tutor Jake Adams! Start with the questions you can answer easily, without your notes.
Save more challenging or time-consuming questions for the end of the test. Read each question carefully and proofread your answer fully address all parts of the questions you can answer easily (without notes). This strategy will save you time by
allowing you to get through certain questions without fumbling through you're ead up having to leave some questions you're really struggling with and come back to them at the end of the test when you've had time to calm down and
gather your thoughts. Sometimes, the other questions on the exam can even help you answer others or remind you of a concept you forgot! 2 Read each question, read every word carefully and underline any words, phrases, or sentences that are key to what
the question is asking. Make sure you understand all parts of the question before giving an answer—most teachers and professors will help you if you don't understand what the question itself means.[2] As you begin to formulate your answer is relevant answer is relevant to the question. A succinct but relevant answer is better than
a lengthy, unrelated one. If your answer to a question involves quotes or citations, avoid copying a long passage or quote over from your notes into an answer that clearly and efficiently answers the exam question. Similarly, make sure your final
answer completely answers all key parts of the question before moving on. Advertisement 3 Review and proofread your answers, if time allows. If you have time left at the end of the exam, go through the questions one more time to look for mistakes—using your notes
if possible, especially when it comes to information that's easily mixed up, like dates, names, vocab, and equations. [3] If you feel like you gave an overly-brief or weak answer to any specific questions, take a moment to flesh them out and improve them. However, don't use this time to doubt yourself and end up changing correct answers to incorrect
ones. Most often, your gut instinct is correct, so only fully change your answers if you remembered or found something that proved your initial response wrong. 4 Manage your time effectively throughout the exam. When the exam begins, take note of how much time you have to complete the exam, as well as how many questions are on the test.
Roughly estimate how much time you have to spend on each question. During the exam, keep track of time passing and adjust your speed if you need to increase or decrease your pace at any time.[4] Adams emphasizes the importance of "understanding how much time you should spend per question and having a plan for when to say, 'I've had enough
of this question and I need to move on.' Realize that you can use your time efficiently by just not spending it all in one place."[5] 5 Stay as calm and relaxed as possible throughout the test. Exam anxiety can affect performance, so make sure you know good strategies to keep your nerves in check in the exam room. Remember that you can only do your
personal best on this exam, and you've done everything you can to prepare for this moment.[6] If you start to feel nervous during the exam, take a moment to stop. While time may be an issue, plowing through an exam despite feelings of anxiety will lead to a poor overall performance. Allow yourself to stop, close your eyes, and take several deep
 breaths to calm yourself before continuing. To help with your anxiety before the test, stop studying at least an hour before the exam and use this time to look after yourself. Take a walk or eat something light. If you're poring over material right before an exam begins, you'll likely psych yourself out. Put yourself into a good headspace before the exam
by getting a good night's sleep the night before and giving yourself extra time to arrive at the exam location and get comfortable. Getting lost or running late can increase anxiety and affect performance. Advertisement 1 Find out exactly what "open book"
means to your professor or teacher. In some cases, you may be allowed to use all of your textbooks, all of your lecture notes, or anything you want! In other cases, you may only be allowed to bring with you—e.g., a 3x5 inch (7.6x12.7 cm)
index card. Knowing this information will help you understand exactly how to study for your test and what type of reference materials you must prepare for exam day. 2 Organize your notes or create a study sheet ahead of time. You don't want to walk into your exam with a stack of papers covered in random facts and figures. Depending on what's
allowed in your exam, organize your collection of notes from throughout the exam, organize them in a way that will best suit your needs during the exam. We recommend sectioning your notes by topic and creating an outline of your notes with key
themes, ideas, and how each topic connects to the others. Also, it's helpful to create a cover page for your notes with the most important information on it. List equations, key terms, dates, and any other information that may be tricky for you to recall and will likely show up on the exam. If you're only allowed a single sheet of paper or notecard to
compile your notes on, you'll have to approach this a bit differently. Memorize the most basic and details in an organized way. Write as small as possible (to fit more notes on the page!) without sacrificing neatness or legibility. If your instructor specified that you must
cite sources on your exam, generate these citations ahead of time so that you can easily copy them over during the exam. 3 Locate and mark key information in your textbook beforehand. If your exam permits you to take your book in, organize your textbook beforehand to help you locate key information quickly and easily.[8] If allowed, highlight key
terms, historical dates, equations, and other difficult-to-memorize materials that you might need to draw from for questions. Jot down notes in the margins with multicolored sticky notes to highlight important information (especially if you're not
allowed to write directly in your textbook). Use different colors of sticky notes to indicate different areas of focus, if needed. Even if your open note exam doesn't allow the use of a textbook, these strategies may still help you in preparing for the exam. Organizing your book during the course of a class can help you easily spot key information while
studying and may even help you better retain information. 4 Focus on the most relevant and challenging topics. We're sometimes tempted to study or transcribe entire books or entire lectures when prepping for open book exams—after all, you never know what a teacher or professor might ask! However, this method is not only incredibly time
consuming, it's actually ineffective. You'll end up scrambling through pages and pages of notes and run down the clock during exam time.[9] Instead, pay attention to where the most focus is placed during lectures. If something is written on the board, repeated, or discussed for an extended period, it will probably show up on the exam. Include those
subjects in your exam notes.[10] Listen at the end of lectures for what your instructor ends the lesson with. Oftentimes, your teacher or professor will provide a brief closing statement that summarizes the most important takeaways from that day's class. Note these takeaways and include them in your study plan. Compare notes with classmates. If
certain subjects overlap across all of your notes, these are probably important areas on which to focus your studying for the exam. You can also see what key issues you might have missed in your own notes[11] Prioritize concepts and bits of information that you really struggle with. If you're pretty sure you have a certain concept memorized, don't
bother including it in your notes or study guide for the exam. Instead, include topics from the class that you have a hard time remembering. 5 Study to understand the material—not just memorize it. Studying for an open book exam can be tricky, as the skills required are not as easy to test as simple memorization.[12] However, there are tricks you
can use to make sure you're prepared for an open book exam: Develop your own commentary on information. As you'll be tested primarily on interpretation, write down your own commentary and insights in your notes. Challenge yourself to explain what you think about the material, and why. This strategy will help hone your critical thinking skills,
which will be needed for an open book exam. Use practice questions while studying. Open book exam questions promote a genuine understanding of the course material, so quizzing yourself using model questions provided by your instructor is a great way to make sure you're prepared going in. Even if you don't have practice questions supplied by your instructor is a great way to make sure you're prepared going in.
your teacher, try to anticipate potential test questions and prepare answers ahead of time. Team up with other study groups are great for any type of exam, they can be especially helpful for an open book. Rather than quizzing one another on materials, you can discuss and debate information from class. This approach helps
you learn how to apply the information you learned. Advertisement Open book exams allow the use of notes, textbooks, or study guides. Throughout the course of an open note test, students can refer to their notes, books, or study guides. Throughout the course of an open note test, students can refer to their notes, books, or study guides. Throughout the course of an open note test, students can refer to their notes, books, or study guides.
memorization, open note exams are meant to teach students how to take information and apply it in a thoughtful, deep manner. [13] For example, a Shakespeare test is unlikely to ask you "What is Romeo's family name?" More likely, you'll see a question like "Using citations, explain why Romeo's family contributed to his eventual death." Open note
tests are often graded more strictly with more difficult questions and higher expectations. Because instructors know that you can consult your notes to answer each question, they're more likely to expect correct and well-researched answers. There are generally two types of open book exams: a restricted type and an unrestricted type. In a restricted
exam, material is limited to specific documents (e.g., a single page of notes or a single textbook). In an unrestricted exam room or take-home test. If you have any questions or concerns on what you can and can't bring into the exam room, do not hesitate to contact your teacher or professor and
ask beforehand. Whether you're prepping for an open note exam or a full-on memorization test, formal assessments require just as much strategy as they do learning and studying tips from Adams: Making study schedules: "For standardized tests, [start]
studying] anywhere from three to four weeks before your test date. For your academic tests, you're probably looking at about two weeks before any big exam."[14] Catching up on rest after cramming: If you've crammed the night before a test, "see if there's a possibility for a nap, because naps put you into your REM sleep cycle and studies have
shown that entering REM is helpful for reintegrating memory. Otherwise, find ways to take a break and do your best to refresh your memory with your notes and study guides right up until the test time. That way, you can eliminate some memory loss that you are probably going to have because you didn't have very good sleep."[15] Staying motivated
to study: "Part of the problem is that the task ahead is really daunting. Start to think of [how you can] build in breaks or rewards for yourself. Have a plan and then know that you're going to do this thing you don't want to do, but that it gets you to something you do want to do: 'I do want to take a 15-minute break to call my friend or go outside for a
walk, but first I'm going to get this task done."[16] Staying positive: "Be realistic. If you make a [study] plan and see that it's just not possible and you only get through about 80% of it, you're still going to probably do okay in the class...You've done the best that you can...and you've put in the full effort. After that, it kind of takes this weight off of your
shoulders of having to be perfect. Instead, it's, 'I have to do the best I can in any given circumstance. And that's all I can do.'"[17] Advertisement Add New Question What is the best strategies for an open book exam? Skim through it. Read for flow. You are most
likely timed. You can take notes and skim through those too. Or you can use sticky notes and put them on each page as a summary of the page. The last thing you want to do is re-read the whole entire book. If you are not allowed to use notes in the textbook, then study the notes you would take on a separate piece of paper. At most you need to know
generally where things are in the book so that you can find them quickly for the answer. Question I have a big closed-book exam in science. I have to memorize, apply and analyze information. There are about 300 words and 100 concepts. I can't use anything other than my brain and a pencil. You may have to make flash cards or ask the teacher for a
study guide. If that is applicable, try to make a game on Kahoot. You may need an account, but it's free. Ask a Question Advertisement Thanks 
unsure of a question, jot down the problem number on a separate piece of paper to remember to return to it. This keeps you from spending too much time on it so you have more time to answer questions you do know. Before the test, prepare a list of questions the test might have. This gives you an idea of what might be on the test and helps you
 Monica, California based online tutoring business offering learning resources and online tutors for academic subjects K-College, SAT & ACT prep, and college admissions applications. With over 14 years of professional tutoring experience and access to a network of
excellent undergraduate and graduate-level tutors from top colleges all over the nation. Jake holds a BS in International Business and Marketing from Pepperdine University. This article has been viewed 330,328 times. Co-authors: 19 Updated: October 29, 2024 Views: 330,328 Categories: Tests and Exams Print Send fan mail to authors Thanks to all
authors for creating a page that has been read 330,328 times. "The article helped me. Time management is very important and always when I read I should rest enough before the exam."..." more Share your story IMPORTANT NOTE: Open-book exams are
NOT easier than closed book exams - oftentimes they are harder. An open-book exam will require you really understand material and be able to apply or analyze information and content rather than just remember it. This means you definitely need to study and get organized since you won't be able to just memorize information! You don't want to
waste valuable exam time looking for things or looking at materials for the first time. You will need to be organized with the materials you are allowed to use. 1. Understand what "open-book" means different things in different situations, and it's your responsibility to make sure you know what you are and are not allowed to access
during the test. Your notes? Textbook or other books? The internet? Friends, a TA, or parents? A tutor? You need to know the if the exam is multiple choice, problem-solving, or essay based. You will also need to know how much time you have to
complete the exam. Every instructor and exam is different, so check Canvas and the syllabus to get that thing clarified. 2. Study: Preparation is key! Remember, open book does not mean that you don't need to prepare or study! This is even more important if your
open book exam is timed. Because open-book exams require you to use "higher levels of thinking", you won't just be asked about facts or to recall. Instead you will be asked to compare, analyze, evaluate, or synthesize information. These ways of demonstrating your knowledge are more challenging than just spitting back facts and require that you
deeply know the material and are able to see connections. 3. Organize your reference materials - the more you need to look through to find what you need. Be selective in what you have available, and whatever you decide to use or bring as reference
materials needs to be organized. Organize your notes - though lots and lots of notes might help you feel more prepared, it might just be more to look through. Identify main themes and topics, summarize important information, organize notes by topic, identify how topics are connected, etc. Prepare your materials - create indices of key topics and
identify where you can find more information on each of them, bookmark important pages/chapters, prepare a list of key information (formulas, definitions, etc.), etc. 4. During the exam, manage your time effectively Just like with any exam, look over all the questions first before you begin answering. Once you've gotten a sense of all the questions,
start by answering those you are familiar with and then move on the to more difficult questions that require you to use your reference materials. Sometimes with open-book exams students might be tempted to keep adding information or to keep going back to check answers again and again (especially if you have a few days to take the exam). It
is important to not over-answer questions - you should be thorough and accurate, but also concise. And, don't over-quote either - your own analysis is critical. 5: Don't forget: You still need to study! I think we've said this a few times already, but it is important, so we will say it again: even if your exam is open-book, you should still develop (and
implement!) a study plan. Up Next: How to tackle exam questions Unlike traditional closed book exams where students are required to rely solely on their recall of exam topics, open book exams allow students to consult reference materials (notes, textbook, etc.) in the course of completing the exam. But don't be deceived. Just because an exam is an
open book doesn't mean it will be easier, or any less challenging, than a closed book exams place focus on higher level learning and typically require students to evaluate, analyze, or synthesize information, rather than simply
remember it. The strategies outlined below will help improve your performance on open book exams focus on "higher level learning". What does this mean? It means that you don't focus on rote memorization or recall. The purpose of the open book exam is to test your understanding of a subject matter. You'll be asked to formulate
compare, analyze, evaluate, or synthesize information, rather than just recall it. Consequently, open book exams are often more challenging than other types of tests, you must adequately prepare. Approach your
preparation for an open book exam like you would any other test. One of the biggest mistakes students make when preparing for an open book exam, extensive notes, textbooks and other reference materials can quickly become a crutch rather
than an asset. Don't expect to have time to review your notes, re-read your textbook, or discover new information on a separate sheet of paper right after getting the test. This will decrease the time you spend using the book. It is
very probable that you will not complete the test if you use it for every question. There is a famous quote by Barbara Benedek which says, "More isn't always better. Sometimes it's just more." This could very easily be applied to open book exams. In the case of open book exams, and test reference materials, not only is more sometimes just more,
sometimes it's actually less. Taking extensive notes, books and other reference materials to an open book exam is rarely beneficial, in fact, in most cases it will hinder performance. Your reference materials should be exactly that, "reference materials should be exactly that, "reference materials. Make sure all reference materials should be exactly that, "reference materials should be exactly that, "reference materials should be exactly that the exam are organized and that you know ahead of
time exactly where all information is that you may need to assist you in answering questions. Carefully select what you can quickly find important information once the test has begun. In preparation for your open book test, identify key concepts and
terms which will more than likely appear on the test. Use your class lecture notes to pinpoint what the instructor is likely to include on the exam. After you've done this, locate where this information is covered in the book you're permitted to use for the test or in your notes. Once you've begun your test, with respect to your reference materials, your
main concern is locating information, not studying it. You should come to the test already having studied all key concepts and topics. If it's permitted, highlight sections of the book where important subjects are covered. Also, write notes in the book's margins to utilize during the test. It is also useful to place post-it notes with important information in
key sections of the book for easy accessibility during the test. In the case of open book math and science exams, list out important data and formulas separately for easy access during the test. Many students do not familiarize themselves with key concepts before open book tests. Students often figure that they can simply look up answers while they're
taking the test. However, open book tests usually cover more information and take longer to complete than traditional tests. You'll likely run out of time if you rely on your book for every answer. Your book and notes should only be used as reference resources for difficult questions or questions that require specific information. Never copy information
directly from the book and pass it off as your own work or answer on an open book test. Teachers are concerned with what their students have learned, not whether they can locate information in a book. It is permissible to use quotes from the book, or lecture notes, to support your positions or analysis, but do not rely too heavily on them. The same
time management rules that apply to general test taking also apply to taking open book tests. First, at the offset of the test review how many questions you are familiar with before answering those that are more difficult or will require using your
reference materials. Finally, don't over answer questions. Be concise, accurate, yet thorough. This will make it possible to complete the open book test on time and achieve a higher score. Once finished, you should spend any extra time reviewing and proofreading your work for grammatical or spelling errors. For general test preparation tips we
recommend: Similar Posts: 35 of the BEST Educational Apps for Teachers (Updated 2024) Using Generative AI Tools to Improve Learning Outcomes 25 Tips For Improving Student's Performance Via Private Conversations Open Book and Take Home exams don't need to be scary and you can prepare for these unique exam opportunities too. We have
three key strategy areas to help you excel on your next open-book or take-home exam. What to Expect How to Prepare What 
professors will be looking to test your ability to understand and explain larger concepts. This could be through displays of understanding (ex. compare/contrast), evaluating (ex. critiquing, examining, defending), or creating (ex. design something new
proposing a plan). Syllabus as compass. Your course syllabus will outline the learning outcomes and goals your professors have navigated and addressed throughout the course. Use this as a compass of the likely topics they will want to see you show knowledge about. How to Prepare Review exam expectations. Make sure to note the exact date, time,
format, and location for submission. If it is an open book exam, verify if it will be done in-person or online. If it is take home, verify how you are expected to submit the exam and be familiar with that platform. Finally, confirm if the exam is expected to submit the exam is expected to submit the exam and be familiar with that platform. Finally, confirm if the exam is expected to submit the exam and be familiar with that platform.
of exam questions. It is important to know if the exam will be multiple choice, problem based questions, or essay questions. Know what resources are approved for use during the exam; note those which may be prohibited. Review course syllabus
for any materials that the professor requires, recommends, or promotes. Make your notes make sense. Organize your resources in a meaningful and comprehensive way for quick reference during the exam. Consider having tabs, specific highlighter colors or icons for themes of information, creating concept maps or organizational charts for
information, creating a master formula reference page, and even embedding reference information within your notes of original resource used. What to Avoid Time loss. Know the exact length of time you have for your exam and compare this to the number of questions on your exam. Create benchmark times to allocate to each question. Then begin
with those questions you feel most confident in answering. For example, if you have a 60 minute exam with six questions, you have 10 minutes per questions questions. Not reading your exam questions. Don't rush through your
exam, read the question thoroughly and make sure you understand, a) what the question is asking, and b) how it wants information presented. Academic dishonesty. Be sure to maintain academic integrity by using your own words and paraphrasing when completing questions. Also, paraphrasing allows you to pull in multiple sources at once and
create large statements personalized to you. Not studying. Open book and take home exams need the same preparation as closed book exams. Review your notes from the semester and start creating your exam resources. Aim to understand your course's information to the level you could teach it to your peers during a group study session. Not being
familiar with the technology. If you are completing an online exam, double check you are comfortable with the exam platform and/or how to submit your exam. Additional help and live support chat is available on the CITL Student Resources website. Open Book Test: Student Reference Guide Having all of your resources to use during an open book or
take home exam can feel overwhelming instead of helpful for some students. Consider using our Student Reference Guide to create a clear path between the key concepts/themes/topics you studied and the resource you learned it from. Looking for more strategies and tips? Check out MUN's Academic Success Centre online! References Center for
Instructional Technology and Training. (n.d.) Bloom's taxonomy. University of Florida. Retrieved November 21, 2021 from R. (2021, April 19). Exam preparation: Strategies for open book exams. Simon Fraser University. (n.d.) Preparing for an online, open-book exam. Trent University. Retrieved November 21, 2021 from Writing an exam
remotely probably wasn't your original plan, but Academic Skills can offer some helpful tips as you mentally prep for new exam formats! Many instructors have transitioned to open-book exam While ope
exams offer the opportunity to look through notes during the test, they are not necessarily easier than closed-book exams focus on synthesis, analysis, and
application, rather than memorization. This means that open-book exams generally require higher-order thinking and writing skills. It is more tempting NOT to study for an open-book exams generally require higher-order thinking and writing skills. It is more tempting NOT to study for an open-book exams generally require higher-order thinking and writing skills. It is more tempting NOT to study for an open-book exams generally require higher-order thinking and writing skills.
of the keys to writing a successful open-book exam: Protect your Academic Integrity All work you submit for credit must be individual, original, and free from unearned advantage. For an online, open-book exam, it is important that you understand what materials you are permitted to access and reference. You may be limited to use of your course
notes and textbook, which means you should not access your web browser, social media apps, or messaging platforms during the exam. Take note of all exam instructions in advance of the exam date, and if necessary, ask for clarification on permitted materials. It is also important to note that you should not be posting or accessing exam questions
or responses to questions on sharing sites or social media. Learn more about the Academic Integrity Policy and How to Protect your Academic Integrity in Online Learning. Steps to prepare efficiently and effectively. Step 1:
Understanding expectations Make sure you understand your instructor's expectations for the exam and that you clearly understand the exam framework for organizing your notes, starting your review, and beginning to make connections between
course ideas that will be important for those higher-order thinking questions. First, review your syllabus: As you take note of the objectives/themes/readings, start to think about connections between them - how does one lead into the next? How are they related to each other? How do they relate to the assignments you've done? Step 3: Prepare study.
notes This is the bulk of your open-book exam prep, but completing the previous steps will make this step easier! Start by preparing good study notes from the lecture notes/slides, course materials: Organize your framework and other course materials: Organize your notes based on the course materials: Organize your framework and other course materials: Organize your notes based on the course materials: Organize your framework and other course with the previous states and other course wi
summaries from Step 2! Identify the type of material you need to understand: concepts or theories, processes, equations, data trends, etc. Summarize and synthesize content using study charts (Figure 1), tree diagrams (Figure 2), concept maps (Figure 3), reference or equation sheets, index cards, etc. Figure 1: Sample column headings for study
charts for different disciplines. Figure 2: Tree diagram example A mind map (or concept and related ideas. Step 4: Practice Effective studying goes beyond just
reading through your notes. If you've completed Step 3 and worked on highlighting themes, organizing ideas, and making connections between those ideas, that's a great start. Remember that open-book exam questions will likely be looking for more application examples or more evidence of analysis and critical thinking - i.e. more than simple recall
of information. Keep that in mind as you try out some of these methods to prepare yourself for your exam: Step 5: Make a system in place for finding the information you need quickly! Here are some tips for developing your system: Set up your test-writing space so that you have
room to write and room to lay out the resources you will need so they are close at hand Have your notes in a binder so that you can quickly jump to the section you need. Make a chart or table of contents for quick reference to big concepts, key systems
or other forms of organization. Annotate your chart or table of contents with summaries of main ideas for each unit, topic, category of information. If you are
using digital notes, make use of highlighter tools, or insert comments in key areas so that you jump to sections. Use a digital table of contents with links to headings. Tips for test time You've thought about the test expectations, reviewed the course objectives, prepared your notes, practiced, and developed a system for quickly accessing your notes.
Now it's test time! Here are some tips for actually writing the exam: If your test is online, make sure you have any technology troubleshooting done ahead of time. Here is some additional great technical advice from Student Accessibility Services. Lastly... Good luck on all of your exams, from the Academic Skills team! Please note that Academic Skills
appointments can be booked through the Student Experience Portal - feel free to make an appointment to further discuss study strategies. Open book tests are kind of like Lord of the Rings marathons. They sound awesome in theory, but in the end...only the strong survive. The truly weak get weeded out somewhere around the second movie when
trees start talking. Everyone else tends to leave about halfway through the battle of Minas Tirith. Just like that marathon, these exams sound like a blast, but they're actually some of the most difficult exams you'll ever take. The professor knows you have access to all your source material. So, the questions are going to focus less on recall and retention
and way more on your understanding of the concepts. Hello, essay questions!Yes. You have to study.Sometimes, though, it isn't always obvious how to study for open book exams effectively, and how to actually sit the test. So, take a deep breath
grab your class notes and your textbook, and let's dig in. How to Prepare Before the TestBefore you even think about sitting down to study for a couple of hours, you have to make a plan. Your plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan. Your plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan. Your plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan. Your plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be based largely on a couple of hours, you have to make a plan is going to be b
textbook? Or, is it an end-of-the-year final exam where your professor will expect you to know everything? If you have an especially nice professor, they've probably given you this information already. What are you allowed to bring to the test? This can vary widely depending on the class. For some of my math and science classes, I was only allowed one
sheet of notebook paper, double-sided. For some other classes, I was allowed a full file of class notes, practice tests, and the use of my entire textbook. Make sure you understand what you can bring so you can prepare accordingly. Will you need to cite sources? If you do, compile a list of sources and quotes that support key concepts or arguments
presented in your class material. If you need to format them in a bibliography or arrange them in any particular way, try to do this before the test so that you don't have to waste precious time on it during the exam. Once you know what material you need to be studying and what you can bring with you to the exam table, now it's time to actually start
studying. Getting StartedHere's a couple of basic tips as you begin to review your material and compile your notes. Know your basic facts, concepts, and definitions by heart. That
way, when you're asked to write an essay explaining the circumstances that led to the Bolshevik Revolution, you don't have to waste time reminding yourself what the Bolshevik Revolution was in the first place. You're ready to go, and you just have to write an essay explaining the circumstances that led to the Bolshevik Revolution, you don't have to waste time reminding yourself what the Bolshevik Revolution was in the first place.
notes!) I can't stress this enough. Your friends and classmates are your best allies. They may have remembered to write down something you forgot, and vice-versa. They also might have a better understanding of a certain part of the course material. Plus, it's just more fun and generally easier to study when you have someone to quiz you. Link
concepts. Focus on the memorization, sure, but also make sure you have a solid understanding of how different concepts and facts interact. Maybe you had a chapter on Freudian psychology, and where did Freud go wrong? Try using a mind-map to link different concepts.
together. Now that you've spent some time reviewing the information, it's time to start organizing your second brain. Organizing your second brain organizing your second brain.
efficiently. Most exams allow you to bring your textbook and a pile of notes. These are going to be your two main tools, and they both deserve equal attention. Your Textbook to the exam, don't just bring the brick, plop it down on your textbook to the exam, don't just bring the brick, plop it down on your textbook and a pile of notes. These are going to be your two main tools, and they both deserve equal attention. You need to put a
little work in beforehand so that you don't waste time flipping through pages. It's good to organize your textbook with tabs and definitions so that they're easy to find. Place sticky notes at the front of each chapter so you can find them easily. On the
sticky notes, write a very brief summary of the main ideas presented (preferably with page numbers attached to them) so you can find exactly what you're looking for during the test. If you want a detailed explanation on how to learn and study efficiently from your textbook, check out this entire video on how to do just that. Your Notes FileYour notes was that it is not in the summary of the main ideas presented (preferably with page numbers attached to them) so you can find exactly what you're looking for during the test. If you want a detailed explanation on how to learn and study efficiently from your textbook, check out this entire video on how to learn and study efficiently from your textbook.
will make or break your test. If you come with a jumbled mass of papers, you're gonna have a bad time. Don't try to include everything you ever learned in class. You're just going to get overwhelmed and stressed out. Here's a list of what you should have: A page of formulae or important definitions. You don't want to have to hunt around for these
during the test! Any practice exams or past quizzes and tests you've taken, if you're allowed to bring them. You never know if a similar question might appear on the page, at least have summaries with attached page numbers of where to find them in the
textbook or source material.In-class notes from important lectures in chronological order, if you're allowed to have them. Mind-maps or summaries you made while studying for this test. I found it very helpful to write myself a table of contents and add page numbers. You don't want to be fumbling through your notes for the date Virginia Woolf died
when you have twelve minutes left on the clock. Your professor doesn't expect you to know everything, but they do expect you to be able to write intelligently about what you've learned. Keep that in mind, and you'll be fine. How to Take Open Book Exams Just like any normal test, the first thing you need to do is make sure you're well prepared. Do you
have a spare pen or pencil?Did you eat something?Did you get a good night's sleep?Did you bring water to drink?If that's all covered, then you're all set. Now, the main thing you have to remember with open book exams is that time is going to be really scarce. It's going to go by faster than you think it will, so just like you had a strategy for studying,
you're going to want to have a strategy for taking the test, too. The first thing you should do as soon as you get the test is to go through the entire thing and answer all the questions you know off the top of your head. Look for things like important dates, facts, easy problems, and short summaries of information. If you can answer it right away without
 thinking too hard, do it now.Once you're done, move on to the trickler stuff. Keep aware of your time, but don't stress. Try not to over-answer or spend too much time on any one quotes or passages. Instead, paraphrase and condi-
as much as you can. Make sure you cite your sources if the exam asks you to!If You're Stuck...If there's a question that you definitely don't know where it is. Leave it blank. If you have time at the end of the test, come back to the difficult question and try to
answer it the best that you can. I often found that the answers to questions I didn't know would reveal themselves while I was working on another problem. Don't let yourself get hung up on any one question. Just manage your time, prioritize your work, and answer everything you can. How to Finish Open Book Exams with Confidence If you have time at
the end, fact-check yourself against your sources and make sure you've cited everything you need to cite. If you feel confident that you're finished, double-check it one more time to make sure you haven't forgotten a question on the back of the test. There's nothing worse than missing a 10-point problem just because you forgot to flip the page
over!Then, give yourself a huge pat on the back and maybe go get yourself a candy bar. You did good, dude!Additional Resources for Open Book ExamsOne last thing I want to say, which I can't say enough: all of your efforts will be wasted unless you get a good night of sleep. Your brain needs that time to process all the information you're trying to
cram into it. Make sure you plan ahead, stay calm, and eat before you go so you don't get distracted by the tummy rumbles. Good luck!—If you've got a test coming up, and you're looking for more resources on the CIG blog for how to handle it, check these resources out: In the vast landscape of Academia, two distinct types of exams have always
reigned: traditional and open-book. Our focus today lies on the captivating realm of open-book exams. These aren't merely tests; they're adventures where learners, whether high school enthusiasts or postgraduate scholars, embark upon with their trusted armors of notes, textbooks, and strategies. Professor John A. Smith, an esteemed sage, once
observed, "Open-book exams don't test your memory; they test your understanding." This was the ethos behind such exams. These tests encouraged the seeking of profound understanding rather than a surface-level memory recital. They aligned more closely with real-world challenges where the might of problem-solving overpowered rote
memorization. Moreover, the prospect of accessing resources during these tests provided solace to the anxious hearts of many. While the arena of traditional exams felt familiar to many, dominated by memorization and recall, the open-book battleground was different. Here, comprehension and application were the champions. Warriors of traditional
exams armored themselves with repetitive review and memorization drills. In contrast, the conquerors of open-book exams equipped themselves with in-depth understanding, expertly organized notes, and a keen sense of time management. Dr. Emily Johnson, another beacon of wisdom, believed, "Taking notes is not merely about writing. It's about
processing and understanding." As learners ventured into open-book exam preparations, their note-making strategies evolved. They embraced thematic notes, employed diagrams for visual clarity, and adopted color-coded systems for swift referencing. However, the most potent tool in their arsenal was the art of summarization—crafting notes in their
own words, ensuring a deeper understanding of the material. Efficiency became a cornerstone for open-book exam prep. Seasoned scholars advised using sticky notes to mark crucial textbook sections, categorizing notes for each topic, and harnessing digital tools for faster information retrieval. They also championed the idea of mock testing under
real exam conditions, ensuring that students were well-acquainted with their materials, and more importantly, with the act of applying time, over-relying on materials, and neglecting practice were the lurking adversaries in
the open-book odyssey. Emma, a renowned psychology scholar, once shared her experience, highlighting the importance of understanding over mere location of information. In her journey, she found success by organizing her resources, making summarized notes, and relentlessly practicing mock tests, emphasizing that true mastery came from
comprehension. As our narrative unfolds, one truth remains evident: open-book exams, while challenging, offer a unique opportunity to display understanding over memorization. The tales and strategies shared above are not mere stories; they are maps guiding learners to their academic El Dorado. So, as you stand on the precipice of your open-book
exam journey, remember: the path to success is paved with organization, understanding, and consistent practice. Dive deep into this reservoir of knowledge and let it guide you, for success in open-book exam and how you can prepare for one. When
prepping for university exams, you might have expected to be getting ready for endless rows of students gathered in a large hall, heads down for three hours, with no noise or notes allowed. Well, open book assessments are quite the opposite! Open book assessments, such as Controlled Condition Exams or Take-Home Papers allow you to consult
reference materials while you're taking the assessment. You will be completing this using your computer or tablet, most likely away from UCL - in your own space at home or your university accommodation. It's important to note that you are expected to spend roughly the same amount of time on the open book assessment as you would have spent on
the examination if you were present in an exam hall. For your own wellbeing, we do not encourage you to use the whole 24 hour or 7 day window of a Take-Home Paper to prepare your answers - longer time spent is also unlikely to lead to significantly improved marks. The additional time in some open book assessments (e.g. a 24 hour window) is
there to allow for any technical issues that might arise in downloading the paper or uploading your answers. If you are used to exams that test memorisation, you might think that open book assessments are easy or encourage cheating, but don't be deceived. They are designed to assess you even when you have access to reference materials and the
internet. Open book assessments: focus on higher level learning skills and test your understanding of a subject matter or its application to a real-world problem, rather than recalling knowledge; draw upon a range of intellectual skills to test your understanding of the "big picture" of your module(s) and how the concepts you have learnt work
together; and typically require students to formulate, compare or contrast, analyse, synthesise, apply or evaluate information, rather than simply remember it. For example, you might be given a problem or scenario and asked to apply concepts from different parts of the module to develop your answer. Return to the top of the page Many of the usual
tips for preparing for exams will apply, but in an open book assessment, you can make a big mistake by assuming that you can just prepare by having all your reference materials to hand. Your notes, internet sources, textbooks and other reference materials to hand. Your notes, internet sources, textbooks and other reference materials to hand. Your notes, internet sources, textbooks and other reference materials, access to peers by phone, email and on social media can easily become a crutch rather than
an asset. Although in some cases, you may have 24 hours or even a week to submit your assessment, please don't assume that you'll have time to review your notes and watch lecture casts, re-read your textbook, or discover new information. You won't. Indeed, having access to books and other reference materials may actually hinder your
performance. By preparing well beforehand, you will be able to manage the stress that is natural, and you will feel a sense of achievement of drawing all the knowledge and skills you have learnt together. You should approach the assessment already having studied all key concepts and topics. There are some revision steps you can take to make sure
that you organise yourself well for open book assessments: Your notes will make or break your assessment. If you sit down with a disorderly mass of papers, you're going to waste time sorting them and may feel overwhelmed and stressed. Ensure all reference materials are organised beforehand so you know where to find the information you need
without wasting time and getting frustrated looking for them. Identify key concepts, formulas and terms which are likely to appear in the assessment. Use your lecture notes or recordings to help you. You may find it helpful to place post-it notes or online comments with important information in key sections of your printed textbook or pdfs so you can
access them quickly. For maths and science assessments, produce an outline or list of key data and formulas. Create or reuse any mind-maps. Work out what material the assessment is likely to cover. Are there any specific chapters or key concepts in your textbook? Which lectures might help most? Is the assessment covering more than one module
(this is often known as a synoptic or keystone assessment)? Identify the most effective sources to cite. Compile a list of sources and guotes that support key concepts or arguments. You can format these as part of your preparation in a reference list before the test so that you don't waste precious time organisms this and formatting in the correct
bibliographic style. Return to the top of the page By submitting an assessment on Assessment on Assessment conditions, there may be a greater temptation to copy and paste from the resources you have to hand. You
should take an academic approach to drawing upon quotes and data to support your answers or argument, but do not rely too heavily on them and always make sure you reference appropriately. Click for more information and guidance on UCL's academic integrity regulations and check out student advice on avoiding contract cheating and academic
misconduct. Return to the top of the page For centrally managed assessments, you will use an internet-connected computer or tablet to log in to the Assessment response and have access to your own textbooks, notes, and other resources. You can log in to
the AssessmentUCL platform before the Central Assessment Period begins to practice assessment. This is your chance to familiarise yourself with the whole process well in advance. See Practice assessment for guidance. If you've been advised to handwrite some of your assessment response (e.g. where your answers include equations,
graphs or diagrams), don't forget to practise the process for scanning/photographing handwritten content in advance. Check the quality of these 'mock' documents is acceptable and seek advice if needed. Don't forget you can also access electronic copies of past exam papers from the Library. Note, however, that these papers will have been set for
traditional exam conditions, not the open book format. Return to the top of the page The Exams and Assessments page is your one-stop-shop for all the relevant instructions and guidance. For help with your academic writing and referencing, check out this list of academic communication support resources at UCL. If you need to discuss any issues
that may be affecting your ability to prepare for your exams, you can contact your personal tutor or the UCL Students' Union UCL also offer an Advice Service via email, telephone and video/voice chat on Microsoft Teams. Return to the top of the page The
instructor knows that you have your notes and text right in front of you, so is unlikely to ask questions that just call on you to copy information. Instead, open book exams tend to ask students to apply, analyze, synthesize, compare/contrast or evaluate 1 information. They test whether you understand the "big picture" of the course and how course
concepts work together. For example, you might be given a problem or a scenario and asked to apply concepts from several parts of the course to it to develop an answer. The instructor will be looking for well-structured and presented arguments or solutions. The exam is likely to be more challenging than others, and the instructor is likely to have
higher expectations for the quality of your answers and the extent of your critical and analytical thinking, knowing you have course materials available to draw upon. Find out from your instructor exactly what you are allowed - and not allowed - to bring in to the exam, and make sure you follow the rules. Find out if you need to cite sources in your
answers. Learn your material as thoroughly as you would for any other exam. Do not count on having time to look up all your answers. Organize your resources so that you are going to bring in. Bringing excessive materials may distract you, clutter your
workspace, and tempt you to waste time by looking up facts unnecessarily. Write key concepts on sticky notes and use these as tabs to index your textbook, notes, and other materials so you can find them quickly. Tab and label any tables of contents or indexes of books You may even colour-code the tabs for quicker access. Prepare a condensed set
of notes, or summary of the course. Include page references for where you can find the "long version". Include notes or concept maps showing the relationships or connections between different concepts and parts of the course. Colour-code and tab the summary as well. You may be able to collaborate with classmates on this. If formulae will be part
of your exam, put these in a separate, easily accessed place. Once your summary is complete and your material is indexed, take your resources for a test drive by practicing answering questions, or you could work
with classmates to develop practice questions for each other2. Although you may decide to bring your written answers to practice questions and be able to copy entire answers need to directly answer the question that is asked, not the somewhat related
question that you may have prepared. Time is likely to be scarce. First answer the questions that you know without extensive referral to materials. Know the basic answers and, if necessary, look up an exact formula, a numerical value, or supporting evidence for your answers. There may be sufficient time to quickly refer to materials, but not to learn
something new - such as how a formula works, or the relationships between various course concepts - from your materials during the exam. Copying long passages or quotes is a waste of time; instead, paraphrase and condense any information you find in your materials. Aim for concise, well-supported answers. If you have time for review at the end,
you may check your materials more extensively to verify accuracy or to find additional points. 1. For information on these types of questions and how to answer them, see Levels of Learning and Understanding Action Words in Questions and how to answer them, see Levels of Learning and Understanding Action Words in Questions and how to answer them, see Levels of Learning and Understanding Action Words in Questions and how to answer them, see Levels of Learning and Understanding Action Words in Questions and how to answer them, see Levels of Learning and Understanding Action Words in Questions and how to answer them, see Levels of Learning and Understanding Action Words in Questions and how to answer them, see Levels of Learning and Understanding Action Words in Questions and how to answer them, see Levels of Learning and Understanding Action Words in Questions and how to answer them, see Levels of Learning and Understanding Action Words in Questions and how to answer them, see Levels of Learning and Understanding Action Words in Questions and How to answer them, see Levels of Learning and Understanding Action Words in Questions and How to answer them, see Levels of Learning and Understanding Action Words in Questions and How to answer them.
strategies, the other being studying a little bit almost every day. See Dunlosky, J. K.A. Rawson, E.J. Marsh, M.J. Nathan and D.T. Willingham (2013). Improving Students' Learning Techniques: Promising Directions from Cognitive and Educational Psychology. Psy
&Take Home Exams ,The Learning Centre, University of New South Wales. The page also drew upon on pages from the National University of Singapore and Charles Sturt University which have since been removed from the universities' web sites.
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