

PLANNING

1. Double check the date, time, and place of each final; record on your calendar.
2. Before you leave your room/home to take a final, be sure you have: a watch to pace yourself during the test; notes to review briefly on the way; paper, pencils, and pens; a calculator if needed. To boost energy and concentration, take a snack to eat halfway through a long exam.
3. Plan to arrive 10 minutes early for a last review. Avoid talking to panicky classmates; sit up front to block your view of others, and they won't distract you.

CLASS- THE FINAL EXAM

1. Don't panic when the test is handed out. Read directions carefully. Breathe deeply and pretend you are alone in the room. Do a "memory dump," writing names, dates, formulas, etc. on the test.
2. Preview the test for organization and point distribution. Plan your time: a part worth 50% gets 50% of the time. Jot down start and stop times for each section. Use a watch to stick to your schedule.
3. Answer EASIER questions FIRST, then return to harder ones. Read each question carefully; accept it at face value. Don't read things into the question that aren't there. Focus on one question at a time. Underline or circle key words in the question and in answer choices to help concentrate.
4. Lapses of memory are normal & temporary. Don't let yourself panic. Relax, move on, then return.
5. For essays, print or write on every other line to improve legibility and to leave space for corrections and additions. To clarify organization, state your thesis in the first sentence, and write a separate paragraph for each key point. Underline key points to ease grading. Remember to save a few minutes to proofread and make any final corrections before turning in.
6. Change answers ONLY if you misread a question or just remembered a forgotten fact.
7. CHEATING IS FAR MORE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR ACADEMIC RECORD THAN FAILING. You can retake a course, but expulsion or an honor violation on your transcript can't be erased.

STUDY

1. Review notes, textbook underlining, and returned tests. To remember, do MORE than read: recite aloud; write summaries; make lists, charts, maps, or flash cards; tape notes and listen; discuss ideas with a study group or tutor. Create test questions or problems and practice answering them.
2. More than one final on the same day? Allocate time carefully so you can study for one without worrying about the other. Decide if they deserve equal time or if one needs more; set up a schedule. You may study last for the first final, so it is fresh in your mind. Then, after the first, review for the second.
3. Don't overdo caffeine to stay awake, or you won't be able to sleep when you need to. Exercise is preferable. Need a break from thinking? To use up nervous energy, start packing to go home.
4. Resist the urge to blow off your last final, especially if it's on Saturday. Remind yourself of all the work you've already invested in that course. You want your final grade to reflect that investment.
5. Respect 24-hour quiet policies. Celebrate the end of your finals away from others studying.

YOU

1. After finishing a final, give yourself at least an hour off to unwind before starting to study again.
2. Dress for comfort, but also confidence.
3. For energy and concentration, at least eat 2 well-balanced meals a day. Limit caffeine, sugar, and alcohol.
4. Get adequate sleep. For best recall, wake up 1 to 2 hours before a test and eat a combination of protein and carbohydrates.

The Final Week

Once you've completed the Finals Planning sheet and the Four Weeks to Finals calendar use the 24/7 planner below to organize your Final Week.

First, enter the times of your finals, then fill in the remaining tasks during specific time periods on the days assigned in the Four Weeks to Finals calendar.

To be at your best during exams, plan time for adequate sleep, food and exercise during this critical period. You'll do better on an exam after a good night's sleep, and a protein meal to fuel both your brain and body is helpful.

Remember, 20-30 minutes of any aerobic exercise daily can help reduce stress and improve concentration.

***Note- this example is from a previous semester!**

The Final Week - EXAMPLE

	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed
	5-May	6-May	7-May	8-May	9-May	10-May	11-May	12-May
7am	Wake	Wake	Wake	Wake	Wake	Eat	Wake	Wake
8am	Eat	Eat	Eat	Eat	Eat		Eat	Eat
9am						BIOL FINAL		
10am	Study ACCT	Study BIOL	Study ACCT	Study ACCT	Study BIOL	8-11	Study PSYC	Study ENGL
11am	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise		Exercise	Exercise		Exercise
12pm	Eat	Eat	Eat		Eat	Eat		Eat
1pm			Study BIOL	ACCT FINAL			PSYC Final	
2pm	Study BIOL	Study PSYC	Study PSYC	11:30-2:30	Study BIOL	Study PSYC	11:30-2:30	Study ENGL
3pm	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break	
4pm					Study PSYC	Study PSYC		ENGL
5pm	Study PSYC	Study ACCT	Study ACCT	Study BIOL	Study ENGL	Study ENGL	Study ENGL	FINAL 3-6
6pm	Eat	Eat	Eat	Eat	Eat	Eat	Eat	Eat
7pm								
8pm	Free Time	Free Time	Free Time	Free Time	Free Time	Free Time	Free Time	Free Time
9pm								
10pm								
11p – 6a	SLEEP							

Goal GPA:

Fall 2025 - The Final Week

6 am							
7 am							
8 am							
9 am							
10 am							
11 am							
12pm							
1 pm							
2 pm							
3 pm							
4 pm							
5 pm							
6 pm							
7 pm							
8 pm							
9 pm							
10pm							
11pm							
12 am							
1 am							
2 am							
3 am							
4 am							
5 am							

Goal GPA:

Fill in the dates of ***your*** last seven
days in the top row below.

Fall 2025 - The Final Week							
6 am							
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Finals Preparation Checklist

Find additional resources at smu.edu/StudySkills

- Schedule a time to meet with your professors regarding any questions or concerns:
 - Current course materials- understanding/clarification
 - Questions regarding the final assessment
- Review all of your syllabi:
 - Check the attendance policy
 - Confirm the final exam schedule/information (double check on Registrar's website AND with your professor)
- Review all your scores on Canvas:
 - Tally all of your scores to gain a clear understanding of what grades to aim for to achieve your goal
 - Check for discrepancies and follow up immediately with professors on any questions
- Schedule an appointment with the Writing Center for any final papers
- Add the tutor schedule into your planner for the dates/times you need to work with a tutor
- Schedule any study rooms/spaces that will be needed
- If you need to use a printer, make sure you have ink and paper/money for PaperCut
- Prepare 1st, 2nd, and 3rd backup study locations
- Revisit the calendar over the entire semester:
 - Make sure you have all content and notes for any missed class