

HOW TO SUCCEED AT... TAKE HOME EXAMS

Not all exams take place in a classroom. Sometimes professors trade closed books and short time frames for open books and longer, assignment-style exams. But just because you have your notes or more time doesn't mean these exams will be easy. On the contrary, take-home exams often have more difficult questions and higher expectations than regular exams. Preparing for a take-home, therefore, will look a little different.



Common Take-Home Exam Types

- **The In-Class Substitute**
 - Similar format to an in-class exam with a precise start and end time.
 - Might be three hours, but often shortened because you have access to your notes.
 - Make sure you log in on time and have reliable Internet.
 - Prepare by memorizing key information and making up sample questions.
 - If open book, “study” by creating methods to find important information quickly (sticky notes for important pages, annotations in the margins of your notes, etc.).
- **The Multiday “Assignment” Exam**
 - Appears more like an additional assignment with a due date than a traditional exam.
 - Might last a day or even a week.
 - Characterized by essay(s) and/or a large number of problems to solve.
 - Sometimes requires research beyond your textbooks and lecture notes.
 - Professors will be expecting higher quality answers here, so make sure you outline before you start writing and revise your work after.

General Studying Tips

Even though many take-homes are open book, you still need to study for them if you want to do well. Consider these do's and don'ts:

Do:

- Memorize key course info (vocab, dates, formulas, etc.) for easier recall during your exam.
- Study by preparing sample outlines, questions, answers, translations, etc.
- Earmark important charts or passages in your textbooks to find them quickly.
- Look for connections between course topics.
- Confirm in advance your exam time frame, permitted resources, format, etc.

Don't:

- Try to relearn course content on the fly. You won't have time to look up everything mid-exam.
- Only study by skimming your notes.
- Say, “I know this stuff. And if I forget, I'll just hunt for it during the exam.”
- Study topics independently from one another.
- Wait until the last minute to look up your exam instructions.

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How to Prepare for...

- Multiple Choice → -Memorize key definitions, dates, etc. Make up practice questions for significant chapters and lecture topics.
- Short Answer → -As practice, write 5ish-sentence descriptions of key people, events, rules, details, etc. related to the course.
- Essay Questions → -Make up potential essay questions (preferably dealing with 2 or more course topics). Prepare sample, *adaptable* essay outlines that you can build off when writing your exam.
- Translation → -Continue to memorize vocabulary. Find new (or redo) sample translations from textbooks, Scripture, or online.

Make a Study Schedule

Whether your exam season consists of multiple take-homes or just one – and whether that exam is in a scheduled 3-hour block or takes place over multiple days – you’re going to want to make a study schedule. This will help you budget time for studying, for writing longer take-home exams, for other life commitments, and even for de-stressing. Here’s a sample:

TIME	Monday	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
7:00am	Wake up	Wake up	Wake up	Wake up	Wake up	Wake up	Wake up
8:00	Wake up	Wake up	Wake up	Wake up	CLAS 1043 EXAM	Wake up	Wake up
9:00	Study		Work on	Study	CLAS 1043 EXAM	Work on	
10:00	Study		CLAS 1033	Study	CLAS 1043 EXAM	CLAS 1023	Church
11:00	Study		Paper	Study		Paper	Church
12:00pm	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:00	Work	Study	CLAS 1013 EXAM	Study		Work	
2:00	Work	Study	CLAS 1013 EXAM	Study	Work on	Work	Work on
3:00	Work	Study	CLAS 1013 EXAM	Study	CLAS 1023	Work	CLAS 1023
4:00	Work	Study	Work on	Study	Paper	Work	Paper
5:00	Work	Dinner	CLAS 1033	Study		Work	
6:00	Work		Paper	Dinner	Dinner	Work	
7:00	Dinner	Work on	Dinner	Edit and	Work Out	Dinner	Dinner
8:00	Work Out	CLAS 1033	Work Out	Finish	De-stress	Work on	
9:00	De-stress	Paper	Bible Study	CLAS 1033	(Movie, Game,	CLAS 1023	
10:00	time		Bible Study	Paper	Chat with friend)	Paper	
11:00				CLAS 1033 EXAM DUE			CLAS 1023 EXAM DUE MON. NIGHT

Just remember:

- Your schedule has to fit **your** life and **your** commitments.
- Make sure you take breaks where you don’t look at a screen!
- Find the balance that works for you, then run with it.