

CRAMMING SUCCESSFULLY

Life happens! While cramming is not the most effective study method, cramming for a quiz, exam, or paper is sometimes unavoidable. Intentionally prioritize your focus to maximize the time you do have!

Beware of crashes from sugar or caffeine. Kansas State University (2022) recommended briefly exercising or chewing gum instead to help students stay awake!

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

1. **Purposefully divide your time** – conquer procrastination and relieve anxiety by having a clear plan and goals for your study time.
 - a. **Laser focus** - Determine how long you are able to study or write. Divide your time into blocks with scheduled break times (Thomas, 2023). For instance, try the pomodoro method where you study for 25 minutes and then take a five minute break plus a 15-30 minute break after four blocks. Make sure you remove distractions!
 - b. **Unfamiliar to familiar** - Establish a specific goal or task for each study block. Start with the most difficult and unfamiliar concepts first. Only review the easiest, most familiar concepts if you have time (Kansas State University, 2022).
 - c. **Prioritize highest impact assignments** - Review the charts in your course syllabi and determine which assignments are worth the most points. Prioritize the highest weighted assignments to earn the maximum amount of points in your remaining time.

Method of Evaluating Student Performance

Assignments	Points	Weight
Class Participation: Discussion Boards Theory Papers	300	30%
Event Analysis	100	10%
Critical Review of Berger & Luckmann	100	10%
Journal/Conference Paper (original research or advanced theory critique)	500	50%
TOTAL	1000	100%

- A. In this example, students should prioritize their journal paper because it counts for 50% of their grade over a remaining discussion board post, which would count as 2% (15 total posts worth 30% overall).
- d. **Strategically follow the late policies** - Professors have different late policies. Some follow a strict 11:59 pm deadline while others accept assignments for a discounted grade. Know your professors' expectations and prioritize assignments that must meet a certain deadline.

2. **Practice strong memorization strategies** - by reading, writing, and speaking important concepts, terms, and ideas, you will increase your retention of the material.
 - a. **Active repetition** -
 - i. First, read the main ideas from your notes.
 - ii. Then, place your notes aside and state these main ideas aloud.
 - iii. Without checking, write down these concepts.
 - iv. Double-check your work.
 - v. Repeat until you can complete this cycle successfully three times in a row.
3. **Read purposefully** - academic writing follows a specific pattern. By capitalizing on this pattern, you can understand the scholar's main argument and reasons efficiently.
 - a. **Look for the key ideas** - read the introduction and highlight the scholar's thesis, which should be the last sentence of the introduction. Their thesis should contain the main argument of their paper and the reasons for that claim. Next, read the topic sentences, which provide the overarching idea for each paragraph. Lastly, read the conclusion, which summarizes the primary points from each section of the paper.
4. **Take breaks** - students often forget to schedule in breaks to their study time. Make sure that you take brief breaks to avoid burning out as you cram.

EXAMPLE OF A CRAMMING STUDY SCHEDULE

Kayden is preparing for his final history exam, which he takes in three hours! He is fairly confident about modern politics and economics but has a fuzzy memory of America's earlier history. He creates the following study plan:

1. 25 minutes: Look for the key ideas, terms, and concepts from 1900-1950
2. 5 minutes: Grab a delicious snack
3. 25 minutes: Practice active repetition using these notes
4. 5 minutes: Stretch
5. 25 minutes: Identify the key ideas, terms, and concepts from 1950-2000
6. 5 minutes: Check social media and text
7. 25 minutes: Practice active repetition using the second round of notes
8. 30 minutes: Go on a walk
9. 25 minutes: Review concepts from recent events 2000-the present
10. 10 minutes: Mentally shift into test-taking mode. Practice a breathing exercise such as equally inhaling and exhaling for four seconds each and two minutes total. Pray for peace & strength.

PRACTICE NOW