




# KEEPING ON TOP OF YOUR READINGS & PREPARING FOR TESTS

Effective test preparation isn't just about studying hard a week before your test. It begins on day one of the semester and runs through the whole term. Here are some critical things to keep in mind.

## Review:

If you review regularly, you'll do a lot better on tests. It's as simple as that. Why? Because your brain is programmed more to forget than it is to remember. If you don't give your memory a boost by reviewing material throughout the semester it's perfectly natural that you'll forget. So what do we mean by regular review? Think of review in 5 stages:

1. Review your course material **before class**; you don't have to memorize it. If you don't have time to read a full chapter, at least check the summary at the end of the chapter.
2. Review your material **within 24 hours** of getting it in the first place. It doesn't mean memorizing everything; review can be 15 minutes long. This is also the time to make sure you understand your stuff and get answers for specific questions.
3. You can review your material again **within a week**. A good time to do this is just before class.
4. **Every 2 or 3 weeks**, pull out your material and review again. You're going to have to go through more stuff than you did for review stages 1, 3 and 3 because the material is cumulative.
5. Go over material just **prior to being tested**. This step won't be so difficult, long, or scary.

<b>40%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>40%</b>
		
What you retain by reading your materials <b>before</b> class	What you retain by paying attention <b>during</b> class and participating	What you retain by reviewing <b>after</b> class

**If you don't review your material, in 4 weeks you'll only be able to recall about 20% of what you originally learned. No wonder you have to cram for tests! You have to relearn 80% of the material.**

## Active learning:

In addition to reviewing regularly, you need to review effectively. Effective review means active learning. So what is that? Reviewing your notes means reading them repeatedly: better than nothing for sure but, not very exciting or effective. Some of the ways you could review actively would be to:

- Make summary notes
- Create diagrams and pictures
- Recite our material out loud
- Test yourself by having a partner ask you questions or making them up yourself
- Relating the information to other materials you've learned

In class, you can learn more actively by:

- Taking notes
- Asking relevant questions
- Reviewing your notes from previous class before hand & making connections between pieces of information

Combine **active learning** with **regular review** and you'll be more successful on tests.