

EXAMS: HOW TO STUDY FOR THEM

When a test is announced, be sure to find out what kind of an exam it will be; essay, short answer, multiple choice, etc. Determine what topics will be covered and what portions of the reading material and lectures deal with the topics. If you have not done all of the necessary reading, do so immediately and record the important facts and interpretations as indicated in the section on "How to Read a History Assignment." If you have missed any lectures, obtain a copy of the notes from someone who knows the rules of good note taking. Now gather together all the materials to be covered in the exam. Reread the parts of the text that you underlined (or otherwise noted) as being important. Reread all of the relevant lecture notes, paying special attention to any points emphasized by the instructor. Sometimes it helps to do your rereading aloud.

If the test is to be an essay exam, compose sample questions based upon the important topics and themes contained in the readings and lectures. (Many textbooks contain sample exam questions or topics for discussion at the end of each chapter.) If you do not know how to answer any portion of the sample question, go over your study materials again and look for the information needed. If you are preparing for an objective exam--that is one requiring short answers--you must pay special attention to the important facts (persons, places, events, changes) in your study materials. You must be precise in order to get credit for your answer. Make a list of the outstanding people, events and historical developments, and be sure that you can adequately identify them and explain their importance. (Again, your text may help you by providing sample short-answer questions.)

Take the time you need to prepare adequately. If tests make you nervous, the best medicine is to go into the exam confident that you know the material. Keep on studying until you have mastered your sample questions and until the material to be covered makes sense to you.