

Studying Tips for Intro. Psych.

For more detail, go to the study guide web page:

<http://www.morris.umn.edu/academic/psychology/psy1051/index.htm>

For this annotated version, notes such as this will appear in black on the slides...

1) What to expect on exams?

Beyond "identification": What we identified in our exams

- **A**pplication
- **C**omparison/contrast
- **I**ntegration
- **D**istillation



Based on a review of actual exams, these are the types of questions we identified.

Application

Example:

Life has been hard for Norman. His expectations have led to behaviors that make the future look equally bleak. His expectations are also called:

- a) self-fulfilling prophecy
- b) frameworks expectation
- c) personality
- d) external loss of control

To get the answer, (a. self-fulfilling prophecy), the definition needs to be understood so well that proper examples can be recognized and alternatives eliminated.



Preparing for what's *really* on the test

- **A**pplication–
 - Define terms in own words
 - provide own examples

If you're unsure about the examples you come up with, contact a TA or instructor– "This is what I'm thinking, is that *right?*"

Comparison/contrast



Example:

Erickson's psychosocial stage theory of development is most closely related to which other theorist's views of development?

- a) Piaget's stages of cognitive development
- b) Ainsworth's attachment stages
- c) Kohlberg's stages of moral development
- d) Freud's psychosexual stages

In order to select the correct answer (d. Freud's psychosexual stages), you need to understand what each of these theories say, how they may relate to Erickson's views, but you also need to be able to explain to yourself why the other answers are wrong.

Preparing for what's *really* on the test

- **C**omparison/contrast–
 - Think about differences
 - explore relationships
 - explicitly study what something *isn't*

Integration

Example:

Developing a strong internal locus of control is more likely in which type of culture?

- a) collectivist
- b) individualist
- c) polychronic
- d) monochronic
- e) None of the above—Personality traits are not affected by culture



Here the question asks about several pieces of information that were initially presented in the text individually. You would need to know what it means to have a "strong locus of control," but you'd also need to know enough about each of the types of cultures to be able to relate those to locus of control. Because of this, it is important in this class not just to learn words and concepts on their own, but to pay attention to how understanding one enhances your understanding of another.

Preparing for what's *really* on the test

- **I**ntegration–
 - *Assume* things relate
 - give a lecture

The best way to translate information into something *you* understand is to try and explain it to someone else. This is something every new teacher learns....

Distillation



Example:

Based on recent large-scale research, if a woman you know is about to experience menopause, how will she likely describe the experience when it is over?

- a) as physically demanding, with terrible pain and discomfort
- b) an emotionally draining transition from fertility to barrenness
- c) in generally positive terms, it is not a big deal
- d) socially humiliating, the worst time of life for any woman

The textbook this question came from had a fairly lengthy section on menopause and each one of the potential answers was referred to in the section. If you didn't truly understand what the authors were trying to say about menopause, you would find it very difficult if not impossible to answer the question. While the answer is C, some women do experience the problems described in the other three answers, and many other women fear that they will have a negative experience. As a result, unless they read carefully, it could easily seem like all the answers were correct.

The trick is to always ask yourself, "So what?" at the end of a section.

Preparing for what's *really* on the test

- **D**istillation–
 - Get in the habit of summarizing and identifying main points while reading

2) What are some tips for reading?

True/False:

1. Before I actually read the chapter, I previewed it so that I would know what was coming up.
2. I spent time while reading explaining the definitions or concepts in my own words and thinking of my own examples.
3. I took notes on the chapters and studied them.
4. I tried to learn what I was reading by connecting it to other ideas in the chapter, other classes I've taken, or life experiences.
5. When I start reading, I review what I read earlier before moving on.

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For each of the questions above that you answered "TRUE" give yourself 1 point. This is a summary of the kinds of things you need to be doing while reading. Otherwise, much of the time you currently spending is wasted time...

Tips on reading

- ❑ **Effective use of the textbook**
 - ❑ **Shifting 'goal' of reading from number of pages read to understanding**
 - ❑ **Breaking the memorization habit**
 - ❑ **How to avoid "orphanizing"**

Tips on reading

- 1) **Read ahead:** Every successful student we interviewed read 6 or 8 pages each night. By the time they got to lecture, they were already familiar with the material that would be covered.
- 2) **Make connections:** All of the A/B students we worked with made a conscious effort to connect the new material they were learning with something else in their lives.

Tips on reading

Breaking the memorization habit, avoiding 'orphanizing', & helping you remember what you read:

1. What are you highlighting? (*Why?!*)
2. Take notes on the readings.
3. Compare words and ideas to each other.
4. Stop reading the textbook like a novel: *Review as you go.*

If you're only highlighting the bold-faced terms and their italicized definitions, you're not getting the concepts. For each section you need to bring your attention to the terms, what they really *mean* (in words *you* use), how those concepts might be used (examples), how they relate to other things, and the conclusion/so what.

* When you take a break from reading, skim back at what you read to make sure you got it before you go on. Otherwise, yesterday's reading was simply a waste of time. Also, skim ahead--don't worry about ruining the plot. Instead, get the 'big picture' about where the text is going.

3) What should be in my notes?

Tips on note-taking

- Print off or copy the outlines from the course web page

Get a sense of where the class is going and help your mind create a schema *before* listening to lecture. Keep ahead in the reading, even if it's only to skim the section before coming to class.

- Don't just write what's on the board.

The things that are said when I step away from the board are just as important. This is where you'll get the examples, how the ideas relate, and the "so what" information. You need to.

- Listen/synthesize/write

If I go too fast in class, or if you didn't catch something– *RAISE YOUR HAND*. Others will be happy that you did...

Tips on note-taking

- Go over your notes after class (while fresh) and add comments or correct info.
- Jot down text page numbers that relate to notes *and compare information*.
- Contact the professor for clarification or raise hand in class if you missed something– *I won't know unless you tell me!*

4) What are some effective approaches to studying?

True/False:

1. For every hour I spent in class, I spent at least two hours studying outside class.
2. I reviewed my lecture notes at least four times a week.
3. When I sat down to study I had previously decided what I would accomplish during that study session.
4. I studied each day for this class.
5. I read the book before attending lecture.
6. I read the entire chapter two or three days before the exam, all in one sitting.
7. I plan to pull an all-nighter before the exam so it's 'fresh' when I take the test.

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On this one, give yourself 1 point for each of the first 5 that you said were TRUE; for the last two, you get one point each for saying FALSE.

Tips on studying

- Plan your studying
 - Schedule it into your life– *and stick to it*.
 - Set goals for a studying session: Understanding a section; using vocabulary words, etc.

See studying as a process, not in terms of pages read or hours spent.

Your primary job right now is to be a student. What you do outside of the class is a key piece of that– You need to work it into your schedule.

Tips on studying

- ❑ **Avoid cramming– *it doesn't work!***
 - ❑ **Time management**
 - ❑ **Don't count on recognition**
(What that means is, you'll recognize all of the statements made on a question. You need to know why one is right and the other three are wrong.)
 - ❑ **Remember to make connections**

Cramming is an ineffective use of your time. You cannot remember all of the material covered in these chapters by going through them in one sitting. You also cannot *work* with the information in the ways we've discussed here.

Instead, you need to count on working through the material a bit each day and using the last day or two to review what *you have already learned*. This will keep it fresh while allowing you to make the connections you need.

Tips on studying

Do study groups work?

- Our study revealed that students who were earning some of the lowest grades liked to study in groups.
- In general, these study sessions involved one student reading off vocabulary words and the others reciting definitions word for word, straight out of the book.

Memorization, whether done alone or in a group, will not prepare you for the test!

Tips on studying

Do study groups work?

For an effective study group,

- Have your study partners think up scenarios that use the words;
- Come up with lists of questions you think will be on the exam;
- See who can summarize a chapter section without looking at the book;
- See if you can identify the main ideas of the chapter.

In other words, the group needs to be prepared before meeting and needs to work on connecting concepts.

5) What should I do during the exam?

Tips for during the exam

Before you start:

- *Don't Panic!*
- Take a deep breath
- Skim the exam and look for the Friendly Question

The questions are not presented in any particular order, so you can go ahead and answer the ones you know for sure before getting flustered by others.

Also, you SHOULD write on your tests. Jot things down before they get knocked out by other information.

Tips for during the exam

Taking the exam:

- Ask if a question is unclear or you don't know a non-vocabulary word
- Treat the questions as-if open-ended: Cover up the 'distractors'
- Don't be afraid of changing answers, *but be sure you were wrong before*

Tips for during the exam

Taking the exam:

- Don't talk yourself into wrong answers: Keep to the information provided in the question
- Stick to the material: How does the question relate to what we learned?
- Stick to the material: Don't get swayed by your own hopes or beliefs

Lastly–

Learn from your mistakes. Review your old exams and look for areas to improve:

- We're the mistakes from lecture or text?
- What types of questions were giving me trouble (Application, Comparison, Integration, Distillation)?

And remember to use your resources: The T.A.'s, instructor, Academic Assistance, and each other.