Checklist for Preparing for Midterm Exams

Winter break is almost here! Even if the weather doesn't support this notion (currently 65° at General Academic's office), students everywhere are excited about the coming break. They'd be even more excited if midterm exams didn't come first. Having helped students prepare for midterms for nearly eleven years, we at General Academic have a few pointers to make everyone's life happier and less stre



5 Steps to Better Exam Results Everyone Can Take

- [ ] 1. **Schedule.** What are the dates and times for each of your exams? Be specific, for example, "Math – Tuesday, December 16th at 8am." Specificity is important because many schools have half days during exam period and offer tutorials in preparation for the next day's exam.
- [ ] 2. **Content.** What material will each exam cover? Again, specificity is important. It's really stressful to think of an exam as covering the entirety of the last four months of material. But usually, teachers are a little more specific in what they really want students to focus on.
- [ ] 3. **Organization.** Have you gathered and organized everything you need to study? Common items that students need include a) the exam study guide b) previously turned tests and quizzes c) past homework assignments & weekly syllabi and d) books and handouts.
- [ ] 4. **Tutorials.** Most schools offer additional tutorials in preparation for midterm exams. Often times these are multi-hour affairs a couple of days before. It's especially important to attend because often teachers will give little hints on what specifically to study.
- [ ] 5. **Weaknesses.** Let's be honest, you probably have a pretty good idea what you're NOT good at. For example, did you get a C on that test on matrices and hoped that you'd never see it again? Now is your last chance to identify those weaknesses and address them.

1 Big Step That Students SHOULD Take

- [ ] 1. **Study.** Steps 1-5 don't accomplish a lot by themselves. Ultimately, you've still got to sit down and get into the thick of it.

We recommend:

- [ ] 1. **Start with what you're given.** Work through your review packet if you have one.
- [ ] 2. **Do a quick review.** Review the textbook and handouts for key concepts.
- [ ] 3. **Do a self-diagnostic.** Work through a few practice problems for each section/ chapter to make sure you've still got it
- [ ] 4. **Get up to speed.** Dig deeper for the areas where you feel weaker.
- [ ] 5. **Triage.** As much as we would have liked you to have started this process weeks ago, let's be honest and be content with the fact that your exam is maybe five days away at most. You don't have time to learn 4 months of material in four nights (not even with the aid of one or several of General Academic's amazing tutors). Focus on key concepts (i.e. what was the outcome of the Americana Civil War) versus obtuse details (i.e. what date was the Battle of Gettysburg).

Most schools including Houston ISD will have midterm exams between December 15th and 19th. Shelby Joe is the Founder and President of General Academic and publisher of Thesis Magazine.

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