



SAINT JOSEPH CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL  
STRIVE Mini-Lesson  
Exam Preparation

Objectives:

Students learn exam preparation strategies from basic to more advanced ones.

Students will become aware of time remaining before exams.

Students will begin to create a study plan.

Procedure:

1. Review the ***Exam Preparation Tips*** document. Note: The most basic tips are at the roots of the tree; the trunk of the tree is where the foundation of studying , and the leaves are elements of thorough preparation.
2. Remind students that there are only 10 days of classes before Exam Week begins, with Part A's occurring before then. Planning their study sessions should begin now in order to cover the last four months of material. Provide students with a blank calendar to help them begin their planning. When planning their studying students should not only name the course but the unit they will study. Share the final exam schedule with them and they can enter their exams as well.
3. Review the ***Specific Exam Writing Tips*** document to review essay writing and multiple choice test tips.



## Exam Preparation Tips

Practice with test banks.

Study with friends. Quiz each other.

Understand & Memorize

Make summary sheets.

Minimize distractions –  
turn off the cell phone  
and TV, avoid gaming.

Write down key points for  
each major topic.

Use flash cards to memorize.

Practice under exam conditions.

- Begin exam prep at least 1 week in advance of exam week so that you have enough time for all your classes.
- Create a study schedule that includes the course and units (topics). Do your best to stick to the schedule.
- Study in chunks of about 20 – 50 minute intervals followed by a 5 – 10 minute break, repeating as necessary. This should include what units the focus will be for each subject.

- Review and rework past exams, quizzes, assignments and notes.
- Skim chapters in textbook, paying special attention to the subtitles.
- Find out what you can about the exam – format, unit breakdown...
- Start by studying what you know, then add new information later so that it can be linked to what you know.

- Eat a meal and drink water before the exam.
- Show up to the exam with all material required (pencil, calculator, etc).
- Be sure to be well rested – go to bed at a decent time the night before.
- Read the instructions, answer every question, do **NOT** try to be the first one done.

# January 2013

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31 Second Semester begins		

## Specific Exam Writing Tips

### Multiple Choice

#### At the Beginning

- **Begin by reading the directions** and jotting down any formulas and memory devices you might forget.
- **Survey the test.** Note whether some sections are worth more points than others, and plan your time accordingly
- To build your confidence, **start with the easiest** questions.

#### Reading the Questions

- **Paraphrase the question stem** by saying to yourself, "I see, I'm looking for...."
- If the stem provides enough direction, **try to anticipate the answer and then look for it.**
- **Underline or circle key words** in both the question stem and the choices. (Writing on the test sheet can help your performance tremendously.)
- Notice any words in the stem which you can relate to words in the answer choice.
- **Watch for absolute determiners such as *all, none, always, never, only*.** Circle these words and realize that they usually indicate a false choice, unless you recall the teacher emphasizing an absolute statement during a lecture (i.e. all cells are \_\_\_\_).
- **Read very slowly**, running a pencil under the words as you read to avoid mistakes. Re-read the stem when necessary.

#### Choosing the Best Answer

- **Read all of the choices and keep an open mind.** Even when the first or second choice looks correct, don't simply read the other choices with the intent of dismissing them. Consider them carefully.
- As you proceed through the choices, **use the process of elimination** and cross off any choices that are clearly false. Then re-read any choices you are still considering.
- **Use caution with questions in which you're looking for a false statement (the question stem may contain words such as *not, except, false, etc.*)**
- If two choices overlap or mean essentially the same thing, both are probably incorrect (unless there is a choice of *all of the above* or *both B & C*).
- **Notice *partner choices*** (two choices that are opposites or have a difference of one or two words.) Often, the correct answer will be one of these options.
- **Be alert for grammatical inconsistencies** between the stem and the choice (read the stem with the choice to see if the two "fit together.")
- **Don't worry about the following choices: *all of the above, none of the above, both B & C*.** Use the process of elimination and simply look at what you've already eliminated among the previous choices. Sometimes these final

options are correct (especially *all of the above*), but sometimes they are simply *filler* because the person writing the test ran out of ideas.

## Final Suggestions

- **Answer every question.** Even if you forgot some of the material, you will probably be able to eliminate some choices, thereby increasing your odds of getting a correct answer.
- Be on the lookout for questions that may answer other questions.
- **Don't try to be the first to leave.** Use all of the available time to look for careless errors and to double check your answer sheet. However, if you find yourself routinely finishing exams much earlier than others, you might try reading the questions more slowly your first time through. This approach usually works better than rushing through the questions once and then going over each question a second time. That approach can lead to either looking right through an error or changing a correct answer to an incorrect one.
- **Change your answer only when you have a concrete reason.** Never change an answer because of a feeling. This feeling is often simply nervousness.

## Essay tests

### **A. Read through the exam sheet (5 min.).**

1. Examine the instructions for each section.
2. Choose the best questions to answer and start with the easiest.
3. Be sure to respect the formatting and type of writing requested.

### **B. Budget your time.**

1. Allocate total time according to points per question.
2. Leave 10-15 minutes at the end for checking.
3. Note the expected finishing time for each question.

### **C. Plan your answers.**

1. Decide what the question is asking (circle key words).
2. Write a key word outline of the points you will make.

### **D. Write.**

1. Answer the question directly in an opening sentence which lists points you will later discuss.
2. Use transitions.
3. Be complete: define terms and explain everything so that the teacher doesn't have to read between the lines.
4. Write legibly.
5. For each point you make, use the following formula:
  - State your point.
  - Explain how your point answers the question.
  - Write details and examples about your point.

### **E. Finishing-up**

1. Check through all answers, neatly crossing out material to.
2. If unfinished with the test, list remaining points in a skeleton outline.