

TESTS AND QUIZZES

Tests and quizzes come in a range of different lengths and formats. They can be administered in class or online, and they may constitute a very high or very low percentage of your overall mark.



The benefits of tests/quizzes

Although it can seem stressful, regular tests are great for learning. This is partly because tests help you to avoid cramming all your study into the end of the semester.

Research shows the best way to retain information is by spacing out your study – tests and quizzes provide an opportunity to do just that by motivating you to learn important unit content as you go along.

Tests also provide useful feedback on your progress. The results can help you to work out any gaps in your knowledge so you can focus on these areas for your exams.

The specific questions you are asked may also act as a guide for what you should study for the exam. If a unit coordinator quizzes you on a certain topic, there's a good chance it will show up in the exam.

TIP: Space your study

Look at the timing of your tests/quizzes during semester and create a study schedule. You should do this using **spaced practice**. Rather than cramming all your study into one block, split your study over multiple short sessions where you study new topics and keep revisiting old topics.

How to study for tests/quizzes

In your study sessions, try to regularly retrieve information from your memory. Review your notes, then put them away and practice calling the information to mind.

Also try:

- Asking your tutor for past examples of quiz questions.
- Finding example questions in your textbook or course materials.
- Creating your own questions.
- Creating flip cards to test yourself.

Interleaving

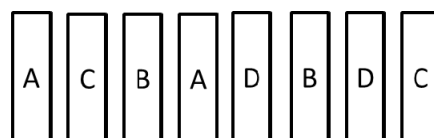
If you are taking a test in a discipline that requires you to solve a problem or apply some kind of rule (e.g. maths, stats, physics, languages) you should practice answering different types of questions in one study session.

This is because solving problems requires two steps: 1. determining the type of question and 2. working out how to answer it. Problems that look similar may require quite different strategies. Interleaving gives you practice in choosing the correct strategy for each question.

Blocking



Interleaving



Tests and quizzes come in various formats, but two of the most common are multiple choice and short answer questions.

Multiple choice questions

Many students assume that multiple choice is easier to study for than other types of question formats, but this is not necessarily the case. Often you are required to do more than simply remember facts. You could be asked, for example, to solve equations, apply knowledge or interpret a graph.

Here are a few strategies you can use:

1. Try to think of the answer before you read the provided options.
2. For questions involving calculations, read the options to get an idea of what is required but don't try to guess the answer. Do the calculations.
3. Work backwards by first eliminating the answers you know are incorrect.
4. Answer all the questions even if you are unsure of the answer (unless there is a penalty for wrong answers).

Short answer questions

Short answer tests require you to provide a concise and specific answer to an open-ended question. Pay attention to the task word. Examiners are looking for different types of information when they ask you to **define** a given concept, to **discuss** it, to **explain** it, or to **compare and contrast** two different concepts or ideas.

Importantly, make sure you read the question carefully and try to answer it directly, rather than just writing down everything you know.

TIP: Study to understand

No matter the format of the quiz, make sure you focus on the meaning of what you are learning. Think about how different ideas are connected.

Even if you are required to answer fact-based multiple choice questions, understanding the story behind the facts will help you to remember them.

Written maths tests and quizzes

For written tests, always write your mathematical workings with clear expression and correct grammar:

- Write each step underneath the previous one.
- Ensure complete agreement between lines.
- Jot down notes that help explain your steps at the side .
- You should be able to read your workings out loud like ordinary text.

In fact, write like this all the time! It will help organise your thoughts and make your work comprehensible during revision.

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