Many exams have a mix of multiple choice, short answer, true/false, and matching questions. While there are certain approaches you can use to prepare for each type of question, it’s not recommended you focus on just one, or even a few. Prepare using several different study approaches to learn the material inside and out.

**HOW TO PREPARE FOR SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS**

- **Go beyond memorization:** Aim to fully understand the content. Practice applying concepts, comparing, & identifying relationships by making these connections when studying.

- **Practice:** Many textbooks provide short-answer questions at the end of each chapter. Use these to test your knowledge and practice recalling information. Answer these questions without using your notes to identify what you know and what you still need to understand.

- **Formulate test questions** based on the different categories of concepts. Use old assignments, your course outline, study partners, and your lecture and text notes to help you predict and create possible short-answer or essay questions. Practice answering your questions within a limited time frame. Try to budget your time according to how much time you think you will have for each question on the exam.

- **Review your lecture and text notes regularly** to keep the content fresh in your mind. Look for themes, ideas, concepts, and trends that recur throughout the course; study notes can be organized around these major ideas.

**HOW TO PREPARE FOR MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS**

- **Go beyond recognition:** A common error made in preparing for multiple choice questions is to study only to the point where correct answers can be recognized. Multiple choice questions test both your ability to recognize facts but also your ability to apply the information.

- **Prepare for facts and understanding:** Multiple choice questions test recall for factual information while assessing understanding. When studying pay attention to detail and ensure you have a thorough understanding for the course material. Use previous tests to identify the type of questions that might be asked (factual details, conceptual understanding or a combination of both).

- **Underline key terms and phrases** to help you identify what material you should study. When writing the test these familiar phrases may show up in the multiple choice answers.

- **Use mnemonics and other techniques** when studying lists and concepts requiring a specific order. Reciting these mnemonics during the test will help you identify the correct multiple choice answer.

Adapted by the AAC from [http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/assistance/learning_services/handouts/essay_exams.cfm](http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/assistance/learning_services/handouts/essay_exams.cfm)
• **Practice**: Write your own questions and locate relevant multiple choice questions (textbook, professor, online, etc.) to practice. This will help you review the concepts and identify information you still need learn.

• **Time yourself**: Practice answering questions within a limited time frame. Try to budget your time according to how much time you will have on the exam. Remember to carefully read the question once and select the most appropriate answer. You can use additional time to reread and review your selections.

### HOW TO PREPARE FOR TRUE/FALSE QUESTIONS

- **Underline key terms and phrases** while studying. These same statements may be listed as true/false questions on the test since you and your professor are using the same content.

- **Go beyond recognition**: True/False are situated for evaluating students’ knowledge of specific facts and concepts. This means you must use repetition in your studying to “memorize” specific terms and details.

- **Select appropriate studying techniques**: Certain study methods are better than others when studying for memory and retention. Try making and practicing flashcards, use lists, charts and create mnemonics to help you remember detailed concepts and facts.

- **Practice**: Use resources (professor, textbook, Internet, etc.) to locate practice true/false questions. This will help you identify what areas you still need to learn while helping you to practice taking similar questions that will be on your actual test.

### HOW TO PREPARE FOR MATCHING QUESTIONS

- **Create a list of key items**: Review your lecture and textbook notes, and any notes provided online and create a list of important theorists, people, places, events, etc.

- **Make connections**: Using your notes & the text, identify specific vocabulary, dates, names of theories, etc. that relate to each of the important items you listed from the previous strategy to help you be able to recall similar items, dates/events, etc.

- **Create & study flashcards** by writing one key item (i.e., theorist, historian) and the information they are known for on the back. Do this for each important topic you identified from the text/lecture.

- **Make a timeline**: Drawing a visual timeline is particularly useful in history courses, as well as those that emphasize important dates, decades, and/or eras, etc.

- **Complete a mini practice test**: Divide your paper into 2 columns. One the left, record important vocabulary terms, theories, concepts, events, etc. On the right, expand on each item, as if it were a matching exercise.

- **Study game**: Use small pieces of scrap paper and write down 1 important item on each piece. Include dates, theories, concepts, etc. Put them face down on a table and mix them up. Pick them up one by one and say aloud what corresponds to the item listed on the paper.

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