

Cramming

Although you've been told to avoid cramming (studying the night before), there are times when you're left with no other choice. If you have not managed your time well and find yourself needing to cram, here are some strategies to make the best of a less than ideal situation.

For students who have reviewed and created notes throughout the term:

1. **Write out a course summary.**
Reviewing the structure of the course will help you remember, comprehend, and retain the material.
2. **Work through notes and assignments, but just skim the text.** This is the best way to set priorities for the time that you have.
3. **Stay calm and confident!** By taking breaks in your studying, by getting at least six hours sleep, and by reminding yourself that working hard all term really will pay off.



For students who have not prepared throughout the term:

1. **Gather information about what's likely to be on the exam.** Find out which chapters in the text were covered; get a set of course notes, ask your peers what topics in class were emphasized.
2. **Identify principal themes, sub-topics and major illustrations and memorize them!** Repetition is the key to memorization. Use every trick you can: word association, rhymes, enumeration, sentences from acronyms.
3. **Be selective.** After memorizing major themes, decide what supporting material to concentrate on. You're more likely to remember a narrow range of material covered in depth. Skim the text if there is one, or read only the chapters that seem emphasized from your information gathering. If there are many texts, pick two to concentrate on. Take time to review what you've covered.
4. **Be kind to yourself.** Get at least six hours sleep and do not skip any meals. This will ensure your brain will be able to retain the maximum amount of information as your study.

Adapted from University of Waterloo Counselling Services