

Post-Exam Reflection

THE EXAM

1. Note the questions you got wrong or lost some points on and consider why that's the case. Here is a (non-exhaustive) list of some potential reasons:
 - a) Misunderstood the question
 - b) Didn't know the material/unfamiliar with the concept
 - c) Difficulty applying a concept to a new context
 - d) Overthought the question/thought it was a trick question
 - e) Didn't know where to start
 - f) Careless mistake
 - g) Running out of time and had to rush

After writing down that information, you can also note the question type, as well as the concept that was being assessed. This will be helpful in the subsequent step.

Question #	Why I got it wrong?	Question Type	Concept

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2. Do you notice any patterns where you lost points in terms of question types and/or content areas?

Note any patterns here:

3. Did you utilize any specific test-taking strategies during the exam? List them here:

4. Did you have extra time after finishing the exam? YES NO

a) If YES, did you go back and check your work? YES NO

b) If NO, were there certain questions that took up a lot of time? Note them here, as well as any patterns you notice:

5. If you have any other notes or observations about the exam, provide them here:

6. How does your actual grade compare with your expected grade? To what would you attribute that difference, if any?

EXAM PREP

1. On a scale of 1-10, how prepared did you feel going into the exam?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. How long before the exam did you start studying? _____

a. From that date to the exam, about how many hours did you study? _____

b. Did you use a planner/calendar to space out your studying? _____

c. On average, for how long did you study at any one given time? _____

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3. Which study strategies and/or resources did you use? Check all that apply. If you want, you can include an estimate of the amount or percentage of time spent doing each.
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading the textbook and other class materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Using concept maps and other visualizations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reviewing reading notes | <input type="checkbox"/> Using mnemonic devices and other memory techniques |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reviewing lecture notes | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Re-doing homework problems/quizzes | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working new problems (unassigned, online, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taking old exams | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Practice quizzes/exams | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flashcards | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Study group/collaboration | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic mentoring/tutoring | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Going to office hours | |

4. Reflect on your study habits and the space(s) where you studied for the exam.
- a. Is there anything that stands out as problematic (distractions, messy space, etc.) that you might want to address before the next exam?

- b. Is there anything about your habits and space that you are proud of or that you think made your studying more effective?

5. Did you feel particularly confident or comfortable about certain topics, or unconfident or uncomfortable about others?

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6. Did you spend more or less time on specific content/concepts? Compare that with your level of comfort or confidence with those topics, as well as any patterns on the exam that you noted above.

7. Looking back at your exam and your answers above, would you say that your performance matched your preparation? YES NO

BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER CLASS

It is also useful to take the time to reflect on your learning in a broader sense, not just in the context of the exam and your preparation for it. Consider the following questions:

Before class:

- What do you do to prepare for class (reading, notetaking, practicing problems, etc.)?
- On average, how much time do you spend preparing before each class?
- Are you noting anything you're not familiar with, unsure about, etc. to follow up on later?
- Overall, do you think you are preparing well? What could you do to be better prepared for class?

During class:

- How would you rate your attention and engagement during class? Why is that?
- Do you take notes during lecture? If so, do you use a certain style? Are you intentional about your notetaking, or just copying down exactly what the instructor says? [View our tips on notetaking here.](#)
- Are you able to follow along and keep up with the lecture?
- Are you actively making connections between the lecture content and your current knowledge/prior experience?
- Are you asking or writing down questions?

After class:

- What does reviewing after class look like for you? How soon after lecture do you review, and what materials do you review? Is your reviewing active or passive?
- Do you take advantage of resources on campus (office hours, peer mentoring, group study, etc.)? Are they working for you?
- Think about your mindset...How would you say you approach homework: as something that needs to be checked off your to-do list, or as an opportunity for effective practice?

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ACTION PLAN

After reflecting on your entire learning experience, you are now ready to put together a plan for how to move on from this exam and prepare for the next one.

1. What is/are your goal(s) for the next exam? Be specific.

2. Take a look back at the study strategies and habits that you noted above:

- a. How do you learn best? How can you better implement that moving forward?

- b. Which past practices were effective and should be continued to achieve your goal?

- c. Which are problematic and need to be modified or abandoned to achieve your goal?

3. **Make a study schedule** for the period between now and the next exam (for tips, [see our time management handout](#)). As you create action items and plot them out, be specific about your actions (e.g. “Study flashcards,” “Attend peer mentoring session,” or “Practice test,” rather than just “Study for x”). Recognize that it’s okay if you need to move things around or alter the specifics of certain action items later on – what’s important is that you are thinking about and making plans, which will help keep you accountable later on.
4. **Talk with your instructor or TA.** You will find that the conversation, whether it’s about the exam or about your plans moving forward, will be much more productive after having completed these self-reflection exercises.
5. **Talk with your classmates and peers.** See what’s working (and not working) for them. They may have some great ideas that you had not thought of before.
6. **Get help from The Learning Center.** On weekdays during the academic year, our peer coaches are available to help with your action plan, as well as academic skills such as time management, organization, and study strategies. [More information can be found here](#). Additionally, Learning Center staff are available to work with you on weekdays between 9am and 5pm. To schedule a time to meet, email learningcenter@wustl.edu.