

Avoid Common Exam Errors!

Answering with the wrong list or the wrong concept.

Cause: Memorizing material as separate lists and ideas .

Solution: Get an overall view of the material by organizing it on study sheets and learning it as an organized mass of material.

Writing a sketchy answer

Cause: Skimpy lecture notes and study sheets.

Solution: Avoid by taking complete lecture notes and making complete study sheets.

Answering a question in the wrong way.

Cause: Hasty reading of the question and the desire to write about what you have studied, whether or not the professor asks about it.

Solution: Read the question well; mark and number its parts, referring back to it from time to time as you write. Ask the professor to clarify difficult questions.

Not knowing the key terms as they appear in the question or as they are needed in the answer.

Cause: Neglecting to isolate and learn key terms throughout the semester.

Solution: Avoid by writing key terms on cards and learning what these terms mean before the exam.

Not knowing how to apply the material from the course to new situations (occurs in math and science as well as in liberal arts classes).

Cause: Not thinking enough about the material being learned during the semester.

Solution: Invent original examples, applying what you have learned to new situations, and write your insights and ideas in brackets in lecture notes, textbooks, and on study sheets.

Leaving out important material such as parts of the question, supporting details, or ramifications and implications.

Cause: Not reading the question well enough and not knowing how much information to include in the answer.

Solution: Write all you can that is relevant to the question. Use plenty of detail and examples. Reread questions when you have finished writing your answer to check whether you have answered all parts.