Exam experiences

How do you feel about taking exams?
The thought of sitting an exam is very stressful!

*But there are great preparation strategies*
- Reduce your stress
- Remember more

Preparing for exams

- Exam preparation
- Memory strategies

Exam preparation

**Step 1:** Plan your study time

**Step 2:** Collect information

**Step 3:** Memorise and revise

Planning exam study

Exam timetable

- Write down exam dates
- Decide on the amount of time needed to study for each exam
- Block out study times
- Have regular breaks
- Break each session into topics that you will study and practise
- Review study timetable every week

http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/exams/timetables/
Know when and where your exams are, and when and where you will study for them.

Work early or work late – find the best place and time for you. While studying, remember to eat, sleep and get regular exercise.

Understand the purpose of the exam
- For you to demonstrate your knowledge, understanding and ability to apply and evaluate concepts covered by the course.
  - Therefore
    - You need to know and use the terminology of the paper
    - You need to be able to name major theorists and what impact their theories have had
    - You need a good fund of relevant examples
    - You need to be able to remember the sets of facts in correct categories
    - You need to have practised every which way a formula/equation can be applied

How to you work out what you need to know?
Collect information
- Lecture notes
- Study notes
- Assignment preparation notes
- Notes from books and readings
- Past exams
- Stream information and discussions for the paper

Topics and types of questions
- Use past exams
  - What topics are repeated
  - Which themes are emphasised?
- Types of questions
  - Essays, short answers, multiple choice
- Allocation of marks

Two memory special effects
"Startle effect"
If something stands out as ODD, bizarre or unexpected it can sometimes be easier to remember

"People effect"
Faces are memorable, especially famous faces
- Imagine your favourite musician / pop idol / TV character etc explaining your subject

Memorise and revise
Step 1: Summarising and understanding
Taking notes: Study summaries, lists, flash cards etc

Step 2: Storing and retrieval activities
Acronyms, rhymes, talking out loud, verbal associations

Step 3: Practice and application
Practice answering questions (out loud or written)

Summarising and understanding
- If the information doesn’t make sense to you, it will be harder to remember
  - Organise your information
    - Number it
    - Break it into sections
    - Label it
    - List it
Study Summaries
Different ways to take notes
- Written info or pattern/image
Condense information into:
- Flash Cards
- Note cards
- Audio Recordings

Outline Summary/linear notes
172.237
A Global Perspective on English – Topic 3

Inner Circle
USA, UK, Canada, NZ. A few controversial. p. 15
All public functions > Eng.
- gov; media; creative pursuits; etc.

Outer Circle
India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Singapore, South Africa, Zambia + others
- See table Kachru & Nelson (2001, p. 11) for more eg of outer and inner countries
Long history as institutionalized lang. & has cultural role
- gnp/hrd.
- Literary creativity / angu-

Charts
Especially good for planning compare and contrast questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 basic issues</th>
<th>Piaget</th>
<th>Vygotsky</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuous or discontinuous development?</td>
<td>Discontinuous – stages of development</td>
<td>Continuous – gradually acquire skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One course of development or many?</td>
<td>One – stages are universal</td>
<td>Many possible courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature or nurture most important?</td>
<td>Both nature and nurture</td>
<td>Both nature and nurture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example of a Study Matrix
Displays the similarities and differences amongst bacteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Name</th>
<th>Reproduction</th>
<th>O2</th>
<th>Relation</th>
<th>Habitat</th>
<th>Morphology</th>
<th>Coating</th>
<th>Gas Energy</th>
<th>Habit Relation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archaebacteria</td>
<td>Methanogiser</td>
<td>RNA</td>
<td>Obligatory</td>
<td>Anaerobic</td>
<td>Swamp/marsh</td>
<td>Endobiotic</td>
<td>Solitary</td>
<td>Unique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Membrane</td>
<td>Lack</td>
<td>Paptidoglycin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H2 + CO2 → CH4 + H2O</td>
<td>Few(-) &amp; many(+))</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halophile</td>
<td>Thermophile</td>
<td>Bacteria</td>
<td>Janobacteria</td>
<td>Notorophic</td>
<td>Pseudonomads</td>
<td>Spirochaetes</td>
<td>Endosphere Formers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example: Diagram/mind map

From the Mind Tools website:
http://www.mindtools.com/media/Diagrams/mindmap.jpg
Flow Chart of Infection Cycle

Storage and retrieval

Memory strategies
- Acronyms and acrostics
- Talking out loud
- Chunking
- Rhymes and chants
- Roman room

Acronyms and Acrostics
Use these to remember a set or a sequence

- BEDMAS
  - Brackets, Exponentials, Division, Multiplication, Addition, Subtraction
  - Every good boy deserves fruit
  - Happy Henry likes beans, butter, carrots, nuts or fruit now

Talk out loud
Go through a topic out loud
- How fluent is your explanation? Did you have to stop and start?
- Are you using the right terms or having to use less clear, less precise words?
- Can also read notes out loud

Chunking
Great for numbers and formulas
- o800 83 83 83

Rhymes and chants
These are often based around a sequence or tune that is well known e.g. "This old man he plays ..."

1. — bun —— Bronfenbrenner – environment, family first, community and culture; circular model (like a bun)
2. — shoe —— Vygotsky – continuous devp (shoe size); scaffolding – one stage to the next; stages of proximal devp
3. — tree —— Piaget – discontinuous stages (flower, seed, plant); set learning at diff stages; schemes (roots of thinking); obj permanence (rock-a-bye baby); real/fantasy (tree house); conservation (trees), reversibility; concrete operational (solid trunk); hypothesising (ideal world clean and green)
4. — door —— Ainsworth – attachment theory – importance in infancy (entering the world); door has hinges – to stay stable; attachment necessary for stable relationships
5. — hive —— Erikson – psycho social (hive is like a society)

Roman Room

Negative reinforcement
Classical conditioning
Extinction
Operant conditioning
Positivereinforcement
Shaping
Punishment
How would you try to remember this list?

- Oranges
- Arteries
- Sun
- Chocolate
- Veins
- Limes
- Horse
- Capillaries
- Lemons

You might group them into categories:

- **Blood vessels**: arteries, veins, capillaries
- **Citrus fruit**: oranges, lemons, limes

You might come up with a story: the sun melted the chocolate and the horse licked it up.

You might come up with a chant, an acronym, or a visual image...

Overall, the key to good memory in exams is to present your information in a way that works for you, and revise revise, revise.