

Study Skills in Action

Preparing for the Final Exam

At the end of the semester, most students are inundated with projects, papers, and tests. Instructors may speed up the pace in lectures to get through all the material. If something unexpected is going to happen to a student, it often happens during this time.

Getting through the last couple of weeks of a math course can be challenging. This is why it is important to plan your review time for the final exam at least three weeks before the exam.



These students are planning how they will study for the final exam.

Smart Study Strategy

Form a Final Exam Study Group

- 1 ▶ **Form a study group of three or four students several weeks before the final exam.** The intent of this group is to review what you have already learned while continuing to learn new material.
- 2 ▶ **Find out what material you must know for the final, even if the instructor has not yet covered it.** As a group, meet with the instructor outside of class. A group is likely to receive more attention and can ask more questions.
- 3 ▶ **Ask for or create a practice final and have the instructor look at it.** Make sure the problems are at an appropriate level of difficulty. Look for sample problems in old tests and in cumulative tests in the textbook. Review what the textbook and your notes say as you look for problems. This will refresh your memory.
- 4 ▶ **Have each group member take the practice final exam.** Then have each member identify what he or she needs to study. Make sure you can complete the problems with the speed and accuracy that are necessary to complete the real final exam.
- 5 ▶ **Decide when the group is going to meet during the next couple of weeks and what you will cover during each session.** The tutoring or learning center on campus is an ideal setting in which to meet. Many libraries have small study rooms that study groups can reserve. Set up several study times for each week. If you live at home, make sure your family knows that this is a busy time.
- 6 ▶ **During the study group sessions, make sure you stay on track.** Prepare for each study session by knowing what material in the textbook you are going to cover and having the class notes for that material. When you have questions, assign a group member to go to the instructor for answers. Then this member can relay the correct information to the other group members. Save socializing for after the final exam.