

EXAM PREP

A WILLIAM LYON MACKENZIE STUDENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT GUIDE

Exams are a part of life.

Post-secondary students write exams.
Carpenters, cooks, electricians, and ironworkers write exams.
And soon, you'll write your first round of exams.

Are exams a part of life, or is life one big exam?...



An exam is one kind of **culminating activity**. It is intended to assess your knowledge and understanding of material covered in a course. Your **performance** on an exam will help your teacher determine your final grade. It should also help you come to a better understanding of your strengths, and of areas for improvement. It should not, however, have an impact on your sense of self-worth: you are not your grade!

DID YOU KNOW?

Lions are good at exams! They can solve unfamiliar puzzles, and can remember the solutions to these puzzles. In fact, lions can remember the vocalizations of spotted hyenas even after ten years with no contact of any kind with them.



Let's shoot some hoops before the big game!

Writing an exam *is* like putting on a performance, and exam prep is like a rehearsal or a scrimmage. You wouldn't take the stage for a dance recital without rehearsing beforehand; you wouldn't take the court for a playoff game without putting in as much practise as possible first. Don't write your exams without preparation.

BEFORE writing

- Make a plan — let's do that on the next two pages.
- Organize your course materials. Complete any missing work. Review Google Classroom / Brightspace.
- Carefully note the date, time, and location of each exam. Pack all required materials.

GET ORGANIZED

BE GOOD TO YOUR BRAIN

- Feed your brain: it takes up about 2% of your body weight but accounts for 20% of your body's energy use. On an average day, you burn about 320 calories just by thinking!
- Move around. Physical activity increases the flow of oxygen to your brain, which will improve your concentration. If possible, walk or bike to school on the day of your exam.
- Prioritize sleep: it's crucial for learning and memory formation.

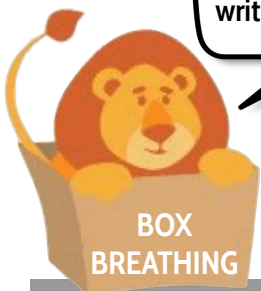


WHILE writing

- Read over the entire exam before beginning. Pay close attention to all instructions provided.
- Answer the easiest questions first. You'll bank some guaranteed marks and build your confidence.
- Don't feel like you should spend every moment writing, even if it looks like others are. Your thinking might be more beneficial than their writing.

Not everyone who takes extra paper writes extra sense!

Keep an eye on the clock; budget your time according to the mark value of each question. Stay calm — consider using one of these techniques:



BOX BREATHING

Breathe in while counting to four; hold while counting to four; breathe out while counting to four; hold while counting to four; repeat.

POSITIVE SELF-TALK

Make a conscious effort to think positively about your abilities. Tell yourself "I know there are a lot of questions here, but if I take them one-by-one, I know I can make it through," and "I can do it!"

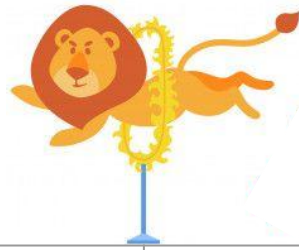
STAY LOOSE

Relax your arms and hands. Plant your feet flat on the floor. Sit up straight. Stretch briefly in your seat.

DID YOU KNOW?

Lions spend up to 20 hours a day resting and sleeping!

THE PLAN



CLASS	EXAM?		DATE	TIME	LOCATION	FORMAT
	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			<input type="checkbox"/> 9AM <input type="checkbox"/> 1PM		
	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	-> I F		<input type="checkbox"/> 9AM <input type="checkbox"/> 1PM		
	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	-> Y E S		<input type="checkbox"/> 9AM <input type="checkbox"/> 1PM		
	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	->		<input type="checkbox"/> 9AM <input type="checkbox"/> 1PM		

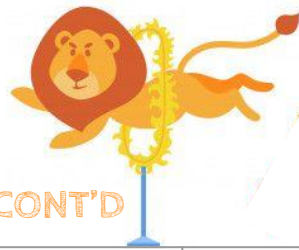
- Gather as much information about the exam as possible. What is the format? How long is it? How much time will you have to write it?
- Think like a teacher: predict exam questions based on course outlines, notes, and assignments.
- Create study aids, such as reading summaries or charts.
- Try to explain difficult material to someone else. If you can explain it to a peer, parent, or guardian, you can explain it on an exam.

DID YOU KNOW?

The “social intelligence hypothesis” says that navigating a complex communal life pushes animals like lions and humans to evolve problem-solving abilities. Since social complexity leads to cognitive complexity, consider assembling a study group (study pride?) as you prep for exams!

- Write down where and when you will study, and set clear goals for each study session.
- Don’t plan to cram: cramming leads to higher stress and lower scores.
- Break up study sessions into manageable chunks. Take breaks to snack, hydrate, stretch, or just stare out the window.

THE PLAN CONT'D



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
 DECEMBER	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 BREAK BEGINS	27	28	29	30	31
 JANUARY	2	3	4	5	6 BREAK ENDS	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 EXAMS BEGIN	26	27	28
29	30	31 EXAMS END	 FEBRUARY	2 PA DAY	3 SEM 2 BEGINS	



AFTER writing

Give yourself props! Writing exams is stressful, and you made it through. If you're not entirely happy with your results, don't worry: you'll have another opportunity to write exams at the end of second semester, and this time, you'll have had some practice. And, again, *you are not your grade*. Now do something super-fun to reward yourself for all your hard work!

