

# DIRECTIONS

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## Preparing for Exams

James Fitchette of the Counselling and Development centre offers strategies for surviving the final phase of your academic year. The real key to success in taking and preparing for exams is active studying, and given below are hints on how to study which, once learned, apply also as effective work habits throughout the year.

For more information on these and other study techniques, contact James Fitchette, Learning Skills Centre, Counselling and Development, 148 Behavioural Services Building (667-3215).

### SQ4R

A systematic approach to study. This acronym stands for Survey, Question, Read, Record, Recite, Review. This effective method of study offers an approach you can take to any material, and most particularly should focus your reading of textbooks, novels, poems. Its message is to PREPARE yourself for learning, and the most important first step is to survey your materials.

Take an overview: check copyright date, skim the table of contents, read the preface and introduction, etc.

Preview each chapter or section: read the introductory materials, read subheadings and any materials in bold print, read the summary and conclusions.

Read analytically, purposefully; your purpose is comprehension and recall.

### Study Strategies

The following study hints will help you organize your thoughts; these same techniques may be used to prepare for exams and, with some modification, apply also to writing exams and papers. Read on:

1. The following are key words often used in examination questions or essay/paper topics. Keep these definitions in mind, as a guide to organizing your thoughts while you study:

**COMPARE.** Look for qualities and/or characteristics that resemble each other. Emphasize similarities, but look for differences.

**CONTRAST.** Stress dissimilarities and differences of things, qualities, events and problems.

**DEFINE.** Give clear, concise, authoritative meanings.

**DISCUSS.** Consider various points of view, analyze carefully and offer pro and con reasons.

**EVALUATE.** Appraise. Offer your opinions. Cite both limitations and advantages and include the opinions of authorities.

**REVIEW.** Examine a subject critically, analyzing and commenting on it or statements made about it.

2. Consider studying in groups. This form of active studying can help formulate your thoughts, refresh your memory, refine your recall of information. Each member of the group could be asked to prepare a handout or

presentation reviewing assigned material. Information on booking rooms may be found elsewhere on this page.

3. Develop the habit of outlining information before writing an essay or exam question; professors grading an exam will appreciate seeing the organization behind the answers you give.

4. Reduce your classroom/research notes by selecting key words or phrases that serve as a focus for the material you want to remember; highlighting these words creates an index for the main topics of your notes, and provides a quick reference for future study.

The principle of "chunking" allows for consolidating ideas, so that one word may call up larger memory unit, whether you use mind-maps, outlines, mnemonics.

### GOOD LUCK IN YOUR STUDYING!

## Booking Study Space

Students always need study space and are sometimes very creative in the use of space to fill this need. You should know that, in addition to the study halls in your college and study carrels in the library, you as a registered student at York can book classroom space for small-group study purposes.

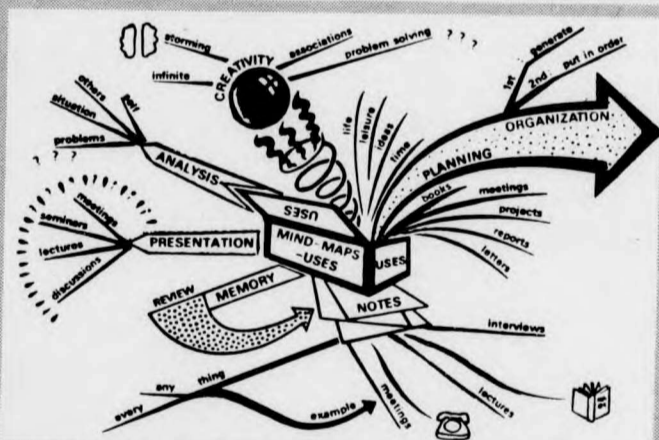
If you want to book a room, simply call the Room Allocation Centre at -2389/2287 (Room C131, West Office Building) to determine what space is available. With the exception of the Fine Arts Bldg. and Osgoode Hall, the Centre can reserve a room on campus at no charge. Study groups should consist of at least three persons. Weekend bookings should be made no later than noon on Thursday of that week. Student identification will be required. For bookings made more than 24 hours in advance of use, you are advised to drop by the Centre to confirm the booking.

To protect your right to use classrooms, we recommend some few courtesies, however: prior booking through the Room Allocation Centre, booking for a group rather than an individual, and consideration for fellow students who use the rooms after you, e.g., cleaning up after yourselves. It can be tempting to find an unoccupied classroom and use it as your private study room. The practice of picking a room and chalking "occupied" on the door is a disservice to other students who may have booked the space officially and to caretakers who have to clean the doors.

## Mind-Maps and Patterns

People can learn effectively by using creative "mind-maps" to structure information around a central theme or concept. These can be used effectively in nearly every activity that involves thought, recall, planning and creativity; they offer a tool for reviewing for exams or organizing an answer to an essay question on an exam. Linear notes might span two to ten pages, but a mind-map pulls all the main ideas into one place. (see picture above for an example)

Pictured above is a "mind-map" taken as a sample from "The Brain Book"; what appears merely whimsical may, on closer inspection, prove to be a useful tool for study.



## Mnemonics

The mnemonic techniques are based on principles of memory and learning such as meaningfulness, association, organization, visualization, attention and interest. Some common systems are

1. The Peg System (number rhyme). Numbers are associated with a rhyming word (one-gun, two-shoe, three-tree) and the item to be remembered is associated visually with the rhyming word.
2. The Loci System. A series of mental images of familiar locations memorized in a logical and natural order and associated visually with specific locations.
3. The Link System (Story System). Associations are formed, usually visual, between items to be remembered or the items are woven into a story.
4. The Phonetic System (Number-Sound System). Sounds are used to represent numbers with words and those words are associated with items to be remembered.

Examples:

### HOMES

The Great Lakes: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior.

### FACE

The spaces of the treble clef in music.

### Do men ever visit Boston?

The ranking of English titles: duke, marquis, earl, viscount, baron.

### Some officers have curly auburn hair to offer attraction

The trigonometric functions of a right triangle:

sine = opposite side/hypotenuse  
cosine = adjacent side/hypotenuse  
tangent = opposite/adjacent

### Roy G. Biv

The colour spectrum: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet.



## Going home for the Summer?

If you are leaving for the summer months and need someone to take over your apartment, house or room while you are gone, contact the off-campus housing service at 667-2226. We will do our best to find you a suitable tenant.

## Staying here for the Summer

The off-campus housing service has listings of summer accommodations available off-campus. If you need a place to live during the summer months, check out the notice boards in the South Corridor of the Curtis Lecture halls (behind the Central Square cafeteria), or drop by the Office of Student Affairs, 124 Central Square.