

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Study Skills Workbook

Compiled by Clark Schwab, June 2002

Do you want to improve how you do in school? Do you want to spend as little time as possible doing that? If so, read on ...



**MORE EFFECTIVE STUDY TIME**



**= MORE FREE TIME**

Everyone learns differently. It is important that you know your learning style and what works best for you.

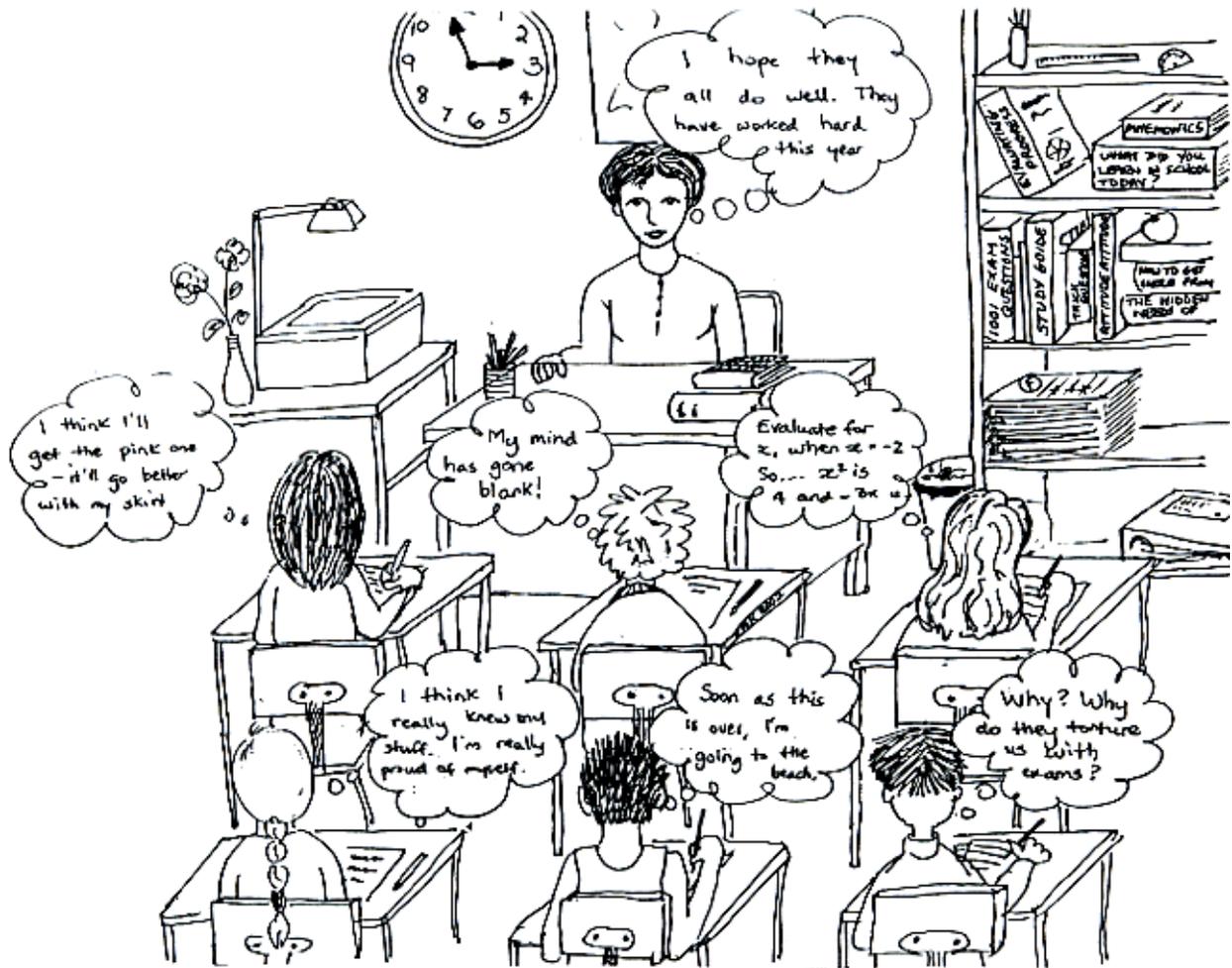
**This booklet is arranged in the following way:**

1. Why do we write exams?
2. Learning Styles Inventory
3. The Learning Curve
4. Classroom skills
5. Study Schedule
6. Where to study
7. What to study
8. How to study
9. Study Tips
10. Writing exams and tests
11. Curing the nerves
12. Study Checklist

# 1. WHY DO WE WRITE TESTS AND EXAMS?

Exams are not created to satisfy a hidden need of your teacher.  
Some of the purposes of exams are:

- Exams are a way to check what you have learned in your class
- Exams often motivate students to study and review their work



## 2. BARSCH LEARNING STYLE INVENTORY

Place a check on the appropriate line after each statement

	Often	Some- times	Seldom
1. Can remember more about a subject by listening rather than reading.			
2. Follow written directions better than oral directions.			
3. Like to write things down or take notes for review.			
4. Lean down extremely hard with pen and pencil when writing.			
5. Require explanations of diagrams, graphs or visual directions.			
6. Enjoy working with tools.			
7. Are skillful at and enjoy developing and making graphs and charts.			
8. Can tell if sounds match when presented with pairs of sounds.			
9. Remember best by writing things down several times.			
10. Can understand and follow directions on maps.			
11. Do better at academic subjects by listening to lectures and tapes.			
12. Play with coins, pens or items in pockets.			
13. Learn to spell better by repeating the word out loud than by writing the word down.			

	Often	Some- times	Seldom
14. Can better understand a news article by reading about it in the paper than by listening to it on the radio.			
15. Chew gum or snack while studying			
16. Feel the best way to remember is to picture it in your head			
17. Count on your fingers			
18. Would rather listen to a good lecture or speech than read about it in a textbook.			
19. Are good at working and solving jigsaw puzzles and mazes			
20. Grip objects in your hand during learning			
21. Prefer to listen to the news on the radio rather than reading it in the newspaper			
22. Obtain information on an interesting subject by reading relevant material			
23. Feel very comfortable touching others - hugging, handshaking etc.			
24. Follow oral directions better than written ones			

## SCORING THE BARSCH LEARNING STYLE INVENTORY

**Score:**

OFTEN: 5 points

SOMETIMES: 3 points

SELDOM: 1 point

Place these point values on the line next to the question it corresponds to. Next, add up the points to obtain a preference score under each heading.

<b>VISUAL</b>	
Question Number	Points
2	
3	
7	
10	
14	
16	
20	
22	
<b>VPS =</b>	

<b>AUDITORY</b>	
Question Number	Points
1	
5	
8	
11	
13	
18	
21	
24	
<b>APS =</b>	

<b>TACTILE</b>	
Question Number	Points
4	
6	
9	
12	
15	
17	
19	
23	
<b>TPS =</b>	

VPS = Visual preference score

APS = Auditory preference score

TPS = Tactile preference score

The highest score is your strongest method of learning. Scores within two points of each other are considered equally strong. More than a two-point spread means you are stronger in one area than the other. When you know which way you learn best, read the tips on the following pages, under the section that applies to you. These tips will help you study more effectively.

## THE WAYS TO STUDY AND LEARN

### For **AUDITORY** learners:

Translate the things you see into things you can hear.

1. Sit where you can hear well and be undistracted during class time. This may mean not sitting next to friends.
2. After you have made notes on something or have read something, read it into a tape recorder, then listen to it to memorize.
3. Write up practice exam questions from notes and orally practice answering them with a friend.
4. Practice orally spelling words with a friend.
5. When you study, say the information out loud to yourself after you have looked at it.
6. If the word seems unfamiliar when you look at it, have a teacher read it to you (especially on a test) because you'll probably understand it more easily through hearing it.
7. Read important parts of your text on tape and listen to it with earphones.

### For **VISUAL** learners:

Translate the things you hear into things you see

1. Take notes while your teacher is talking
2. Use different coloured pencils to accentuate
3. Take written notes and rewrite in chart or graph form e.g. use a time line to chart events you have to remember in history.
4. Write definition words on flashcards, words on the front and the answer on the back; use coloured pens.
5. Carry a small notebook to jot down important ideas.
6. When memorizing, look at information, then look away and try to visualize it in your (make a picture of it) e.g. spelling words

**For TACTILE learners:**

Translate the things you see and hear into things you can do.

1. Write out facts, that you must learn and remember, 3 or 4 times.
2. Take information from the textbook and make drawings, graphs, flashcards, maps, and time lines.
3. Take notes while the teacher is talking.
4. Take notes while you are reading your textbook or notebook.
5. In spelling trace words with your finger as you think about them.
6. When memorizing, walk instead of sitting.
7. When memorizing, bounce a ball, do a repetitive movement or squeeze something in your hand etc. whatever is most appropriate at the time.

See it !

Σαψ ιτ !

Do it !

### 3. THE LEARNING CURVE

Answer the following questions:

1. Can you tie your shoes?
2. When did you learn to tie your shoes?
3. When did you last study to tie your shoes?
4. If you haven't studied how to tie them recently, how do you still remember how to tie them?

Bonus question:

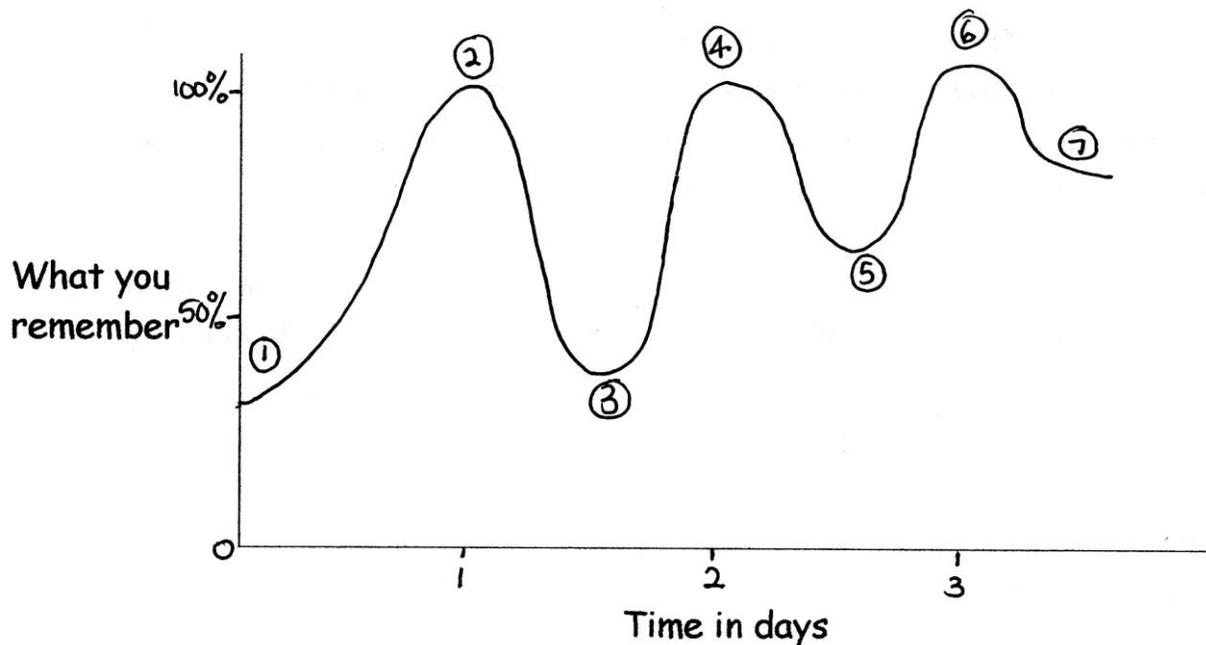
5. Can you tie them with your eyes closed? You can?! Wow!!!!



Most of us learn billions of pieces of information throughout our lifetime. If we remembered every detail of everything we ever learned as clearly as you remember your own name, we'd probably go mad! *Our brains are designed to forget - to keep us sane.* We only remember what is important. So, to learn and memorize we have to trick our brains into thinking the information is important.

One of the most effective ways of doing this is to learn the information more than once.

## The Learning Curve



### A Story

As you read this story, follow along the graph using the number references.

Bobb, (his parents were cruel -- how could anyone misspell Bobb?) Anyway, Bobb has to study for a Socials test. We will assume Bobb is not an idiot and he can already remember about 30% of what he has learned in Socials this year.

Bobb begins studying at (1) on the curve. Bobb crams for three hours and memorizes all of his Socials (2). Bobb feels very confident. He goes to sleep that night ...

Bobb walks into his test next day (3) and writes it. He gets 40%. What happened? During the night, Bobb's brain decided that all the Socials he had just learned was unimportant and all the information was discarded and forgotten. Bobb has learned his lesson. He decides that for the next test he will need to study more than once.

He starts at (1), studies and learns all material. He (2) goes to sleep, and when he wakes up next day, (3) he remembers about 40% of what he had learned the night before, so....., (4) he studies again the next night and again learns everything.

Unfortunately, he needs to sleep again (5) but this time when he wakes up, he remembers 75% of what he had studied the night before.

Bobb decides he had better study one more night to be sure he remembers everything. So one more time he learns all his Socials. He goes to bed, wakes up in the morning, writes his test and gets over 90%.

Bobb is a happy camper!

**The moral of the story:**

If you want to remember what you've studied by studying effectively, you need to study the same material more than once. You should study the same material at least 3 times before any test.

**If you study new material within 24 hours of learning it,  
then again 1 week later, then again 1 month later,  
you will never forget it.**

## 4. CLASSROOM SKILLS

Want to minimize the amount of time spent studying? Want to make your life easier? Try doing the following in class all year.

### Organize Yourself in Class

1. Bring supplies to class.
2. Date your work.
3. Put all your handouts in your binder as soon as you get them.
4. Number your papers. You'll know papers are missing and can keep them in order and find them easily when studying.
5. Keep **all** your work (at home if necessary). You will need this to review and study for tests and exams. Bonus: You can sell it next year to juniors! (Just kidding!)
6. During class write down all new words. Example: simile, metaphor, assonance etc.
7. Use a highlighter pen or underline to draw attention to important words, questions, titles, etc.
8. Correct all assignments and tests.
9. Use your agenda book to record important dates, homework, tests etc.
10. Indicate the important sections in your text - use a pencil, so you can erase the marks later. Try putting a little bracket with a star next to important items.

Eg.        Many important events occurred to change the course of colonization in the new world. Two events in the late 1840's served to focus British attention on Vancouver Island - the Treaty of Washington in 1846 and the annexation of California to the United States in 1848.

The bracket highlights the two important treaties you need to know, while ignoring the first sentence. This reduces how much you need to re-read in preparation for a test or an exam.

## 5. STUDY SCHEDULE

As you will need to study more than once, it is important to plan ahead.

**Use** your agenda book and the calendar at the back of this workbook to record any tests or exams that are ahead.

**Write** down the test date and plan at least 3 study times prior to the test date.

**Stick** to your schedule!

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
				1. Study SS	1. Study Chem	
2. Study SS	2. Study Chem	3. Study SS	SS test	3. Study Chem	Chem test	



*No one plans to fail  
But many fail to plan!*

## 6. WHERE TO STUDY

The best place to study is a cramped smelly dark basement with poor lighting. **NOT!!!** Everyone learns differently. You need to find a place that suits your learning style. Find a place you like to sit - preferably somewhere you can write and consider these points:



Good lighting



If you are an auditory learner - listen to music



Do you like junk food? Put healthy desirable treats on your desk. Use them as a reward. You can't eat them unless you are studying!



Create an environment you want to be in. If you don't like your study area, you probably won't want to come back to study there.



Make sure you have your study schedule, dictionary, notes, assignments, labs, textbooks etc. on hand.



Use a timer and time yourself to allow for 45 minutes of study time, followed by a 15-minute break. Sticking to this can be difficult - just remember there are treats on your desk waiting for you!

### BEST STUDY PLAN

45 minutes studying

15 minute break

45 minutes studying

STOP!!

Repeat this twice a day, **MAXIMUM** once in the morning and once in the evening

## 7. WHAT TO STUDY

On your first scheduled study day, you will need to get all your study materials together. You will need your notes, texts, labs, tests, quizzes, assignments, handouts etc.

### Step 1

Global Review - quickly look over everything you have and decide how much stuff you have to study. If you are not sure what you should study, ask your teacher what will be on the test or exam.

### Step 2

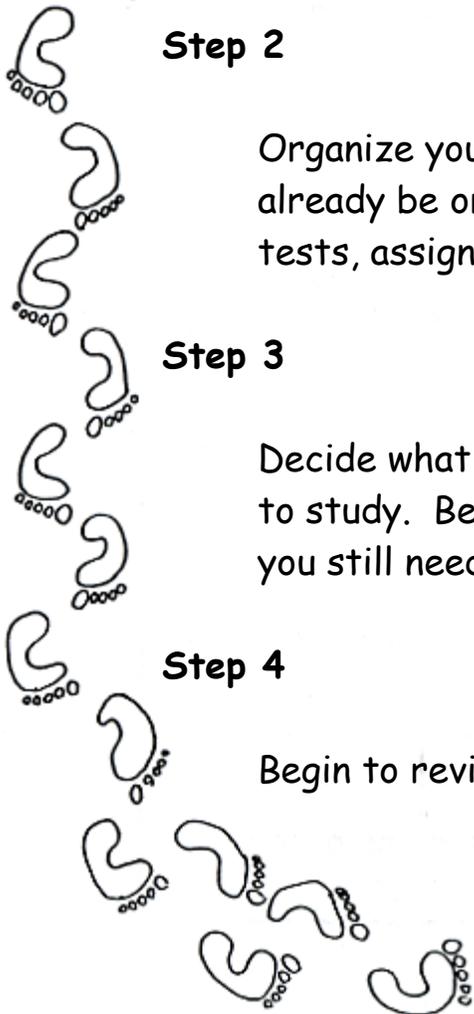
Organize your notes. This won't take you long as they should already be organized and numbered. (Hint! Hint!) Line up your tests, assignments etc.

### Step 3

Decide what is important. Study only those things that you need to study. Be aware of what of what you already know and what you still need to learn.

### Step 4

Begin to review.



## 8. HOW TO STUDY

1. **SURVEY:** Survey the chapter, review summaries and main points. After you have surveyed you should know what the chapter is about.
2. **QUESTION:** Go to the review section for each chapter (Math, Science etc.) and do the review questions. You can do them in your head, orally or write them down - whatever works best for you. If you can't answer some of the questions, you need to study more.
3. **READ:** Read the sections you have indicated as important in each chapter. Pay attention to keywords.
4. **RECORD:** Use a study sheet to record important definitions, concepts, diagrams, lists and formulas etc. How? Read on ....
5. **REVIEW:** When you have finished your planned section of study, take a small break. Then go over the chapter or section again and see if you can answer the review questions. Take note of what you are unsure of.

## SQ3R

This method is known as the SQ3R study method.

Survey  
Question  
Read  
Record  
Review

Without review, the average student can forget 80% of what has been

## Study Sheet

While reading this, refer to the study sheet on the next page of this booklet.

-  Record the concept you are trying to remember in the left hand column. In the right hand column record the page number in your text or notes where that information can be found.
  
-  When you study, start at the top of the "Things to Know" list and work down the page reciting and recording the definitions, concepts etc. that you need to know. When you have memorized the page from the top to the bottom, start from the bottom and work your way up.
  
-  Use strips of paper to hide the answers on your list.
  
-  Try to recall the information in different orders to "trick your brain"

## REMEMBER

- ❖ If you cram for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours, you will only remember about 25% of what you learned.
- ❖ Study for 45 minutes, and then have a 15-minute break. Repeat. This is the most effective method.
- ❖ Plan for a maximum of 4 x 45 minute study periods a day. (You can't study if your brain is burned out).





## 9. STUDY TIPS

*Not all of these things will work for you. Find out what you can use from this list of tricks.*

### 1. **Memory techniques**

- Review what you need to take with you before you go anywhere.
- Wear your watch or rings in an unfamiliar way.
- Ask someone to remind you.
- Write it down.
- Say it to yourself.
- Visualize.
- Make up a formula or a sentence.
- Use acronyms or acrostics.

2. **Acronyms.** An acronym is a word that is made by taking the first letter of the words you want to remember, and creating a new word. For example: **HOMES** is an acronym to remember the Great Lakes, **H**uron, **O**ntario, **M**ichigan, **E**rie and **S**uperior.

3. **Acrostics.** An acrostic is a sentence that is made by taking the first letter from each word or symbol you want to remember and inserting another word beginning with the same letter. For example: **KING PHILIP CAME OVER FOR GREEN STAMPS** is an acrostic for the classification of living things: **K**ingdom, **P**hylum, **C**lass, **O**rders, **F**amily, **G**enus, **S**pecies.

4. **Vary study techniques** in order to increase concentration.

5. **Use flash cards**

6. **Draw pictures**
7. **Say things out loud**
8. **Listen** to music
9. **Use rhythm**, sing, hum, tap, snap your fingers or pace
10. **Make lists** of things you need to remember
11. **Visualize** or try to connect the idea with something that is easy for you to remember
12. **Cover card** - use it to conceal answers or what you have just read while you recite the facts from memory
13. **Guess what questions** will be asked on the exam
14. Use colors to **highlight**
15. Pick the **time of day** that's best for you to study (for most, it is in the morning)



## 10. WRITING EXAMS OR TESTS

### Before the Exam

1. Bring all of your materials to the exam: pens, pencils, calculator, ruler, text if permitted etc.
2. Try to relax
3. Wear comfortable clothing
4. Go for a walk, listen to music - whatever works for you

### During the Exam

1. Brain dump - find a blank page on the test and immediately write down all of those items you studied that you thought you'd forget. Whew! They are now available for you whenever you need them.
2. *Read directions carefully* and put your name on the test paper.
3. Look over entire test to plan your time and decide where to start.
4. Answer all the questions that you know how to answer first. This will build your confidence as well as ensure that you have some marks.
5. Be aware that some questions on the test will provide you with the answers for other questions.
6. Don't linger too long on any one question.
7. Leave time to check your paper before you turn it in.

Check:

- ◇ Did you follow the directions?
- ◇ Did you answer all the questions?
- ◇ Did you answer the questions fully?
- ◇ Spelling, grammar

STUDIES SHOW that  
second guesses on multiple choice questions  
are more often wrong than right

## Hints for specific question types

There are at least 10 basic question types:

Multiple choice  
True / False  
Mix and Match  
Short answer

Essay  
Fill in the blanks  
Definitions

Diagrams  
Problem solving  
Oral exams

Here are some hints to help you with some of these:

### MULTIPLE CHOICE

- Cross out the answers that are definitely incorrect to narrow your choices.
- Underline the key words that appear in the questions eg. *Which of the following statements is not correct?*, *Which two of the following are properties of metals?* etc.
- Stick with your first answer unless you are *very* sure you should change it.
- Look for obvious contradictions - chances are one of them is right!
- Generally, a longer answer indicates a correct one - it takes more words to create a true statement than a false one
- Take care when transferring answers to a separate answer sheet - if you skip a question be sure to leave a blank.

### TRUE / FALSE

Note key words. Statements with "never", "always", and "every" are likely false. More moderate statements tend to be true.

## MIX AND MATCH

- Check whether each item can only be used once.
- Match those pairs of which you are sure
- Cross off items as you use them
- Double check that you have put the right letters with the correct numbers

## ESSAY AND SHORT ANSWER

- Brainstorm - write a point form list of all the pieces of information you feel the teacher will be looking for. Teachers often grade by looking for specific pieces of information. Number your ideas in order of importance or use.
- Write an introductory statement
- Link brainstorm ideas together into sentences to build your essay/paragraph
- Write a concluding statement
- Double check your work - spelling, grammar etc

## BONUS POINTS?

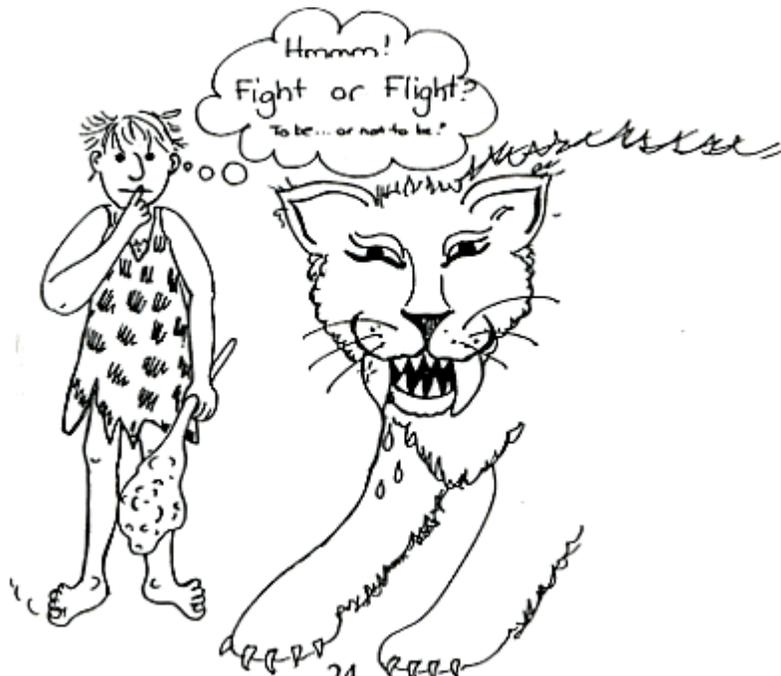
If, at the end of the exam, you have time remaining and would like to earn some extra marks, try this: on a separate piece of paper, write a note to the teacher explaining to him or her that you know a lot of information from the course that was not asked for on the exam and that you would like to submit it for grading. Then write all you know on that piece of paper. *Some* teachers may be impressed by your initiative and give you extra marks.

## 11. CURING THE NERVES

Before there were exams, our forefathers and foremothers survived in a much more dangerous world. If you ran into a sabre-toothed tiger, most people would either fight it or run away. Those who ran - usually survived. Those who chose to argue with the tiger about whether it should eat them or not, usually did not survive. Running into a sabre-toothed tiger was a stressful experience so the body made the decision making process easier by releasing adrenaline. Adrenaline shuts down the higher brain functions and triggers the "flight or fight" response.

Exams are also stressful (no kidding!). When you are faced with writing an exam and you get nervous, your body releases adrenaline. You can't pass an exam by fighting it or running from it, but the excess adrenaline is shutting down your higher brain functions. All this does is makes you stupid! Great.....!

**YOU GET NERVOUS = YOU GET STUPID**



## **How to avoid getting too nervous:**

- ★ Know that teachers don't want to fail you, they just want to know what you have learned - so, show them what you know.
- ★ Do something relaxing before a test - walk, listen to music.  
Don't drink coffee
- ★ Don't talk about the exam with a friend just before it starts - it will only remind you of all the things you have forgotten to study. You'll get nervous and then what will happen...?
- ★ Accept your butterflies - they're normal - just allow them to happen

**You know your stuff.**

**You've studied hard.**

**Be confident!**

**You can do it!**

## 12. STUDY CHECKLIST

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Before the test or exam

- Study schedule complete
- Study space organized and equipment ready
- Books / notes etc. organized
- Know what you need to study
- Study Session 1 completed
- Completion of study sheets / flashcards etc
- Study Session 2 completed
- Study Session 3 completed
- Prepare materials for exam / test (stationery etc.)

### On the test/exam day

- Relax
- "Dump" information you are worried about forgetting by writing it on the test
- Read over exam before you begin to write
- Read / follow directions carefully
- Write test /exam questions that you know best
- Complete all other questions
- Review / re-read test and make any necessary corrections

You are done - CONGRATULATIONS!

# STUDY SCHEDULE

Month \_\_\_\_\_

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
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Photocopy this calendar and use one sheet for each month