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# Study Strategies for Success in College

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## Chapter 1

### *Strategies for Managing Time at the College Level*

By Professor Marilyn Martin

#### Objectives

When you complete this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Explain for a flexible schedule helps you manage your time at the college level.
2. Draw up a sample schedule using the guidelines in this chapter.
3. Describe the three ways scheduling time in college can help you better manage your time.
4. Explain two ways to manage your free time between classes.
5. Explain three ways to prepare to study.
6. Explain how studying in manageable blocks of time is beneficial.

#### Introduction

This unit is all about time and managing it wisely at the college level. Time is like money, and if you invest it wisely, it will pay you great dividends later on. One of the biggest complaints that college students have is that they never seem to have enough time! Think about it. There are 168 hours in a week. If you sleep eight hours a night, that account for 56 hours per week, or one third of your time. But there are still 112 hours left. If you are a full-time student, you probably spend about 15 hours per week in class. You now have 97 hours left. Surely this is sufficient time to get all of your studying done, any other activities you must do, and still have time to enjoy yourself. But it requires management of your time, so that hours do not unknowingly get wasted. Furthermore, if you manage your time appropriately, you will not

have to feel guilty when you are out enjoying yourself. Remember, think of your time as money and spend it wisely.

## **Managing Your Time with a Flexible Schedule**

The first thing you must do as you consider ways to manage your time is realize the value of writing out and living within a schedule. Many students think that following a schedule will tie them down to doing certain things at certain times with no room for changes and free time. This type of a schedule is indeed inappropriate and a far too rigid way to live. However, a flexible schedule give you the best of all worlds. A flexible schedule helps you to organize yourself so that you get done what must get done, and you do so effectively. A flexible schedule actually gives you more freedom because it lets you know when you have free time, which you can then enjoy without feeling guilty about your not doing your studying. A flexible schedule is one in which you will in what absolutely must occur for each day and then work out the ties for relaxation, etc. So a student would fill in his class times and any other activities such as a part-time job that are actually inflexible and then look at the time he has left. Look at the schedule in Figure 1.

As you can see in this schedule, all of the class times and working hours are filled in. When a schedule is drawn out like this, the free time that a student has available to him/her becomes quite apparent. This is why it is essential for you to begin to write out your schedule so that you can see where you have available time to study ad review for classes. In fact, a sample schedule has been provided for you at the end of this chapter. Also, notice in Figure 1. underneath the schedule is a list of possible things that might need to be completed for that week including activities outside of school.

## **How Scheduling Time in College Helps You Manage Your Time**

Now once you have drawn up your schedule, you should realize that the class times and working hours probably will not change in the semester, but the special schedule for each week

would change. Remember also that this special schedule lists only the high points for that particular week and all of the preparation and review for each class is not listed. Therefore, scheduling time in college helps you manage your time in three ways: (1) It reminds you of all

Figure 1. Scheduling Time in College, Weekly Schedule

Hourly Schedule	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
7-8	X	X	X	X	X
8-9	History	X	History	X	History
9-10	X	Math	X	Math	X
10-11	English	Math	English	Math	English
11-12	Biology	X	Biology	Biology	Biology
12-1	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	LAB	Lunch
1-2	Psych	X	Psych	Lunch	Psych
2-3	X	X	X	X	X
3-4	Work	Work	X	Work	X
4-5	Work	Work	X	Work	X
5-6	Work	Work	X	Work	X
6-7	Work	Work	X	Work	P
7-8	X	X	X	X	A
8-9			X		R
9-10			X		T
10-11			X		Y

Weekly Notes:

- Mon: History paper due
- Tues: Chap. 5 Math (dentist appt @2)
- Wed: Prepare for Bio Lab
- Thurs: Review for Psych quiz
- Fri: English paper due (sticker for car)

the things you absolutely must do, (2) it reminds you of the major activities in a particular week, and (3) it reminds you of the free time you have. Now, you can see that within this schedule you have a great deal of time and flexibility in terms of when you choose to study and review for classes.

## **Managing Free Time between Classes**

The next point to consider is the use of your free time between classes. Too many students think of this as time to waste or as time to hang around in the lounge and play cards or some similar activity. Remember, it is okay to play cards, etc., but you should build this into your schedule if you choose to. But if these hours were put to better use in the day time, then you would have more free time in the evening to do things that you really want to do. Remember, the difference between high school and college is that in high school your schedule is arranged by you and the school and the teachers; whereas, in college, you must have the discipline to make and live with your own schedule. These free periods between classes are excellent times to: (1) go over your notes in preparation for your next class, and (2) review the notes from the previous class to fill in any missing facts.

## **Managing Your Study Time**

When considering managing your study time, it is important to plan it out carefully. Too often students put off doing their studying to the last moment, and soon they find themselves getting bored and restless. This is because they have not planned out their studying times with relax times built into it. When you sit down to study, you should decide on an approximate amount of time you want to study. You should also determine the approximate amount of work that you want to accomplish—keeping in mind the amount of time you have and what you need to do. The third thing you should determine at the beginning of a study period is when, how long, and how many breaks you will take. In this way, you are building in goals and rewards

for yourself, and you will know when you can stop working and have a strong sense of satisfaction that you have completed what you set out to do. Therefore; to manage your study time, you must determine: (1) how long you will study, (2) what you will accomplish, and (3) when, where, how long, and how many breaks you will take.

## **Studying in Manageable Blocks of Time**

The last thing to be discussed in studying is manageable blocks of time. It is an accepted fact that it is of little use to stay up before an exam and try to cram all of the information into your head at the last minute. If you carry this idea a little further, then you will see that longer periods of study are not as beneficial as shorter periods of time. Rather than sitting down and studying one subject for eight hours straight, you should try to spread that eight hours out over a week, so that you will avoid the boredom, restlessness, and wastefulness that often comes with doing anything for an extended period of time. If you study in manageable blocks of time, say an hour at a time, your mind will continue to process what you were just studying even if you go on to another subject or decide to watch a little TV. When you do this, then you keep yourself fresh and interested. For instance, if you had a three-hour block of time to study in, you would be better off to spend perhaps fifty minutes each on a different subject with ten minute breaks between each. **Therefore, when you study in manageable blocks of time, you will learn the material easier, it will be more meaningful to you, and it will stay with you longer.** Remember that when you start getting tired, your mind must work harder and yet it retains less. Sometimes it is difficult to distribute your study time throughout a week, but you should make every effort to do so in order to get the best return for your efforts, and be sure to build in time for yourself.

## Conclusion

This unit has been about time and managing it wisely at the college level. Remember what was pointed out at the beginning of this chapter—time is like money, and if you want it to pay you great dividends later on, you must learn to invest it wisely. To do this, you must manage your time intelligently, so that you do not waste your valuable time. Most importantly, if you manage your time wisely, you will not have to feel guilty when you are out enjoying yourself. **Remember, think of your time as money and spend it wisely.**

## **Strategies for Managing Time at the College Level**

### **Review Test**

1. How does a flexible schedule help you manager your time in college?
2. What are the three ways scheduling time in college can help you better manage your time?
3. What are two ways to manager your free time between classes?
4. What are three ways to prepare to study?
5. How is studying in manageable blocks of time beneficial?

Hourly Schedule	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
7-8					
8-9					
9-10					
10-11					
11-12					
12-1					
1-2					
2-3					
3-4					
4-5					
5-6					
6-7					
7-8					
8-9					
9-10					
10-11					

## Chapter Two

### *Strategies for Taking Notes at the College Level*

#### Objectives

When you complete this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Indicate what is the best kind of notebook to use.
2. Draw a diagram showing how notebook pages may be set up for taking notes.
3. Indicate the importance of reviewing and revising your notes as soon as possible after class.
4. Explain what summary notes are and how they should be used.
5. Explain why reading your daily assignments before class is something that will better prepare you for taking notes.
6. List four clues that tell you what parts of a lecture are important.
7. Indicate a way of checking your notes for accuracy.

#### Introduction

One of the most important strategies students must develop if they are going to be successful in college is the strategy of taking comprehensive notes. The first thing that you should do before you even consider going into a classroom is to get a good notebook. This is something you will not realize the importance of until it is too late—when you cannot find papers, you cannot find lecture notes, and you cannot find other various important data that you need to study for midterm and/or final exams.

## Type of Notebook

You must always keep in mind when you are taking notes that you are not taking them for tonight or tomorrow, but you are taking notes that you will have to refer to in perhaps seven or eight weeks for a midterm exam or, perhaps, fifteen weeks for a final exam. When you select a notebook, it should be a notebook that has divisions in it. Divisions that will allow you to have separate areas within the notebook for each particular subject that you are taking. If you do not do this, you will end up taking notes on consecutive pages for different subjects, and all you will have in front of you is a mass of confusion. **The best kind of notebook to have is a loose-leaf type of notebook.** That is the kind with the spring that pops open and allows you to shift pages around, to add pages, to take pages away, etc. You will not realize the importance of this until you have missed a couple of lectures and you want to get the notes from a friend. Then you want to put them in the appropriate place, and you cannot do it with a bound notebook. Therefore, what you do is copy the notes and you jam them into your notebook, and they either fall out and get lost, or they fall out and people step on them, or they fall out in the back seat of your car, etc. Then they are messy and you cannot understand them. Unfortunately, you will not realize this until it is too late—when you are studying for a midterm or final exam. Well, let us say, you have a good notebook, and you are sitting in the classroom waiting for the instructor to arrive.

## Setting Up to Take Notes

What is the first thing that you should do? You will need to set up a page for taking notes. On the following page, you will see in Figure 1. a recommended format for setting up the first page of your notes.

Figure 1.

Date: _____		Key to Abbreviations
Course: _____		
Topic of Lecture: _____		
Main Notes	Summary Notes	

**Figure 1.**

Look at Figure 1. Notice that the first thing noted is the date, which is very important because if you are absent from any lecture and it takes you a week or two to get the notes from someone else, and when you go to put them in your notebook if you have not been dating your notes, they you don't know where these notes go, and it can be very confusing. After writing the date, list the course. This may seem unnecessary, but, as you will see, many courses overlap and what obviously seems like history today may appear to be sociology or psychology five weeks from now. Next, you should note the main topic. Listing the main topic helps you in many ways. It helps you to keep things in order, and it helps you get ready to take notes. In other words, if the instructor comes in, as some will, and writes on the board the main subject to be discussed today, or he or she tells you what it is, then you key in on that. Now, another think about this is it will give you an idea as to what you can abbreviate. Also notice in Figure 1.

On this page on the upper right hand corner is “Key to Abbreviations.” You should have any abbreviations you make in this area. Sometimes in the rush of taking notes, you make abbreviations, and this is perfectly alright, but at the end of your notes, be sure to go back and add those to your key abbreviations. Remember, in seven or fifteen weeks it is not going to mean anything to you or any other abbreviation that you have and this is especially helpful if the ... [words seem to be missing].

## Reviewing Notes after Class

Notice in Figure 1. the sample sheet of notes divided into three sections. There is the section for abbreviations, which has been discussed, and there is the section for the main lecture notes. These are the notes that were taken in class. Next to the main notes are the summary notes that you will note sometime shortly thereafter, perhaps that evening. Another point you should realize is that immediately after class, you should go over your notes. I realize the last thing that you want to do when you get out of class is to look at your notes, **but wise students recognize the importance of taking five minutes after class to review their notes, to check to see that all abbreviations have been noted, and to revise any illegible lecture notes. Spending this five minutes reviewing your notes after class could be the most valuable time you spend in college.** It is a very difficult practice to get into, but, if you can get into this habit, you will find that it will be very beneficial to you.

## Summarizing Notes

If you look at Figure 2. on the next page, you will notice that the important points from each grouping of the main lecture notes is summarized in the summary column. This is another important step you should incorporate into your note taking strategy. **It is important for you to summarize the important points in your notes and place them in that summary column of**

your notes as soon as possible, perhaps that afternoon or evening after taking these notes. This practice will help you put your notes into a manageable form and provide you with an easy method of reviewing your notes for future tests.

Figure 2.

<p><b>9/17/2014</b>  <b>HUS 103</b>  <b>The Greeks</b></p>	<p><b>Key to Abbreviations</b>  <b>Gks. = Greeks</b>  <b>* = important</b></p>
<p><b>Main Notes</b></p>	<p><b>Summary Notes</b></p>
<p>*<u>Gks. strive for unity</u>—vigorous people whose goal was to be <u>well-rounded</u>, i.e., a blend of unity of knowledge and activity. They did not specialize in only one subject area, such as law or literature. They believed men should master all things equally as well.</p> <p>*<u>Gks. negative about death</u>. Gks. did not regard death as “eternal bliss,” as in Christianity. Gks. believed <u>death was black and evil</u>. They loved life and lived it fully.</p>	<p>Gks. strive for unity. Goal: be well-rounded</p> <p>Gks. negative about death.</p>

Figure 2

## Preparation for Taking Notes

The next consideration in taking notes is how to prepare to take effective notes. The first crucial step in this process is of course adequate preparation. In all probability, teachers will assign you readings before class. They may, the first day of class, give you an assignment for the whole semester, or they may give them weekly or daily. Whatever the case may be, **you should realize that reading your daily assignments before class is something that will better prepare you for taking notes in class because it prepares you mentally to take better notes because it helps you to understand which points are important.** Consequently, students interested in doing well in college will recognize the importance of reading the daily or weekly assignments before they go into the lecture room.

## Clues to Noting Important Parts of a Lecture

Assuming you have read the assignment, you are sitting in the classroom. With a good notebook and your page setup to take notes, what clues should you look for to determine what is important in the instructor's lecture?

- **Clue Number 1: Pay attention to what your instructor writes on the board.** Usually, if an instructor takes the time to write something on the board, he or she feels that it is important and this should be indicated in your notes. You can do this by underlining it and/or starring it as shown in Figure 2. Either way, it is important that you somehow indicate in your notes that the information is important. This is important for you when you come back to it in seven or fifteen weeks, you will be alerted to what is important.
- **Clue Number 2: If your instructor tells you, "This is important"—it is important.** I know this may come as a surprise to some students, but most instructors do this because they

love their discipline, and they are there to help you learn as much about it as you can. Therefore, the intelligent student will mark it accordingly as indicated in Figure 2.

- **Clue Number 3: More subtle instructors will *suggest* that something is important.**

Instead of saying outright that something is important, some instructors will say something like, “ This is kind of interesting,” or something to the effect , “This item might be of interest to you” or “This might be something worth noting.” In this area, you will have to get to know your instructor and determine which devices he or she uses.

- **Clue Number 4:** Listen for repetition of information. For instance, the instructor may say that the causes of WWI were such and such and, later on in the lecture, may indicate to the class again in not the same words the causes of WWI. If you are mentally alert and you pick up on this, you should mark it in your notes accordingly.

## Checking Your Notes for Accuracy

Now that you know some of the basic clues to look for in determining what is important in a lecture, the next step is to verify the process by comparing what you took for notes with how you did on the test on those lectures. The great mistake many students make is that after they receive a graded test, they look at the grade and then throw it in the trash. Successful students take that test and go over it to see how it compares with their notes in terms of seeing what is important, and if they were able to get most of the points, If so, this means that you generally know how the instructor indicates what is important and that means you are taking good notes. If not, go back over your notes and find out why you didn't get certain points, and find out how the instructor did emphasize the points you did not get, so that in future lectures you will be able to note the important parts. In fact, I had refined this process with one instructor to such an extent that my guide sheet or review sheet, which is a combination of my lecture and textbook notes, was laid out exactly as the final exam. I am sure if he saw what I had for a guide sheet, he could have suspected me of cheating. Unfortunately, I had not refined

this process to this degree until the second half of my sophomore year after many trials and errors. Remember it is important for human beings to learn from those who have gone before them.

## **Conclusion**

Now that you know how to prepare for taking notes, how to set up your lecture notes, how to look for the basic clues to the important parts of the lecture, and how to jot these important parts down, you are well prepared to take notes at the college level. Hopefully, you will build on and refine this process because it is by no means the last word in note taking. It is a brief summary of the important points you should do and think about while taking notes, but it is something each individual must work out for him or herself and refine and develop so it will work with his/her particular learning style.

## Strategies for Taking Notes at the College Level

### Review Test

1. What is the best kind of notebook to use when taking notes at the college level?
2. Draw a diagram showing how notebook pages may be set up for taking notes.
3. Why is it important to review and revise your notes as soon as possible after class?
4. Explain what summary notes are and how they should be used.
5. Explain why reading your daily assignment before class is something that will better prepare you for taking notes.
6. List four clues that tell you what parts of a lecture are important.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
7. Indicate a way of checking notes for accuracy.

## Chapter Three:

### *Strategies for Reading Textbooks at the College Level*

#### **Objectives**

When you complete this unit, you will be able to:

1. Indicate the purpose of reading an assignment in a college-level textbook.
2. Indicate the purpose of the Preparation part of the PQR2R Method of reading a college textbook.
3. Indicate the steps you need to take to use the Preparation part of the PQR2R Method of reading a college textbook.
4. Indicate the purpose of the Question/Read part of the PQR2R Method of reading a college textbook.
5. Indicate the steps you need to take to use the Question/Read part of the PQR2R Method of reading a college textbook.
6. Indicate the purpose of the Recite part of the PQR2R Method of reading a college textbook.
7. Indicate the steps you need to take to use the Recite part of the PQR2R Method of reading a college textbook.
8. Indicate the purpose of the Review part of the PQR2R Method of reading a college textbook.
9. Indicate the steps you need to take to use the Review part of the PQR2R Method of reading a college textbook.

10. Indicate the three ways the important parts of the chapter are indicated to the reader.

## Introduction

This chapter will discuss a strategy for reading textbooks at the college level, so that students can get the most out of their reading assignments. The strategy that is going to be discussed in this chapter is called the PQR2R Method of reading a textbook. As a student, you must understand the purpose of reading a textbook. **The purpose of reading a textbook is to understand what you have read, to remember what you have read, and to be able to reiterate what you have read on a test.** If you cannot do this after reading your assignment in your textbook, then you have not successfully read your assignment.

When most students are given an assignment to read in their textbooks, they simply turn to the first page of the assignment, begin readings, and then stop reading when they have finished the chapter or required number of pages. Then they show up for class the next day thinking they are prepared for the lecture or quiz, and they are surprised when they cannot remember much about what they have read. After all, they did the assignment, didn't they? These students did read the assignment, but they did not use a strategy for reading a college-level textbook. The first thing you must realize in reading is that you read different materials different ways depending on your purpose. In other words, you read through the newspaper often quickly and superficially because usually your purpose is to just get the overall idea about the news. Therefore, if you read a textbook this way, you will only get the overall idea also, which is not enough if you want to be a successful student.

In order to get the most out of your reading assignment at the college level, you have to use a strategy for reading and studying your assignment. As indicated before, the strategy that is going to be discussed in this chapter is called the PQR2R Method. This is a modified SQ3R Method, which was originated during World War II by Francis P. Robinson, a psychologist at

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Ohio State University. SQ3R stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review. You will notice similarities between these systems, but what I have tried to do is use a modified system based on thirty-eight years of taking classes and reading textbooks myself and more than twenty-five years of teaching reading at the college level. What I have done is incorporate into my system what I usually ended up doing when I read textbooks. Regardless of what strategy you use to read a textbook, you will eventually modify it to match your particular learning style. In this chapter, each one of these parts will be discussed in detail.

## **Preparation**

The first part of the PQR2R Method, or what the P stands for, is Preparation. This purpose of the Preparation part is to give you an overall idea of what you are about to read. The Preparation step can help you another way, too. Many students have trouble beginning an assignment. Doing the preparation before reading the chapter is a good way to get started because it gets you ready to read. The preparation part only takes a few minutes to do, and it gets your attention and energy focused on the assignment. The first step in doing the preparation part of this system is to read the title and the listing of the chapter's objectives, and the second step is to read the introduction. Remember, you should not spend too much time on this step. After you have completed the preparation step, you should now have a good idea of what this chapter is going to be about.

## **Question/Read**

The Q R in this process stands for Question/Read. **The purpose of the Question/Read part of this process is to help you know what is important when you are reading.** Too often, when students read their textbook assignments, they are half way through a section in their reading before they realize what aspect of this section is important. **The first step in the Question/Read part of this process is to take the headings and subheadings in the chapter,**

**which are usually in boldface print, and turn them into questions. The second step in this process is to read each section and highlight the text that best answers the questions you have made up.** For instance, if you use this chapter as an example, you would make a question out of this subheading like “What is the purpose of Question/Read in this chapter?” Then you would read this section to find the answer to this question, and, once you find it, you should highlight it somehow. Then when it is time to review for exams, all you have to do is study the parts of the chapter you have highlighted. Do not make the mistake of highlighting everything that looks important because you could end up highlighting too much of the chapter.

Remember that the purpose of highlighting text is so that when you go back to review it for an exam, you will only need to note the important parts. If you have highlighted too much of your text, you will tend to reread all the text, and you will not be able to distinguish between the important and unimportant points. Do not be afraid to mark up your textbook by highlighting important parts or writing short notes in the margins. Remember these are your textbooks, and any notes you make that help you understand the material better will help you to become a more successful student. Another point you should keep in mind is your reading speed. You should adjust your speed to the difficulty of the material. If you are having a difficult time understanding a particular section, do not rush through it. Stick with that section until it is clear to you. Remember, if you do a reading assignment thoroughly and carefully the first time, you will not have to spend as much time on it later on when you study the material later on for an exam. In this chapter, all important text is highlighted in boldface type and you merely have to note it.

## **R1—Recite**

The next part in the PQR2R procedure is R1—Recite. **The purpose of this part is to see how much knowledge you have acquired from your reading. The way to do this is after you have finished reading the chapter, you try to recite, in your own words, the answer to the question you made up from the heading/subheadings of the chapter.** This step is very

important because if you cannot recite the information right after you have finished reading it, you are certainly not going to be able to do it for an exam the next day or some later point. And it is also important that you try to put the information in your own words instead of memorizing the exact words from the textbook. That way you are sure that the material has become part of your knowledge. Research in learning suggests that reciting material out loud and in your own words helps you to remember 80% more of the information than you would have by simply reading it. So you can see that this step can certainly be a big help.

## **R2—Review**

The last step in the PQR2R2 procedure is Review. The purpose of Review is to make sure your new knowledge stays with you. The best way to review is after completing the entire reading assignment, close the book and go on to some other subject or activity. At some later point, come back to this chapter and review it. **The first step in reviewing is to try to answer the questions at the end of the chapter and the questions you made up from the headings and subheadings. The next step in reviewing is to go over any questions you could not answer and go back to the textbook and read and review those sections. The last step in the review process is to close the book and try again until you are sure you can answer all questions from memory.** When you can do this, you have successfully completed the reading assignment. Review is the key to becoming a successful student. In fact, you should plan on reviewing this chapter probably the next morning and then again before class. Then you should review it again before you go on to the next chapter. This is the only way you can be assured that the knowledge you have worked so hard to acquire will remain with you.

## **Conclusion**

Now that you have a good idea of what the PQR2R Method of reading a textbook is all about, you will have a chance to use it because this textbook is set up exactly this way. For instance, each chapter begins with a set of objectives, which is a listing of the important points

in a particular chapter. Each subtitle in these chapters is based on the objectives in the order they appear at the beginning of the chapter. Each subtitle is followed by highlighted text that defines the subtitle. At the end of each chapter is a listing of questions that are based on the objectives from the beginning of the chapter. Therefore, the important points in each chapter are indicated to you in three ways: (1) in the objectives, (2) in the subtitles, and (3) in the questions at the end of the chapter. If you use this strategy or some form thereof in reading your text, you will be well on your way to becoming a successful student.

## Strategies for Reading Textbooks at the College Level

### Review Test

1. What is the purpose of reading an assignment in a college-level textbook?
2. What is the purpose of the Preparation part of the PQR2R Method of reading a college textbook?
3. What are the two steps you need to take to use the Preparation part of the PQR2R Method of reading a college textbook?
  - a.
  - b.
4. What is the purpose of the Question/Read part of the PQR2R Method of reading a college textbook?
5. What are the two steps you need to take to use the Question/Read part of the PQR2R Method of reading a college textbook?
  - a.
  - b.
6. What is the purpose of the Recite part of the PQR2R Method of reading a college textbook?
7. What is the step you need to take to use the Recite part of the PQR2R Method of reading a college textbook?
8. What is the purpose of the Review part of the PQR2R Method of reading a college textbook?
9. What are the three steps you need to take to use the Review part of the PQR2R Method of reading a college textbook?

a.

b.

c.

10. What are the three ways the important parts of the chapter are indicated to the reader?

a.

b.

c.

## **Chapter Four:**

### ***General Strategies for Taking Tests at the College Level***

#### **Objectives**

When you complete this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Explain how to best prepare for test taking at the college level.
2. Explain the importance of reviewing your instructors' previous tests.
3. Explain why maintaining a positive attitude while taking a test is helpful.
4. Cite two ways of maintaining your composure or keeping calm during an exam.
5. Explain of the interrogating approach to taking and exam works.

#### **Introduction**

You have probably said at one time or another and you have heard other people say, “The low mark I received on that test is not fair because I studied for hours and I knew that material backwards and forwards.” You probably did study many hours for this test, and probably what happened was that you lacked knowledge of several basic strategies of taking tests, which prevented you from doing as well as you could have done. When talking about the general strategies for test taking, you must first talk about several ways of preparing for tests. When discussion test taking strategies, one have to talk about test preparation.

#### **Test Preparation**

Test preparation means many things. For example, it means one should prepare an effective strategy of reading and studying a textbook. If you have not developed effective strategies in this area, this should become one of your first priorities. In this book, it is

suggested that you use the PQR2R [SQ3R] method, but the point is that you should approach your reading assignments in some systematic way and do this on a regular basis. Another strategy you need to use to be prepared to take tests is to attend class regularly and use an effective system of taking notes. **Therefore, in order to be prepared to take tests, you need to have been reading your assignments regularly, attending class regularly and taking good notes, and studying regularly.** If you do this, you will be ready to learn how to make the most of your efforts when taking a test.

## **Reviewing Previous Tests**

Another strategy to use to prepare for a test is to review your instructor's previous exams and quizzes. Often times when a student gets a test back from an instructor, he looks at the grade and then throws it into the basket. However, once you realize that this is valuable information that will help you in the future, you will save these tests and review them. Now this does many things. It enables you to determine what type of questions your instructor is going to ask you, you do not have to waste time worrying about how to answer questions, or thinking, what should I do here, etc. If you have been looking over the past quizzes and tests, you should have a general idea of the type of questions and format the instructor requires. Also, see if you can obtain previous exams given from previous years. Some of my colleagues may not like this idea, but it is a common practice in most colleges. Most teachers change their their tests and quizzes, so this should not pose any problem to them. Again, this enables you to see what kind of test and what areas the instructor considers to be important within any given body of knowledge. You see, most instructors are interested in a particular area of their discipline and usually emphasize that in tests. Therefore, the importance of reviewing your instructors' previous tests is to find out what kind of test he or she gives and the areas the he or she considers important.

## Positive Attitude

Assuming you have prepared to take your test, probably the next most important factor in taking a test is your attitude. In other words, you can either approach a test with fear and look at it as a chance to fail, or you can approach a test with assurance and look at it as a chance to excel. Of course, you should approach a test as though it is a challenge and a chance for you to show your stuff. In order to do this, you must maintain a positive attitude.

**Maintaining a positive attitude while taking a test is helpful to a student because it allows a student to do the best he or she can.** In fact it took this author several months of college life and several low grades before he recognized the importance of adopting this attitude, but once he did it, it made all the difference in the world. That is, to look upon a test as a challenge like assuming you were a quarterback of a team in the Super Bowl game and the up-coming game or test is an opportunity for you to illustrate your many abilities. This has been this author's attitude not only in college, but out of college as well. If you adopt an attitude like this, it will make your college experience both tolerable and rewarding. If you adopt this attitude, you will not be easily discouraged. You will attack every question regardless of how difficult it appears. For instance, if there is some part of the test that appears completely foreign to you, you will keep at it until you squeeze out any knowledge you have about that question. Remember your mind is like a great computer filled with knowledge; however, the trick is to push the right button that will enable this knowledge to flow forth. So, if you cannot answer a question at one time, perhaps something about another question will trigger the button that will produce the knowledge if you keep at it and maintain an aggressive and challenging attitude.

## Maintaining Your Composure during an Exam

Maintaining your composure, or keeping calm, during an exam is a major problem for many people. For some people, once the door to the exam room closes, they freeze even

though they know their material, they reviewed previous tests, and they have a positive attitude. There are several ways of dealing with this. A way that works for many people is to concentrate on memorizing or reviewing material for the test right up to the start of the test, and, as soon as they get into the testing room, they jot down some of the formulas or parts they have memorized. Another way is to look over the test and answer the questions you know best first. This restores your confidence and starts the mental juices flowing. Therefore, two ways of maintaining your composure during an exam are: (1) by memorizing or reviewing material for the test right up to the start of the test, and (2) looking over the test and answering the questions you know best first.

## **Interrogating Approach to Taking an Exam**

Now that you are prepared for the test, you have reviewed previous tests, you have a positive attitude, and you know how to keep calm during an exam, what do you do about answering questions you think you do not know? Well, first of all, if you cannot get started on a particular question, you better off to leave it and come back to it later because maybe while answering another question your might remember the answer to the question you were having trouble with. Second, if you freeze on one question, you may take time and credit away from the questions you know. So, do not allow yourself to get hung up on one question. Assuming you have done all the things that have been mentioned, and you still have trouble answering a question, what do you do? Well the best strategy to use is to interrogate yourself during an exam like the detective on a television drama questioning a suspect. Interrogating approach to taking an exam means to ask yourself any and all questions you can think of about the question. For instance, you ask, "What does this mean?" "What is it connected with?" "When is it taking place?" or whatever question that will allow your knowledge to start to flow. Continue to interrogate yourself until you can at least answer part of the question. As you begin to answer part of that question, any knowledge you know about will usually begin to flow. Now, if you are still unable to answer it, at this point, try translating the material into a question in a different

form. For example, see if you can translate it into an experience or more concrete terms that you can relate to. Many times this will bring the knowledge out, but remember you must attack the question with all your forces from all sides.

Now let's see if you can put your new knowledge to practice. Look at the following question, whose answer you probably do not know and try to answer it by using some of the techniques that we have mentioned. Remember, interrogate yourself, consider all the possibilities, do not get discouraged, remain calm but aggressive, and maintain a positive attitude.

South Dakota was admitted to the union as . . .

- A. 4<sup>th</sup> State
- B. 14<sup>th</sup> State
- C. 40<sup>th</sup> State
- D. 49<sup>th</sup> State

If you begin to interrogate yourself and examine what you do know, for instance, that the first thirteen states were all along the eastern coast and you know South Dakota is somewhere out in the West. This will allow you to conclude that the 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> states must have been admitted near the Eastern coast. Also, you could probably reason that the 49<sup>th</sup> state was either Hawaii or Alaska, then you would be left with only one answer—C. 40<sup>th</sup> state. So you see, by maintaining a positive attitude, interrogating yourself, and figuring all you know about a question, you can do well on any test even when you may not know the answer.

## **Conclusion**

Remember, in order to well on tests, you need to prepare well by using an effective strategy of reading textbooks, by attending class regularly, and use an effective system of taking notes. Also, you need to prepare for a test by reviewing your instructor's previous exams. Once you have done these things, and you go into the exam, you need to remember to interrogate yourself, consider all the

possibilities, do not get discouraged, remain calm but aggressive, and maintain a positive attitude. This process of taking tests should be an ongoing one, and you should continue to find new ways to help yourself do better on exams.

## **Chapter Four**

### **General Strategies for Taking Tests at the College Level**

#### **Review Test**

1. Explain how to best prepare for taking tests at the college level.
2. Explain the importance of reviewing your instructors' previous tests.
3. Explain why maintaining a positive attitude while taking tests is helpful
4. Cite two ways of maintaining your composure or keeping calm during an exam
  - a.
  - b.
5. Explain of the interrogating approach to taking an exam works.

## Chapter Five

### *Strategies for Taking Objective Type Tests at the College Level*

#### Objectives

When you complete this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Explain what visualizing the answer in a multiple choice question means.
2. Explain why it is important to read all of the choices in a multiple choice question.
3. Explain why two options in a multiple choice question that are either very similar or exactly opposite can help you.
4. Explain what words like *always, never, all, etc.*, usually mean in a true/false question.
5. Explain why like usually, often, rarely, etc., mean in a true/false question.
6. Explain the best procedure to follow when answering a matching-type question.

#### Introduction

Objective-type tests are tests that involve multiple choice, true/false, and matching-type questions. There are strategies you can use to get maximum credit on any objective-type test you take if you know certain test-taking strategies. Although knowing these strategies will help you to do better on your tests. You still have to read your assignments, take good notes, and study regularly to do well in college. Let us now consider the first strategy that will help you to get extra points on your test.

## Visualizing the Answers in a Multiple Choice Question

Multiple choice questions are questions where you are given a statement or a questions with 4 or 5 choices following it, and you are asked to choose one that agrees with the given question or statement. When answering this type of objective-type question, you should read the question and think of a likely answer before looking at the choices. **This strategy is called visualizing the answer in a multiple choice question; in other words, thinking of a likely answer before looking at the choices.** This does two things. It gets your mind thinking of the possible answer, and it gets you to imagine possible answers even if you think you do not know the answer. This last point allows you to positively attack questions whose answers do not immediately arise in your mind. Look at the following multiple choice question, and see if you can reason out the answer by using this strategy. Keep in mind the answer will probably have to do with something very hot because Phaeton is driving the Sun Chariot.

1. In the Greek legend, Phaeton was the son of Apollo, the Sun God. Apollo let his son take the Sun Chariot for a ride, and he drove it too close to the earth sometimes, and caused some places on the earth to become:
  - a. A great ocean
  - b. A frozen white mass
  - c. A great green land
  - d. A great desert

If you put this strategy into practice, you should have chosen answer d—A great desert. To use this new strategy correctly, you should have read the statement first and thought of a likely answer before looking at the choices, keeping in mind the hint you were given.

1. In the Greek legend, Phaeton was the son of Apollo, the Sun God. Apollo let his son take the Sun Chariot for a ride, and he drove it too close to the earth sometimes, and caused some places on the earth to become:

Now, if you think about this a minute, keeping in mind the hint you were given that the Sun God's son was driving a very hot chariot, and if you carried this thought another step, you would have concluded that whatever it came close to would probably burn or singe. Therefore, looking at the choices, you should be looking for something along the line of hot or burnt. Considering the choices remembering what you are looking for, choice a. is "A great ocean," and this has nothing to do with burnt or fire. Then you look at choice b.—"A frozen white mass." Here, again, this does not reflect anything burnt. Now look at choice c.—"A great green land." Here, again, you do not have anything to do with fire. Now look at choice d.—"A great desert." Here you have something related to fire or at least a very hot place. You have selected the answer by thinking of the answer before looking at the choices.

The reason visualizing the answer before looking at the choices helps you is because when you have something in mind and see something close to it, you will be better able to zero in on the right answer. Whereas, if you read the question and begin right away looking at the choices, the choices all look correct. This will confuse you and throw you off the track and you will continually have to be going back to the question.

Before looking at the next test-taking strategy, please complete the exercise on the next page. After completing this exercise, please turn to the next page.

2. This is test to determine how well you are able to follow directions. Accuracy is more important than speed; you will have all the time you need to complete the test. Before beginning, read the test through once carefully to make sure that you understand all the directions
  - a. Circle every word in the directions above that begins with the letter A.
  - b. Underline two nouns in the above directions.
  - c. Count and write down the number of three letter words in a, b, and d.
  - d. Cross out all commas in the first two lines of the directions above.

- e. Do not follow any of the above directions.

If you fell into the trap and followed all the directions in the choices before reading the last choice, you have learned a valuable lesson. If not, this should remind you to read all the choices when answering a multiple choice question. **Therefore, the next strategy to use in taking multiple choice-type tests is to be sure to read all the choices before making a selection for that you will select the best possible answer.** The reasons for this are many, but the most important is that many professors place answers that are close to the answer in the beginning of the choices. Remember, you can choose an answer that it is correct, but if there is an answer that is more correct, then your first choice is wrong. Please think about this idea for a moment.

### **Noticing Similarities and Differences in Choices**

Another strategy you can use in answering multiple choice-type questions is by **knowing that when the choices in a multiple choice question are very similar or exactly opposite, usually one of these choices will be the correct answer.** Even when you do not know the answer, if you use this strategy, you will be able to make an intelligent guess as to what is the correct answer. Using this strategy, try to answer the following question 3 remembering to notice the choices that are very similar or exactly opposite and will a little common sense, you should be able to choose the correct answer.

3. The French Revolution of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century was mainly the result of:
  - a. American objections to the extension of slavery
  - b. The oppression of the American middle classes of the French nobility.
  - c. The oppression by the French nobility of the French peasantry.
  - d. Overproduction of food.

When you looked at this question, you should have been looking for those choices that were either exactly opposite or very similar. You probably noticed that choices b and c were very similar. If you narrowed your choices to this point, you used this strategy quite well. Now, if you used some common sense, you would have concluded that this Question has to do with the French, and the answer must be c. Therefore, even if you did not know anything about the French Revolution, you would have been able to answer this question.

## Answering True/False Type Questions

Next, you are going to learn several strategies to use in answering true/false questions. **First, you should know that the use of absolute terms like all, always, never, or none in true/false type questions usually means that the answer will be false.** The reason for this is that when you use absolute terms, this means without exception. In other words, you would think that a statement like “All men have two ears” would be true. But if you keep in mind that all you need is one exception to a statement to make it false, then all you have to do is find one person in over two billion people in the world who has fewer than two ears to make this question false. You have probably heard of the painter Van Gogh, who cut off one of his own ears. So when you see these absolute terms, think if there is a possibility for one exception, this makes the statement false.

The next strategy you should be aware of in answering true/false questions has to do with some other terms often used in these type of questions. **When terms like usually, often, rarely, sometimes, or most are used in true/false type questions, this means the answer will usually be true.** The reason this is true is that these types of terms allow for exceptions and give you more room to assume an answer is true. For instance, you might think a statement like “Most women have children” might also be false because there are many women who do not have children, but if you realize that the term *most* allows for exceptions, you would probably conclude this statement is true. Now that you understand these two strategies for answering true/false type questions, I would like you to answer questions a, b, and c under 4.

4. Circle the following correct answers:
- a. True or False—All birds fly
  - b. True or False—Killing is never legal
  - c. True or False—Families with more children are usually poorer than families with fewer children

Let us now look at your answers for No. 4. The answer for a. should be false because there are birds that do not fly, like ostriches. Therefore, if there is one exception, this makes the answer false. The answer to b. is also false because there are cases when killing is legal, such as in wars. The answer to c. is true because, in most cases, a larger family costs more to provide for and therefore would usually be poorer.

### **The Matching Type Question**

The next kind of objective type test to be discussed is the matching type question. The strategy to use in answering matching type questions is called the process of elimination. To use this strategy, you begin by selecting the answers that you know best or that seem most obvious, then you proceed to the ones you are less sure of until you have eliminated all the choices.

Please do the following exercise 5 using this strategy.

5. Match the titles with the corresponding definitions:

<u>Definitions</u>	<u>Titles</u>
( ) 1. Planting a slopping field alternately with rows of corn then rows of wheat then rows of corn, etc.	a. Clean farming
( ) 2. Plowing a crop under instead of harvesting it.	b. Contour farming

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| ( ) 3. Removing brush and weeds along the fence between the fields.  | c. Crop rotation  |
| ( ) 4. Planting around a hillside in level rows instead of planting up and down a hill.  | d. Green manuring |
| ( ) 5. Planting a field one year with wheat, the second year with oats, the third year with alfalfa, the fourth year with corn, etc. | e. Strip cropping |

Assuming you used the process of elimination, then you probably would proceed in answering this question by selecting the title that most obviously goes with a particular definition above. Now, this may be different for each person depending on his or her background. For this author, the most obvious word title related to a definition is item d. Green manuring with item 2. Plowing a crop under because this author reasons that manure is used as fertilizer and if they are plowing green crops under, they are creating green manure. The next obvious one is item a. Clean farming with item 3. Removing brush etc., which is basically cleaning up. The next apparent choice is item c. Crop rotation with item 5. because basically what they are doing is rotating one crop with another each year. The next choice this author would make is item b. Contour farming with item 4. because planting along a hillside is planting along its contour, and the last choice seems to take care of itself because it is the only one left even though it does not seem obvious to this author. **Therefore, the way you answer a matching type question is to use the process of elimination, which means to take the ones you know best and work from there.**

## Conclusion

Now that you are familiar with several basic test-taking strategies to use when taking objective-type tests, you can use these to get maximum credit on any objective-type test you take. Although knowing these strategies will help you do better on your tests, you will have to read your assignments, take good notes, and study regularly to do well in college.

Remember, you have only touched upon the basics in developing test-taking strategies, and you will need to build on and refine this process. It is a brief summary of the important points you should do and think about while taking tests, but each individual must work out for him or herself strategies that work best for his or her learning style.

## Strategies for Taking Objective Type Tests at the College Level

### Review Test

1. What does visualizing the answer in a multiple choice question mean?
2. Explain why it is important to read all the choices in a multiple choice question.
3. Explain why two options in a multiple choice question that are either very similar or exactly opposite can help you.
4. Explain what words like always, never, all, etc. usually mean in true/false questions.
5. Explain what words like usually, often, rarely, etc., usually mean in true/false questions.
6. Explain the best procedure to follow when answering matching type questions.

## Chapter Six

### *Strategies for Taking Essay Type Exams at the College Level*

#### **Objectives**

When you complete this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Explain what are the three major factors in budgeting your time during an essay exam.
2. Define what Direction Words are in an essay type question.
3. Name the two categories of Direction Words used in essay type questions and give several examples of each.
4. Cite the three factors you should consider when approaching an essay type question.
5. List the two reasons to use the strategy of attempt[ting every question on an essay exam.
6. Explain the strategy of actively reasoning through a question in an essay exam.
7. Explain the strategy of using O.K. Words in essay exams.

#### **Introduction**

This unit is about developing strategies to use when you are taking an essay type exam. These strategies will help you get maximum credit when taking an essay type exam. In most cases, exams are usually made up of a combination of objective type questions like true/false or multiple choice and essay type questions. Therefore, the first strategy you should use when beginning any test is to figure out approximately how much time you will spend on each section and question of the test.

## **Budgeting Your Time during an Essay Exam**

In most test situations, the most important element is time. Accordingly, the first strategy you should use when taking a test is to use time wisely. Do not spend too much time on any one question. What this means simply is that if you have an hour exam, which is usually 50 minutes, and the exam is divided into two parts of equal credit with half of it being made up of objective type questions and the other half being an essay type question, then that means you should devote probably 25 minutes on the objective questions and 25 minutes on the essay type questions. Of those essay type questions, there are maybe say five questions and the essay part of that test is worth fifty points, then that means you should spend approximately five minutes on each of these essay questions. The unskilled test taker often spends 40 minutes on the objective type questions, which only allows ten minutes for the essay part of the test that is worth 50% of the grade. To further complicate matters, this person will probably spend most of this ten minutes on only one or two of the essay type questions that he or she knows best. After the test, this student will often wonder what kind of grade he or she will get. Of course, that is easy to figure out. At best, this student will get a 70 for a grade assuming the questions he or she answered were all correct, which is unlikely. After considering this, you must see the importance of budgeting your time during an exam because it allows adequate time for each question according to how much it is worth, how much time you have, and how many questions there are. Therefore, the first strategy you should use in taking an essay exam is to budget your time. **In budgeting your time in an essay exam, there are three major factors to keep in mind: (1) how much each question is worth, (2) how much time is allowed for the exam, and (3) how many questions are on the exam.**

## **Direction Words in Essay Type Questions**

The next point to be discussed is the importance of reading questions and their directions carefully in an essay type exam. You need to be especially alert to the key terms in

and essay type question, especially what this author calls Direct Words in essay type questions.

**Direction Words are words used in essay type questions that direct you to answer the question in a certain way.** Misreading the Direction Word in an essay type exam may lead you in the wrong direction, and you may answer the question incorrectly. There are certain words that tell you certain ways to answer the question. **These direction words are divided up into two general categories: (1) Category one identification words such as *a list, name, identify, state, and cite*; and (2) category two descriptive words such as *discuss, review, summarize, explain, and describe*.**

For instance, how would you answer the following question on an exam?

Cite the four seasons as they occur in New England (4 pts)

Does this mean to write about how beautiful the spring is in New England with the grass turning green and the flowers beginning to bloom, and how great the New England summer is with its magnificent waterways and oceans, and how colorful the autumn in New England is with its changing foliage developing its own unique portrait, and, last but not least, how grand the snow-covered landscape is in New England during the winter? Or, does it mean to list them, i.e., spring, summer, autumn, and winter? Assuming you have budgeted a certain amount of time for this question, which was probably a couple of minutes, then you look at how much this question is worth, only 4 points, then you consider the direction word in this question, which is *cite*. This usually means to just list those particular points of the question. For example, “Cite the four seasons in New England” would merely mean listing them, i.e., spring, summer, fall, and winter. This would be the procedure you would follow regardless if the question read *identify, cite, name, list, or give*—any of these identification types of words usually only require that you give the basic information about that particular question. However, many students think what they should do is put down everything they know about a particular question, and they waste time and lose points. **Accordingly, another strategy you should use when approaching an essay type question, is to consider three factors: (1) How**

**does the Direction Word tell you to answer this question, (2) How many points is the question worth, and (3) How much time have you budgeted for this question.**

Another point you should note is determining how much a question is worth. This is like a double-check because some instructors use some Direction Words like *explain* in identifying and descriptive type questions, and the only way to know how to answer it is by how much it is worth. Considering these factors should be an indication of how much writing should be involved in answering a particular question, so remember to keep this in mind when answering essay type questions.

Looking at another version of the same question should help you understand this better. Consider for a few moments how you would answer the following question: “Describe the four seasons as they occur in New England. (20 pts.)” First, you should think about the three factors you should always consider when approaching an essay type question: (1) How does the Direction Word tell you to answer this question, (2) How many points is the question worth, and (3) How much time have you budgeted for this question. First, because the Direction Word *describe* is used, this means you should give a fairly lengthy descriptive answer, and second, because it is worth 20 points, this means the instructor wants a full and complete answer, and you probably would have budgeted a goodly amount of time to answer this question. You may want to answer this question like the following:

How beautiful the spring is here in New England with the grass turning green and the flowers beginning to bloom, and how great the New England summer is with its warm days and cool nights that allow you to explore its magnificent waterways and oceans, and how colorful the autumn in New England is with its changing foliage developing its own unique portrait, and, last but not least, how grand the snow-covered landscape is in New England during the winter.

Another point that you should probably note about answering a question like this is that it is a good idea to outline the basic points you want to cover because if you don’t, you might forget one of the major points in the midst of the pressure of an exam. If you spend a few

seconds outlining just the four or five basic points needed to answer the question, you will find that you will not leave anything out, and your answer will be more accurate.

### **The Strategy of Attempting Every Question in an Essay Exam**

Another important strategy to employ in taking essay type exams is to attempt every question. Remember questions that look difficult may not be so complicated once you begin answering them. Also, realize here that as soon as you look at a test, you cannot expect that answer to appear magically. You must think about it. Tests are an attempt to measure not only what you know but also your thinking ability, so don't ignore it because the answer does not leap right out of your head. Think about it, and if you are not sure, or if you don't want to answer that question right away, start with another question that you feel you know. This allows your mind to subconsciously consider the answer to this previous question while answering another question. This means you will not be wasting any time. Another reason to attempt every question is that if you are able to at least get something down about that particular question, you may get some credit. But if you do not write anything for a particular question, you will absolutely not get any credit.

**Therefore, using the strategy of attempting every question in an essay exam is important for two reasons: (1) It focuses your mind on that answer, and (2) If you write something for that question, you will get some credit.**

### **The Strategy of Actively Reasoning through a Question in an Essay Exam**

An additional strategy to use in taking essay exams is to actively reason through the question. You have to ask questions about the question. Some people passively stare at the paper hoping that the correct answer will somehow appear as if by magic. Correct answers come about only when thinking about each part of the problem in an aggressive and continuous

manner. Again, in keeping with the previous point made, you cannot expect an answer to magically appear. Do not think because the answer does not immediately appear before your eyes that you do not know it. You have to focus all your attention on this question and reason it through. Often times instructors not only want to know if you know the material, but also if you can manipulate what you know in a different manner. This is many times what the instructors want to see. **Therefore, actively reasoning through a question in an essay exam means to ask questions about the question and logically reason through the answer.**

Another point you might want to keep in mind while taking an essay exam is to avoid daydreaming. It is very easy when you are taking a test to daydream, and, of course, daydreaming is just a form of escape to take you away from a difficult situation, and it is something you have to watch out for. You can be thinking about any number of things while you are taking a test, and you can waste ten or fifteen minutes this way.

## **The Strategy of Using O.K. Words in Essay Exams**

One last strategy this author would like to share with you in taking essay exams is one that has to remain a secret between you and him because if other professors discover this, they would roast this author on a very big academic fire. It involves the use of O.K. words. O.K. words are favorite words that your professor uses in his or her lectures. If you use these words when you are answering your instructor's essay questions, he will be either consciously or subconsciously impressed, and I guarantee this will get you extra points. This author recalls a history professor he had, who often used the expression "part and parcel," and you can be assured this author used this expression every chance he got when taking an exam with this professor. The result was this author received many notes on his exams from this professor applauding his use of words, and this author feels he also picked up a few extra points.

## **Conclusion**

This unit was about developing strategies to use when you are taking essay type exams. Remember these strategies will help you to get the maximum credit when taking an essay type exam, but you need to take good notes, read your assignments regularly, and study regularly. This chapter should be used as a base to build a unique strategy for taking essay exams that is flexible and works for you and that you continue to refine.

## Strategies for Taking Essay Type Exams at the College Level

### Review Test

1. What are the three major factors in budgeting your time during an essay exam?
2. What are Direction Words in an essay-type question?
3. Name the two categories of Direction Words used in essay-type questions and give three examples of each.
4. What are the three factors you should consider when approaching an essay type question?
  - I.
  - II.
  - III.
5. List the two reasons to use the strategy of attempting every question in an essay exam.
  - I.
  - II.
6. Explain the strategy of actively reasoning through a question in an essay exam.
7. What are O.K. words and how should you use them in an essay exam?