

Making Use of the Returned Exam

I. Analyze the Exam

- A. Use the score as a standard of comparison.
 - 1. Check the letter grade.
 - 2. Consider the average score of the class.
 - 3. Consider the range of scores.
- B. Use the test items to evaluate your strengths and weaknesses in the subject.
 - 1. Study the items missed:
 - a. Check for different items repeated in other words.
 - b. Ascertain the need for further study on points.
 - c. Analyze what is wrong with your answers (see Part II).
 - d. Ask the instructor for clarification and suggestions for improvement.
 - 2. Study the answers guessed.
 - 3. Survey the correct answers.
- C. Use the test as a pattern for the next test. Note the instructor's style of writing a test.
 - 1. Note the kind and/or type of questions asked.
 - 2. Analyze the content of questions.
 - a. From text or lectures
 - b. Expected or unexpected material

II. Analyze your errors

- A. What errors did you make?
 - 1. Most common errors in essay exams:
 - a. Students don't follow directions or answer the question.
 - b. Essays are not well organized.
 - c. Essays are too general: students give few examples of specific persons, groups or places.
 - d. Facts are incorrect or mixed up.
 - e. Student's don't give a viewpoint or thesis. They mention facts, but don't tell why those facts are important or what the facts prove.
 - f. Students fail to give a time frame.
 - g. Students write illegibly and don't proofread.
 - 2. Most common errors in objective exams:
 - a. Students misinterpret question.
 - b. Students answer first correct choice instead of reading all choices.
 - c. Students don't study difference or exact definitions of terms, etc.
 - d. Students misread directions.
 - e. Students don't use clues to help them choose.
- B. How did you produce the error?
 - 1. Studying: not enough, not the correct material, not correctly (no outlines, etc.)
 - 2. Read questions wrong or partially
 - 3. Didn't think before writing
 - 4. Wrote incoherently or poorly
 - 5. Not enough time

- C. How do you plan to improve?
 - 1. Instructor expectations
 - a. Kinds of questions asked?
 - b. Source of content?
 - 2. Studying
 - a. Amount: spaced vs. crammed.
 - b. Selection: stressed in book, stressed in lecture, syllabus
 - c. Techniques: organize, think, memorize