

While most students devote a lot of time and energy to studying for exams, many forget what the exam tested soon after they complete it. But you can learn a lot by taking the time to go over a graded exam or quiz. Reviewing an exam can help you determine what you know and what you still need to work on. The review process can also help you better understand key ideas and concepts that will likely be the foundation for further learning in a course or discipline.

Pick up your graded papers and exams

Review all exams thoroughly

- **Compare** what you thought would be on the exam with what was on the exam.

For problem-solving exams: Compare the exam to the problem sets. How were the problems similar? How were they different? Did the exam require you to combine different types of problems?

For all exams: Compare the exam to your readings and class notes. Did you emphasize and understand the right concepts? Did the exam require you to make connections between different readings or ideas?

- **Look for patterns** in the errors you made on the exam.
- **Categorize the types of errors you made.**

Presentation errors: Did you study the right material? Were there key concepts or ideas you didn't review? Did you try to study too much material too fast as the deadline approached?

Test-taking errors: Did you read the directions carefully? Did you misinterpret questions or information? Did you spend so much time on one question that you didn't have enough time for others?

Save your exams

- For problem-solving courses, try redoing the problems you had difficulty with on the exam. For all types of courses, reconsider your answers, perhaps outlining a more thorough or correct response.

Make sure your old notes, outlines, and summaries are usable for the final (if it's going to be cumulative)

- Create notes, outlines, and summaries for the new material you are covering so you have them ready for finals. As you go, predict the types of questions that will appear on the final based on the types of questions you encountered on the midterm.