

A RHHS Student's Guide to Midterms

19-22 January 2016



INTRODUCTION

Midterms are about to begin. The 9th grade team has created this packet to provide you and our parents with valuable information regarding the exam schedule, study strategies, and test taking tips.

Midterm Exam Schedule

Period 1 exam is during class time on Tuesday 1/19/16

TIME	Wed. 1/20/16	Thurs. 1/21/16	Fri. 1/22/16
7:25-9:05am	PERIOD 2 EXAM	PERIOD 4A EXAM	PERIOD 5 EXAM
9:05-9:25am	LUNCH/BREAK	LUNCH/BREAK	LUNCH/BREAK
9:30-11:10am	PERIOD 3 EXAM	PERIOD 4B EXAM	PERIOD 6 EXAM

*****11:10 am dismissal from 1/20/16 to 1/23/16*****

THE GRADING SCALE

FIRST MARKING PERIOD = 1/5

SECOND MARKING PERIOD = 1/5

MIDTERM EXAM= 1/10

THIRD MARKING PERIOD = 1/5

FOURTH MARKING PERIOD = 1/5

FINAL EXAM = 1/10

A=4 points, B=3 points, C=2 points, D=1 point, E=0 points. The numbers are multiplied by two for each marking period and by one for the exam, resulting in the total number of quality points.

EXAMPLE:

1ST QTR= B (2X3=6)

2ND QTR = B (2X3=6)

MIDTERM EXAM= B (1X2=2)

3RD QTR = C (2X2=4)

4TH QTR = C (2X2=4)

FINAL EXAM = A (1X4=4)

The 3rd and 4th marking period grades and the final exam grade will not exist at this point. You can plug in estimated/potential grades to see what you could eventually earn; however, at the midterm mark, those grades have yet to be determined. Final grades will reflect your hard work from all four quarters.

6+6+2+4+4+4=26 quality points

26 is DIVIDED by 10 = 2.6 or a B for a final grade in this class.

To receive a passing grade for the course, students must pass at least two marking periods. The following number of quality points are required for each final grade:

D—8 points needed

C—15 points needed

B—25 points needed

A—35 points needed

Note: GPA is a critical factor for the college application process. Every year counts!

PREPARING FOR MIDTERMS

1. Organize Your Materials so you know what to study.

2. Assess Strengths and Weaknesses

Rating (1-5)	Subject	Strengths	Weaknesses
	English		
	Soc. Studies		
	Math		
	Science		
	For. Language		
	Tech Ed.		
	Health/P.E.		

TYPES OF TEST QUESTIONS

1. Multiple Choice Sections

- a. Use clues from the main part of the question to comprehend the question.
- b. Answer the question in your head before looking at the given choices.
- c. Read all of the choices and choose the one that is closest to your anticipated answer.

If you still can't find the answer:

- d. Draw a line through the choices you know are wrong. Then, try to narrow the remaining choices down to two before guessing. Use common sense and employ what you learned in the classroom.

For the test as a whole:

- e. Answer all the questions you know for certain. Then go back and answer the remaining questions.

2. Matching Sections

- a. Read both columns carefully before matching any items.
- b. Match the items you are certain of first.
- c. Cross out choices once they are used unless answers can be used more than once.
- d. Anticipate the match before referring to the possible choices.
- e. Use all the matching items if both columns have the same number of items.

3. Completion or Short Answer Sections

- a. Be concise by using key words in your response.
- b. Make use of grammar (singular or plural pronouns) in the main part of the question as a clue to the answer.
- c. Look at related test items that may help answer the question.

4. Essay Sections

- a. If there are multiple questions, read all the essay questions before answering any of them. Answer the easier questions first. Leave time to answer all questions.
- b. If there is only one essay question, make sure you address all parts of the prompt.
- c. Budget your time. Allow 10% previewing time; 80% answering time, and 10% proofreading time.
- d. Be alert for words most commonly used in essay questions; *analyze, compare, contrast, define, demonstrate, describe, develop, evaluate, explain, illustrate, interpret, justify, list/enumerate, outline, prove, relate, summarize, trace*.
- e. Take time to organize your thoughts: jot down all of the facts needed to answer the question. Then, put the facts in logical order. Use the ordered facts as an outline for writing your answer.
- f. Be mindful of your use of language conventions as you write.
- g. Read carefully to make sure that the answer matches the question. Be sure you answer the entire question and cite multiple examples to support your generalizations.

TEST ANXIETY: HOW TO COPE

Sometimes students may feel anxious or nervous before or during an exam. Some anxiety or nervousness is natural, but too much anxiety can interfere with performance on the test or exam. Below are two suggestions for lessening test anxiety.

1. “Testwiseness” (use while studying)

“Testwiseness is understanding how the test questions work. In a sense, view the test or exam as a game in which you need to learn the rules to play. That means, when you study for the exam, make sure you study how to answer the questions as well as the materials on the test. When you are “testwise,” you can take what you know about a subject and communicate effectively through the particular type of questions on the test or exam. “Testwiseness” does not take the place of studying for the test or exam. Rather, it helps you take what you’ve learned through your studying to make sure you can convey it clearly on the test or exam.

Studies have shown that students who understand how the test questions work and are skilled in answering these types of questions feel less anxious about the test or exam. The more prepared students feel for the test or exam, the less nervous they will be when they actually take the test.

2. Relaxation Exercise (Use right before the Exam)

Another way to lesson test anxiety is to learn to relax. One method for relaxing is the exercise listed below. Read the directions and try it a few times before you take the test. You can then use this exercise a few minutes before you begin the exam.

1. Sit in a comfortable position with your spine straight.
2. Close your eyes and take a couple of smooth, deep breaths. Feel the air come in all the way down into your abdomen, then feel the air go out again.
3. Now imagine a peaceful scene that you appreciate and enjoy. See this scene as clearly as you can. Make sure you involve all of your senses:
 - a. What do you see?
 - b. What do you hear?
 - c. What do you feel?
4. Picture yourself in this peaceful scene. Feel the relaxation associated with being in this place. Then, feel yourself becoming relaxed, wide-awake, and alert.
5. With your eyes still closed, tell yourself, **“I am relaxed, and alert, and ready to begin.”**
 - a. REPEAT THE ABOVE PHRASE MANY TIMES.
6. Gently open your eyes. You are ready to begin the exam.

HOW DO YOU BEGIN TO STUDY?

Your study environment is everything that surrounds you when you study. What's in your study environment can have an important effect on your learning.

Be aware of your *study environment*:

1. Choose a place at home to study where you feel comfortable.
2. Try to remove as many distractions as you can from your study environment.

When you are studying, try to use the following methods:

1. Set goals for how much you want to accomplish during each study session. Try to give yourself an idea of how long each assignment will take.
2. Figure out what kinds of studying you do best alone and what you can do well with other people.
3. Find a time when you are most awake and alert. Use that time for studying.
4. Try to study for 25-45 minutes at a time. Take a break for 5-15 minutes before you start again. Reward yourself during the break by doing something that you enjoy.

A DETAILED STUDY STRATEGY FOR EXAMS

The strategy explained below assumes that you've already done the work for the course and are ready to study for the exam. It includes four steps:

I. ANALYZE YOUR STUDY PROBLEM

Before you study, identify your study problem for a course by asking and answering the questions below. The answers to these questions will help you plan what to study.

A. What do I need to know for this exam?

As best you can, find out what is likely to be on the exam and the kinds of questions you may be asked. Do this by asking the teacher, looking at your notes to see what was stressed, and talking with your classmates. This idea seems obvious, but it's worth repeating: *don't study what probably will not be on the exam.*

B. What do I already know?

When you already know part of what you think is likely to be on the exam, just quickly review it in general. Don't study in detail something you already know.

C. What do I need to learn?

This is the material on which you want to spend your time.

D. How much time do I have to study?

Divide your available time among your courses. Make a study schedule and use it. Start your studying early enough so you have adequate time for each course.

II. ORGANIZE YOUR INFORMATION

Once you've figured out what you need to study, the next step is to organize your information. This involves deciding what the most important information is from your notes, books, and so on, and then organizing it to make it easier to learn. You'll also learn a good deal as you organize.

Below you'll find four different ways of organizing information. Depending on the content and format of the exam, you'll want to use some or all of them.

A. Write important *terms* on one side of a 3x5 card. Write the definition on the opposite side. You can use these cards to help you learn terms.

B. Write *rules* and *facts* on a 3x5 card. Write the topic or question on the front of the card and rule or fact on the back. You can use these cards to help you learn the rules or facts.

- C. Diagram, map, chart, or graph information that's important so you can easily see relationships. Gather as much information as you can into a series of diagrams, maps, charts, graphs, etc.
- D. Use a *question outline* or *question map* (web) to organize your studying.

III. **WORK WITH YOUR INFORMATION AND LEARN IT**

Now you have established what is likely to be on the exam and taken that information and organized it for efficient studying. The next step is to work with the material and learn it. Below you'll find many suggestions for how you can do this.

- A. Use your question outline or map by asking yourself the questions and rehearsing the answers in your mind, aloud, on paper, and in discussion. When you don't know the answers, look them up in your notes, books, etc. You may want to jot them down on your outline or map. (If you're not certain about your answers, be sure to check them. You don't want to learn incorrect information.)
- B. Work with one section of your outline or map at a time. When you answer the questions, be sure to support main ideas with important details.
- C. Study any 3x5 cards and maps, charts, graphs, and diagrams that you've made as their information fits into your question outline or map.
- D. After you study each section of your question outline or map, review where it fits into the course as a whole.
- E. If you work with a friend or a study group, you can design one question outline or map together. Then, have each person be responsible for teaching one part of it to the rest of the group members.

Finally, think about what kinds of test questions you are likely to encounter on the exam. Go over the information you gathered in step #1 about the kinds of questions to expect. Consider any particular ways that you can prepare for specific kinds of questions. For example, if you know the options for essay questions, you might be able to prepare the essay in your mind ahead of time.

DON'T FEEL OVERWHELMED by all the suggestions you've just read. You don't need to use them all at once. Learn a few at a time and see how they help you. Then, you can come back and learn a few more.

IV. SUGGESTIONS FOR TAKING AN EXAM

- A. Be physically prepared. Take care of your body, because the condition of your body has a direct effect on your mind. Get a good night's sleep and eat breakfast or lunch before the exam.
- B. Be prepared for the exam. Arrive on time, and bring all your materials (pens, pencils, and, if allowed/needed, calculator, notes, etc.).
- C. When you receive the exam, first survey it. Get a sense of the whole. If important information comes to mind while you are surveying the exam, jot it down next to the question so you can refer to it later.
- D. Quickly plan your time. Allow more time for questions which:
 - 1. Carry a high point value
 - 2. Are longer (for example, essays)
 - 3. Are less familiar to you in terms of content and /or format
- E. Start with the questions you find easiest to answer, because they tend to build your confidence, and they may make the harder questions easier for you by reminding you of information you can use in later answers. Keep in mind that the questions at the end of the test may be easier for you.
- F. Read the directions for each section of the test *carefully*.
- G. If you are asked for more than one type of information in a question, number each type in your answer.

	#1	#2
<i>Example:</i>	Explain the causes of the Revolutionary War	Tell which cause was most important and why.

- H. Give the most direct answer you can. For example, if the question says *list*, just list your answer; you don't need to write it in sentences.
- I. When a question includes more than one part, be sure to answer all of the different parts.
- J. Answer all questions on an exam, unless there is a penalty for guessing. Even if there is such a penalty, try to eliminate as many of the choices as you can. If you can do this, then the odds are greater you will guess correctly (of course, being prepared means you don't have to guess).
- K. When you want to skip a question and return to it, place a star or check in the margin to the left of the question to remind you.

L. While you take an exam, try to isolate yourself from distractions in the testing room. Try not to pay attention to or worry about what other people are doing. Just keep yourself focused on what you need to do. Do not worry about students who turn in their exams before you do.

M. When you have the time, check over your answers.

Look over the suggestions that you checked above. Choose the three study tips, which you feel would be the most valuable for you to use. Jot them down on the lines below.

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

IMPROVING YOUR MEMORY

There are two types of memory:

Short-Term Memory:

It is what you can keep in your attention in the moment. Most people can remember five to nine different things in their short-term memory.

Long-Term Memory:

It is what you know and can bring to mind whenever you choose to do so.

An important part of learning is “moving” information from your short-term memory into your long-term memory. Four ways to accomplish this are:

1. Grouping Information

To group information is to organize it so that details are brought together under the main idea or category that connects them.

2. Visualizing Information

To visualize information is to see an image or a picture of it in your mind’s eye. For example, you can see a mental picture of an idea or event or an image of your mapping notes.

3. Repeating Information

To repeat information is to put the information in your own words and go over it. Say it aloud to yourself so that you can hear it as well as speak it.

4. Choosing to Remember

The more you choose to remember, the more you will remember. To choose to remember, you need to want to pay attention and be interested in what you are learning.

Another way to remember information is through mnemonics, the art of remembering. Mnemonic methods are ways of remembering more efficiently. Three useful mnemonic methods are:

1. The Link Method

Link each word in a list with the one following it by creating a picture or image in your mind’s eye in which you see the objects or events representing both words.

2. Acronym

An acronym is a word that is made by taking the first letter from each word that you want to remember and making a new word from all of those letters.

3. Acrostic

An acrostic is a sentence that is made by taking the first letter from each word that you want to remember and inserting another word beginning with that same letter.

TEST PREPARATION CHECKLIST

	YES	NO
Before reading the material, I made questions from the main title and from each subtitle.	_____	_____
I have skimmed the material at least once.	_____	_____
I have mind mapped at least once.	_____	_____
I have answered the subtitle and main idea questions.	_____	_____
I have identified the main ideas and details in my notes.	_____	_____
I have used association / visualization to help me remember important information.	_____	_____
I have thought about the information the teacher is likely to ask on the test.	_____	_____
I have made up a practice test.	_____	_____