



### **ACE Your Last-Minute Strategy: How to Cram**

Although you've been told to avoid cramming (last-minute memorization), there are times when you're left with no other choice. Here is information on how to cram.

**For students who have *worked hard all semester* but now have three exams in five days with only an evening to review already learned material:**

**TRY** Writing out a course summary.

**WHY?** Reviewing the structure of the course will help you remember, comprehend, and retain the material.

**TRY** Working through notes and assignments. Skim the text.

**WHY?** This is the best way to set priorities for the time that you have.

**TRY** Staying calm and confident!

**HOW?** Take breaks in your studying, get at least 6 hours (preferably 8) of sleep, and remind yourself that working hard all term really pays off!

**For students who've *slacked off* and are now in justifiable panic:**

**TRY** Gathering information about what is likely to be on the exam.

**HOW?** Find out which chapters in the text were covered; get a set of course notes to copy (return them); find out what topics were emphasized.

**TRY** From the information gathered, determine principal themes, sub-topics, and major illustrations. Now memorize them!

**WHY?** Repetition is the key to memorization. Use every trick you can -- word association, rhymes, lists, sentences from acronyms.

**TRY** Being selective. After memorizing major themes, decide what supporting material to concentrate on. You're more likely to remember a narrow range of material covered in depth.

**HOW?** Skim the text if there is only one, or skim only chapters that seem emphasized from your information gathering. If there are many texts, pick two to concentrate on. Take time to review what you've covered.

**TRY** Being kinder to yourself.

**HOW?** Get at least 6 hours of sleep. If you have an exercise program, stay with it, and don't forget to eat well!

**TRY** Learning from this experience.

**HOW?** Take some time after the exam to figure out what went wrong. Did you manage your time poorly? Not pay attention in class? Build a schedule that was too challenging? Learning from this experience will help you to avoid repeating it in the future. Your academic advisor can help you develop strategies for avoiding this in the future.