



**AUBURN SCHOOLS**

## Smart test prep can make all the difference

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There are numerous theories regarding the best way to prepare for exams and to achieve impressive results on those end-of-year assessments. Given that final exams are just around the corner for high school students, let's highlight some quick and easy ways for parents and students alike to help ensure they are on the top of their game when it comes time to take their tests.

Students should realize that preparation for exams really began nine months ago; but that being said, preparation prior to testing is extremely important. In concert with content review and practice tests, students must pay close attention to their testing schedule. If your son or daughter has final exams on consecutive days or over a short span of days, he or she should develop a study schedule that begins many days or weeks in advance, and should include multiple days of reviewing information for each of the separate exams. Plan ahead: Students should allow themselves plenty of time to review for each subject and try to avoid “cramming” at the last minute. As the old cliché goes, pulling an “all-nighter” to study for exams can really turn out to be counterproductive, especially if your student has multiple tests in a short span of days. The body and mind need days to fully recover from that level of sleep deprivation.

When it comes to preparing your body, make sure that you get enough sleep the night before testing. Students should also maintain their normal sleep patterns of waking up fairly early, such as if they had school that day, even if their exam is not slated to take place until the afternoon. A well-balanced breakfast can help students get off to a great start on exam day. Students should avoid meals or energy drinks that may pack an initial punch, but the effects will wear off and can bring on a “crash” effect, physically and mentally, once the ingredients have been burned off by the body.

If you have an early riser, or an afternoon test, some targeted exercise may also help you be in great mental shape to take on those final exams. Documentation and research suggest that an individual's actual brain function can be increased for up to four hours immediately following an interval of training in which a student is able to maintain a heart rate that is 60 percent of

their maximum heart rate for at least 30 minutes. For more information behind this research, check out the book "Spark" by John J. Ratey.

To summarize, here are some quick tips to help your students be best prepared for taking their final exams:

- Prepare early and often; repeated exposure to content days ahead of testing will allow students ample time to prepare.
- Avoid major changes to your body's sleep and rest patterns, get a great night's sleep prior to testing and avoid sleeping until 11:30 a.m. if you have a test at noon.
- Seek proper nutrition and avoid empty calories or energy drinks that can leave your mind and body susceptible to crashing while you are testing.
- Consider introducing a steady diet of exercise into your test-prep routine; daily exercise may not only help for these final exams, but for your overall academic achievement in the future.

Best wishes to every family and student and as you conclude your school year. Have a safe and productive summer.

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