

DHS Final Exam Structure and Strategies SY1819

Semester 1 Final Exams

Tuesday, December 18 - Periods 1, 2, 3

Wednesday, December 19 - Period 4, 5, 6

Thursday, December 20 - Period 7, 8, Conflicts

**Exams are 75 minute periods: Exam 1 (8:10-9:25), Exam 2 (10:40-11:55), Exam 3 (1:10-2:25)*

Planning for Finals

- *Overall planning:* Students are encouraged to start slowly preparing for final tests now so that they aren't cramming the night before their test.
- *Details:* Teachers will provide each student with details about finals week for their class. Please note that some teachers/classes will have a project due instead of a final or no final at all.
- *Format:* Teachers will review the format of the test such as multiple choice, short answer, etc.
- *Studying:* Most teachers will review with students what they should be studying. Advisory teachers and senior teachers will also review how to study and advice for doing well on finals. (See below for suggestions on general test-taking tips).

The Night Before and Day of Finals

- *Review:* The night before one or more finals, students should review not cram for a test. It is important that students plan out their study schedule now for each test.
- *Sleep:* Students should strive for a decent amount of sleep to be energized and ready to go the next day.
- *Eat:* Breakfast is key to starting the day out right. Pack snacks or lunch for the day, if necessary. The cafeteria will not serve a full lunch but will be open for some items.
- *What to bring:* Students should ask their teachers if they will need their Chromebooks, calculator, or other class-specific materials for the test. Be sure to bring pencils with erasers and pens, as well as things to do once the test is over. Please note that most teachers will not allow electronic devices until the test is over, so students are encouraged to bring books to read, notecards or notebooks to study, or quiet games like crossword puzzles to keep busy until the end of the period.
- *Look ahead:* Students may have time before, after or during a test to study. The library and cafeteria will be open throughout the day for students to use to study or just relax. The library will be a quiet zone during this time. The ARC will be open after final exams until 3 p.m. for tutoring purposes.

General Test Taking Tips for Students

- Read the general directions and the directions for each question. Often times, mistakes occur when test-takers don't read the directions. For example, some tests require the test-taker to answer only some of the questions.
- Scan the test before starting to get a general sense of the amount of time you will have for each question. Some test-takers are more comfortable starting with an essay versus multiple choice or vice versa.
- Manage time throughout the test. Check the time. Don't spend too much time on any single question. If stuck, make a note and return back to the question later.
- Going back to problems:
 - Rephrase a question in your own words.
 - If acceptable, ask the teacher to clarify the wording of a question.
 - Use the process of elimination to reduce choices for multiple choice.
 - If you are stuck, explain what you do know for possible partial credit.
- Show your work! Check your work! Some teachers will provide partial points if you show your work and make a small error that resulted in a wrong answer, yet your method was correct. However, checking your work will hopefully eliminate those small errors.

Tips for Different Test Formats

Essays- Demonstrate that you understand the issue, take a stand, make an argument, consider the alternatives, and conclude.

- Read the directions carefully: Does the question ask you to summarize, outline, refute, compare, state, trace, describe, criticize, or contrast? Keep these directives in mind as you write.
- Take a moment to briefly outline your essay. An essay question is meant to evaluate not only what you know but also whether you can organize your knowledge compellingly—this takes a bit of structure.
- Make distinct paragraphs and include evidence from class, such as assigned work and readings.

Short Answer and Fill in the Blank - Answers are typically intended to be short and factual. State the answer clearly and, if appropriate, briefly give the reasons.

Multiple-Choice Questions - MC questions are flexible so that questions may ask you to recall vocabulary or even apply concepts.

- Read the question very carefully.
- Try to answer the question on your own; without looking at the multiple choices. This will help prevent choosing the first familiar-looking answer. To make the exam more challenging, multiple-choice and true/false questions will distract you with answers that are familiar but do not quite fit the question at hand.
- Use the process of elimination if you don't know the answer. Guess if you can't eliminate the choices.