



ACTIVELY ENGAGE IN LEARNING



TAKING EXAMS

Part 2: Preparing for Open-Book and Other Test Types

During Remote Learning, your exams may look different from traditional tests. So you may need to ask specifically about the:

- **Format of the test** (e.g., multiple-choice, short-answer, open-ended, time limits).
- **Resources** permitted (e.g., open book, open notes, websites, etc.).
- **Criteria** that will be used to evaluate your performance (especially if it is not a standard multiple-choice exam). For example, ask for rubrics ahead of time to help you focus your studying and align it with the instructor's expectations.



Once you know these expectations, you might think that these formats—like open-book—seem “easier” than traditional exams and believe you need to study less. **This is not true!** If you are able to use your notes on exams, it is especially important that you:

- know key concepts well (summarize concepts in your own words, then compare to text/lecture notes).
- organize your materials (find key passages in the text, common formulas, primary resources).
- manage your time (if available, take a practice test and time yourself with and without notes).

Bonus: you might color code your notes or bookmark pages so that you can readily navigate to details of the key concepts you know you will use during the exam.

FOR AN OPEN BOOK/OPEN NOTES EXAM FORMAT, YOU MAY NEED TO PREPARE TO:



- Provide **course-related sources** you use to answer questions with page numbers or other citation information and **recommend** whether or not these sources should be included in the course in the future.
- **Reflect** on what you learned about the content or learning process as you researched answers to exam questions.
- **Explain “why”** one exam question was difficult and **“how”** you found the answer.
- **Explain “why”** one exam question is most interesting or most applicable to a future career and **“why”** the content is valuable.



FOR A CLOSED-BOOK EXAM FORMAT, YOU MAY NEED TO PREPARE FOR:

- Several **short-answer questions** about the lecture, so you can demonstrate you “attended” (or watched) lectures and were engaged along the way.
- A **metacognitive task** that asks you to look at an incorrect answer on a past exam and **explain** the correct answer.
- A **reflective question** asking **“how”** the course has changed your thinking on a topic.
- A **recommendation** of scholarly articles, news articles, videos, etc. and **explanation** of **“how”** they would help future students in the course.
- **Short-essay questions** asking you to **synthesize** or combine different pieces of course content.
- An **annotated bibliography** (critical summary of 5-10 articles you choose) **explaining** what they are about and **“how”** they are/are not valuable to the field.
- A **real-world problem** where you explain **“why”** what you’ve learned in the course is important.