



January

Exams

January is the time of year where freshmen experience their first high school exams. In most classes, exams are cumulative tests of all the material learned the previous semester in a course and are worth 15-20% of a student's overall semester grade. Simply put – exams are a big deal and exam time can be stressful. Therefore, it is important for students to organize their materials and their time in advance of studying for exams. Please review the strategies listed below to help take some of the stress out of exam week.

Strategies for Studying for Exams

1. **Get a Head Start At Least a Week (if not more) Before the Exam**

- a. Find out all that you can about the exam
 - i. In class, listen for teacher's clues and signals as to which material might be included on the tests.
 - ii. Find out which type of format the test will be.
 1. If objective only, review and memorize important details.
 2. If subjective only, learn overall concepts but memorize enough facts to back them up in an essay.
 - iii. Find out if you can bring notes into the exam, and if so, how many you can use (size, type, etc.)
 - iv. Find out if any of the chapters/units/materials that were covered in class will not be on the exam. Unless the teacher tells you exactly what will not be included, it's safer to study every chapter and all materials.
- b. Start the preparation
 - i. Get out your notes, old tests, etc. and organize them.
 - ii. Make sure that you have something from every unit that will be on the test (outlines, lecture notes, etc.). If you are missing anything, see if you can copy a friend's notes for study purposes.
 - iii. Consider creating flashcards. This works great for vocabulary words and their definitions or for asking a question on one side and answering it on the other. There are some free iPad apps that work great for this!
 - iv. Make up a study schedule to follow for the duration of time leading up to the test, trying to begin at least two weeks out.
- c. Organize your study sessions
 - i. Follow the study schedule and pace yourself so that you can study a little each day.
 1. Divide the number of chapters or pages to cover by the number of days you have set aside to study.
 2. Study each subject for a half hour before breaking and beginning the next.
 - ii. As you review the textbook, also review the lecture notes and clues from the teacher.
 - iii. Review old tests since the same questions (possibly worded differently) may show up again. If the material was important enough to test you on once, it may be important enough to show up on a final.
 - iv. For each chapter, concentrate on highlighted material (you may need to highlight your notes first) and recall questions (self-created or from a textbook or teacher-generated study guide).

- v. Focus on what you don't know rather than continually reviewing what you do know.
- vi. Consider asking a parent, guardian, sibling, or friend to quiz you. Seek a serious study partner.
- d. Remember to use your strongest learning style and preferences.
 - i. Auditory learners may want to read study materials aloud or record notes or recall questions to listen to later.
 - ii. Visual learners may want to picture the look of a page or make associations. Sometimes it helps to physically draw a picture or symbol to help with recall.
 - iii. Kinesthetic learners may want to rewrite information (ex. brief summary outlines or charts).
 - iv. Study during the times and in the environments that will help you focus best. Only study with a partner if you are really going to study.

2. Cramming

- a. If you have studied leading up to your exam the way you should, you won't have to cram, but just in case...
- b. What is cramming and how can you use it?
 - i. Cramming is really stuffing as much information into your head as possible just before you need to use it, such as the night before or the morning of a test.
 - ii. Unfortunately, cramming only works for very brief periods and for very small amounts of information, so it is not an efficient study strategy.
 - iii. If you find that you absolutely must cram, don't try to read and remember every bit of information from the chapters and notes. Rely upon your highlighted information, vocabulary, and recall questions. This will be the most important information, and you can cram it into your memory in the shortest amount of time.

- 3. **Final Words About Final Exams** – Successful test takers relax before exams. They go to sleep early, wake up in time to eat a nutritious breakfast, get to school on time without rushing, and pump themselves up with confident attitudes.

It is recommended that parents sit down with students prior to exam week and complete the “**Exam Success Plan**” below. For each of your classes, record the following information:

- Class: The name of the class
- Grade: What your current grade is for that class
- Weight: What your exam is worth (points, percentage of total grade, etc. – this may vary by teacher)
- Priority: Rank your five classes 1-5 with “1” being the class you need to spend the most time studying for
- Study Plan: List what you will need to study in order to do well on your final
- Materials: List the materials you will need in order to study for your final. Circle any items you currently do not have and will need to get in order to study properly.

Class	Grade	Weight	Priority	Study Plan	Materials
1 st :					
2 nd :					

3 rd :					
4 th :					
5 th :					
6 th :					

Information for Athletes and their Parents

Be aware of athletic eligibility

Zeeland High Schools have eligibility requirements for athletes. Students must be passing at least 4 of 6 classes in order to be eligible to play sports. *Keep in mind that some athletic teams may have even stricter requirements.*

Be involved

Many coaches have pre-season meetings for the parents of their athletes. These meetings are usually very informative, and they give parents an opportunity to meet the coaching staff. They also give parents an opportunity to meet and talk with the parents of other athletes.

If your child's coach has a parent meeting, be sure to attend. Zeeland also has a booster organization that supports the various athletic teams. If possible, become involved.

Support your athlete

The best way to help your athlete is to provide encouragement and to be positive, both at home and in the stands. If your child has a problem at any time during the season, encourage your child to talk to the coach. Many times, this important step is missed and parents go directly to the coach or athletic director.

Playing a sport in college

Colleges belong to associations, and these associations have specific academic requirements that athletes must meet before they can play a sport in college. Most college athletic programs are regulated by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), which is an organization that has rules on eligibility, recruiting, and financial aid for prospective student-athletes. If your son/daughter is interesting in playing college sports or receiving an athletic scholarship, here is some info you need to know about NCAA rules.

Divisions

The NCAA has three membership divisions: Division I, Division II, and Division III. Generally, larger schools compete in Division I and smaller schools compete in Divisions II and III. Division I schools (ex. University of Michigan) usually recruit athletes in many different sports, and they also offer athletic scholarships. Division II schools (ex. Grand Valley State University) also recruit and offer scholarship money, but Division III schools (ex. Hope College) cannot offer athletic scholarships, although they may or may not recruit actively.

Guidelines for Eligibility

If a student intends to participate in Division I or Division II athletics as a college freshman, he/she must be certified by the **NCAA Eligibility Center**. The NCAA Eligibility Center certifies the academic and amateur credentials of all students who want to play sports at an NCAA Division I or II institution as freshmen. In order to practice, play and receive an athletics scholarship, students need to meet certain academic benchmarks. Eligibility is determined solely by the Eligibility Center and not by the college or university you wish to attend. Eligibility decisions are different for each division and are based on grade-point averages for core curriculum courses (English, math, science, social studies, foreign language or non-doctrinal/comparative religion or philosophy) and scores on the SAT or ACT. The SAT and ACT are nationally recognized standardized tests that are used for college admissions (all students in the State of Michigan are required to take the SAT as part of the Michigan Merit Exam in the spring of the junior year). Below is a timeline for steps to take in achieving college athletic eligibility.

9th and 10th Grades

- Work hard to get the best grades possible
- Take classes that match your school's NCAA list of approved core courses (the list can be found at <http://www.ncaa.org/playcollegesports>).

11th and 12th Grades

- Register to take the SAT and/or ACT.
- Double check to make sure the courses you've taken match your school's NCAA list of approved core courses, found at <http://www.ncaa.org/playcollegesports>, and that you are also on track to take at least 16 core classes prior to graduation.
- Work hard to get the best grades possible and graduate on time.
- Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center at <http://www.ncaa.org/playcollegesports> and complete the amateurism questionnaire.
- Request your official transcript be sent to the NCAA Eligibility Center.

Visit <http://www.ncaa.org/playcollegesports> to download "The College Bound Guide for the Student-Athlete" and to learn more about becoming an NCAA athlete.

Additionally, feel free to visit www.playnaia.org for information about athletic eligibility/scholarships for colleges in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) (ex. Aquinas, Cornerstone).