

POSSE: A STUDY PLAN FOR OBJECTIVE EXAMS

Test Preparation

POSSE is an acronym for a system that helps you identify your study goals and make plans for achieving them. Writing answers to the questions instead of verbally answering them forces you to concentrate more fully on each question. This also keeps you from inadvertently omitting questions. Moreover, it provides a means of reviewing your responses. Your success depends on your honesty in dealing with such issues. It is also important that you begin the POSSE process at least a week before the test is scheduled to allow time for distributed practice. By working through **POSSE** with care and determination, you make the best use of your study time and efforts.

To complete the stages of POSSE, you should consult your instructor, text, course syllabus, lecture notes, or other materials.

PLAN

Answer these questions:

- › What does the test cover?
- › Is the test comprehensive or noncomprehensive?
- › How many questions will the test contain?
- › Will the test require me to apply information?
- › How much does this test count in my final course grade?
- › When is the test?
- › Where will the test be given?

ORGANIZE

Answer these questions:

- › What materials do I need to study: textbook? handouts? lecture notes? supplemental readings? old exams?
- › What study and memory methods will work best with this material?
- › Can I find a study partner or group to prepare for this test?
- › Can I predict test questions by: answering chapter review questions? examining old exams? questioning former students or the instructor to obtain clues about test item construction? creating a practice test of key points? completing a practice test and go over the responses with my instructor?
- › Gather all study materials together. Construct study and memory aids.



SCHEDULE

Answer these questions:

- › How much time do I have before the exam?
- › How much time will I need to study for this test?
- › How much time each day will I study?
- › How will I distribute my study time?
- › Where will I study?
- › When will I meet with my study group or partner?
- › What obligations do I have that might interfere with this study time?

STUDY

At the end of each study session, answer these questions:

- › Am I studying actively, that is, through writing or speaking?
- › Am I distributing my study time to avoid memory interference and physical fatigue?
- › Am I following my study schedule? Why or why not?
- › What adjustments do I need to make?
- › Am I learning efficiently? Why or why not? What adjustments do I need to make?

EVALUATE

After the test is returned, complete the worksheet on the back of Test Taking Tip #4, then answer these questions:

- › What pattern(s) emerge(s) from the worksheet?
- › What type of questions did I miss most often?
- › What changes can I make to my study plan to avoid such trends in the future?

*File your **POSSE** plan, course materials, study aids, exam, after-exam worksheet, and evaluation for future reference.*