Subject Specific Study & Test Writing Strategies

Focus: Chemistry

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Chemistry Study Strategies

Chemistry courses, and therefore chemistry exams involve problem solving. Hence, your approach to studying for your chemistry exams should stress problem solving.

- Do practice problems from old tests, exams, and quizzes

- Know how to use the formula booklet (if applicable)

- You may understand how a problem is worked, but don't make the mistake of assuming that is a substitute for working through the problem on your own. Work through examples yourself. Consult the worked problem if you get stuck.

- Write down what you are trying to answer in a problem. Write down all the facts that you are given. Sometimes seeing what you know written down this way will help you recall the method for obtaining the solution.

- If you get the opportunity, help someone else work problems. If you can explain the problem to someone else, there's a good chance you truly understand it.
Chemistry Exam Writing Strategies

**Multiple Choice:**
- Do the questions you know first
- Use process of elimination (i.e. eliminate what you know is incorrect and cross them out)

**Short Answers:**
- Review how many marks is each question worth? (This will give you a clue to how much to write).

**Graphs, Diagrams or Models:**
- Label the axis and use a ruler

**Calculations:**
- Show all of your work
- Start with the formula
General Tips

• Don't be satisfied with simple recognition of a principle or concept. Aim for actual knowledge that you will be able to recall and to use in a test/exam situation. Try to look at all the possible ways that a principle can be applied. It helps to work with others and to explain things to others (and have them explain things to you).

• Effective examination preparation involves an interaction among homework problems, the classes, your notes and the text. Review actively, including self-tests (you create your own problems/questions). You need to be sure that you can answer problems without referring to your notes or to the textbook. Practice doing problems using both the concrete and the formal approaches, to see which you are more comfortable with.
Resources

- IB Prepared: Chemistry Book Series, IBO

- How to Study Chemistry – Academic Success video and resources, http://www.howtostudy.org/resources_subject.php?id=5

- Cornell College website, http://people.cornellcollege.edu/cliberko/studytips.htm